



FINANCE COMMITTEE

Met at Marshalswick Community Centre on Wednesday 23rd September 2024 at 7.30pm

PRESENT:

Councillors John Hale (Chair), James Lambert, Graham Leonard, Jenny Roberts, Luke Sieger

OFFICERS:

Simon Thwaites, Parish Clerk, Emma Hostler, Deputy Clerk

ABSENT:

Julie Oakley

IN ATTENDANCE:

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770 Apologies

There was none.

771 Disclosures of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor Roberts declared herself a member of the Parochial Church Council (item 777).

772 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5th June 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on the 5th June 2024, having been previously circulated, were reviewed. It was unanimously:

Resolved

That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chair.

773 Budgetary Control

Full details of projected income and expenditure against budget were circulated with the agenda and discussed at the meeting. In summary the Clerk informed Members that projected net expenditure was £366,128 against a net budget of £360,305. It was noted that that this is an early forecast, subject to a number of uncertainties. To give this context, the Clerk explained that the Sports and Recreation Committee are projecting an overspend of £28,006, this being approved expenditure following release from reserves of funds earmarked for the pump track. These comments and projections were duly noted.

774 Review of Banking Standing Orders and Direct Debits

Current banking Standing Orders and Direct Debits paid through the Treasurer's Account were reviewed and noted.

775 External Audit 2023/24

It was noted that the Parish Council's External Auditor, PKF Littlejohn, has completed the 2023/24 audit and that this was reported to Full Council on September 11th.

The Clerk confirmed that there were no issues requiring attention or recommendations.

776 Maximum Spend using a Debit Card – Financial Regulations

The Clerk explained that the Financial Regulations (6.17) allow the Parish Council's Debit Card to be used for purchases up to £500 unless authorised in advance by the Council or the Finance Committee. It was further explained that there is a rising expectation that orders of all sorts are paid

for on being placed and consequently the current ceiling of £500 can be restrictive. After discussion it was unanimously;

Resolved to increase the maximum from £500 to £1,000, this resolution to be scheduled for Full Council to review and ratify in October.

777 Railings in St Leonard's Churchyard

Members reviewed an exchange of emails between the Clerk and a resident whose house shares a boundary with St Leonard's Churchyard, there being a metal fence with pointed pickets along the boundary line. Following discussion it was;

Resolved;

To approve funding up to a maximum of £250 towards removing only the points of each vertical bar (picket). The householder to select and employ a contractor and to provide a VAT invoice in evidence of the cost of modification before any reimbursement is made.

778 Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS)

Members considered written guidance provided by HAPTC's legal advisor in respect of the financial threshold to qualify for this compensation guarantee. The Clerk confirmed that this council remained below the threshold and therefore qualified but that the guidance was inconclusive. This was noted.

779 Review of Bank Signatories

Current bank signatories were reviewed and it was confirmed that some former signatories had not been removed by the banks as previously requested. The Deputy Clerk undertook to re-contact the banks as appropriate and to request Councillors Lambert and Leonard be registered in their place.

780 Matters of Note

- Quarterly bank reconciliations have been signed off as required. It is a requirement of the Financial Regulations that this is noted by the committee.
- IAC Audit and Consultancy Limited will carry out an interim internal audit of the Parish Council on November 18th 2024.
- A salary award for 2024/25 has not yet been agreed between the unions and the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.
- The balance of this year's precept (50%) will be received on September 27th.
- The Ill Health Liability Insurance (IHLI) rate will remain at 1.65% of pensionable salary for the forthcoming year.

781 The Clerk/RFO confirmed that he is currently compiling the draft 2025/26 budget for the consideration of the Finance Committee on 28th October and Full Council on 13th November. The draft will include capital works coming from committee meetings, inflationary increases (including salaries) and several new items. This presentation will include a table of reserves indicating the impact of the draft budget on balances and a recommended increase in precept.

782 Matters Arising

The Clerk informed the meeting that he was in discussion with a resident regarding damp issues at their property with a possible connection to the resurfaced alleyway at William Bell Open Space.

783 Items for Inclusion on the Next Agenda

- There was none.

Date of Next Meeting – Monday 28th October 2024 at 7.30pm, Marshalswick Community Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.08 pm.

Chair **Date**