

**Present:** Cllrs Bell, Clare, Page

**In the Chair:** Cllr Plater

**Clerk:** Michelle Curtis

**Also present:** 1 Member of the public

**1. Apologies for Absence**

All Councillors were present.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest declared.

**3. Public Forum**

There was no comment from the member of the public.

**4. Minutes of Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

**Resolved:** Unanimously agreed that the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 be approved as a true account of the proceedings of the meeting.

The Chairman signed the minutes.

**5. Accounts 2023/24**

The Clerk gave an overview of the current financial position and the expected balance at year-end.

The Parish Council were financially secure, with a small fund for unexpected expenditure.

**6. Earmarked Reserves 2023/24**

The Committee reviewed the Earmarked Reserves (EMR) 2023/24.

Councillors agreed that the process of assessing the EMR gives greater clarity.

Regarding the Community Support/Minor Projects EMR, the Parish Council committed £500 to the 20mph speed limit on East Street. Of the £500, £140 was donated by a resident to this scheme. It was agreed to offer the resident a refund of their £140 as the funds for the scheme were no longer required.

**Action:** Clerk to contact the resident

The Finance Committee would propose the following to the Parish Council:

1) As the committed funds to the 20mph scheme were no longer required, the Finance & Policy Committee would like to propose that these funds be used to purchase a replacement defibrillator cabinet.

## 7. **Asset Register 2023/24**

The Committee reviewed the Asset Register 2023/24.

The Clerk reported that the following changes had been made to the Asset Register;

- 1) Addition of the new Lifebuoys - £1449.99
- 2) Addition of new laptop - £1,409.98
- 3) Removal of the noticeboard at Woodup Pool - £140
- 4) Removal of broken laptop - £1258
- 5) The value of the defibrillator has been reduced from £1,000 to £1.00, as the defibrillator was a donation.

The following items would also be added to the Asset Register:

HM Plaque - £199

Bench Woodrolfe Green - £423 (increase existing Benches to 21)

The balance of the total assets for 2023/24 is £511,243.91. Compared to 2022/23, which was £510,157.95, this is an increase of £1,085.97.

The following amendments to the insurance policy are to be proposed to the Full Council:

To be added to the policy – Lifebuoys - £1,449.99

**Action:** Clerk to make enquiries via Gallagher Insurers about the additional costs of making the proposed amendment to the policy.

## 8. **Audit and Risk Assessment Document**

The Committee reviewed V.7.0 of the Audit and Risk Assessment Document.

The Committee made some minor amendments to the document and would present the Audit and Risk Assessment Document V.8.0 to the Full Council for approval.

**Action:** Clerk to explore options for the secure disposing of documents and redundant laptops.

## 9. **Complaints**

The Clerk confirmed that the draft letter to the resident responding to the twelve emailed complaints had been circulated to all Councillors for approval. All Councillors had confirmed that they approved the draft letter to the resident.

The letter to the resident regarding the complaints is under the Chairman's signature.

The Committee, therefore, approved the draft letter.

**Action:** Clerk to send the letter to the resident.

The Clerk and Councillors were thanked for their hard work in investigating and responding to the complaints, which had taken up a considerable amount of time.

## 10. **Policies**

### 10.1 **Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy**

The Committee reviewed and updated the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy. V2.0 will be submitted to the Full Council for adoption.

### **10.2 Dignity at Work Policy**

The Committee reviewed the Recruitment of Ex-Offenders Policy. There were no changes.

### **10.3 Website Policy**

The Committee reviewed and updated the Website Policy. V2.0 will be submitted to the Full Council for adoption.

### **10.4 Website Accessibility Statement**

The Committee reviewed and updated the Website Accessibility Statement. The revised statement will be submitted to the Full Council for approval.

### **10.5 Compliments and Complaints Policy**

The Committee reviewed the policy and agreed to update and rename it the Feedback, Compliments, and Complaints Policy. V4.0 will be submitted to the Full Council for adoption.

### **10.6 Habitual or Vexatious Complainant Policy**

The Committee reviewed the new Habitual or Vexatious Complainant Policy (this policy is based on the Hatfield Peverel PC Policy).

**Action:** To propose to the Full Council that the new Policy be adopted

### **10.7 Attendance at Meetings Policy**

The Committee reviewed the new Attendance at Meetings Policy (this policy is based on the Ixworth and Ixworth Thorpe PC Policy).

**Action:** To propose to the Full Council that the new Policy be adopted

### **10.8 Recording of Meetings Policy**

The Committee reviewed the new Recording of Meetings Policy (this policy is based on the Spaulding PC Policy).

**Action:** To propose to the Full Council that the new Policy be adopted

## **11. Website**

The Committee reviewed the quotation from Phelan Barker. At a recent meeting of the Parish Council, it was agreed to proceed with the Who We Are Page and Email Accounts.

The Finance & Policy Committee would propose to the Full Council to continue with the following:

- Contributors page
- Personnel Committee page
- Page adjustments – all items except item no. 8 – clubs and association directory. It is proposed to not include names of residents involved with village groups, but instead refer to the Parish Magazine.

This would cost £400.

## **12. Woodrolfe Green Toilets**

The Committee considered the suggestion from Cllr Stephens for the Parish Council to become a keyholder for the toilets at Woodrolfe Green and decided that they did not wish to take on the responsibility.

## **13. Parish Council Meetings**

Format of the agenda:

- 1) Include a statement on the agenda to advise those in attendance that the meeting will be recorded for internal use only. The Parish Clerk will use the recording for the minutes.
- 2) A note on the agenda advising residents to contact the Parish Clerk by noon the previous day if they have an item to raise.

The new changes would apply to all Council and Committee agendas.

The Clerk suggested an admin checklist which recorded a list of actions. This would be reported under Administration. The Committee agreed to trial this for three months.

## **14. Other Matters**

The Clerk reported that she had received notification of the non-domestic rates for the cemetery. The cost for 2024/25 is £478, an increase of £43 compared to 2023/24.

The meeting closed at 9.14pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....