



Minutes of the Personnel and Finance Committee held at 7:00pm at the Arts & Heritage Centre on 1 October 2024

Present: Cllr J. Wright, Cllr J. Bowman (Chair), Cllr M. Galligan, Cllr S. Hodson, Cllr J. Cox, Cllr L. Milner,
In Attendance: Cllr S. Davey, Michelle Moss, Cllr A. Clark,
Members of public present: 0

- 1. To receive declaration of interests and requests for dispensations and to consider granting dispensation(s) - Ref: 3334**
None declared. Cllr Cox noted that the clerks guidance with the meeting invite was that all councillors with any interests should declare them and leave the room for the discussion about that item.
- 2. To resolve to accept apologies for absence and reasons given in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 s85(1) - Ref: 3335**
Apologies received from Cllr Lyus. Cllr Hodson had been nominated as the stand-in for Cllr Lyus.
- 3. Public Participation (10 minutes max). Individual members of the public are permitted to address the council for up to 5 minutes each - Ref: 3336**
None
- 4. To review and approve the draft minutes from 01/08/2024 meeting - Ref: 3337**
The minutes had been circulated to councillors prior to the meeting. RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record of the meeting.
All in favour
- 5. To review the projected spend against budget forecast - Ref: 3338**
It was noted that this years spend is reasonably on target, with the exception of staff costs which are projected to be over budget due to hiring of new resources.
- 6. Consider the budget forecast/review and make recommendations to full council to move unspent funds to reserves - Ref: 3339**
It was noted that the Bins and Benches project has not been started and given current resource constraints, is unlikely to be started this financial year. RESOLVED to proposed to full council that the £3000 allocated to Bins and Benches project should be transferred to allocated reserves for a future start date.
All in favour
- 7. Start looking at the budget provision for 25/26 - Ref: 3340**
The draft budget had been circulated to all members prior to the meeting. This included the decisions made at the extraordinary meeting of the town council in September and all of the project proposal documents received from councillors. It was noted that the draft budget projected a precept increase of 42%. Councillors agreed that this was unacceptable and that the maximum should be no more than 10%.
Following an indepth review of the budget the following possibilities were identified as areas where the budget could be reduced:
 - Play area surface replacements spread over 3 years, 24/25, 25/26, 26/27 – Assuming South St park surfaces are replaced this year, moving £5000 from EMR to cover this cost leaving £6000 in EMR. Allowance of £15,100 in 25/26 budget for sports field surfaces, ongoing repairs and the annual inspection.
 - Reducing the amount spent on grass cutting at the cemetery, church and cong chapel by £3000 – shortfall could be met by reducing the number of cuts/areas cut or more reliance on volunteers
 - Reducing the events budget by 50% to £500
 - Removing the contingency of £2000
 - Reducing grants and donations by 50% to £8500 (including CIB)
 - Remove the proposed grass roots project of £1000
 - Removing the proposed cemetery notice board project of £1800It was also suggested that Millfields park could be re-purposed to save the costs needed to replace the play surfaces, but agreed that this would require further analysis and there was a general reluctance to re-purpose

Signature:



any green spaces.

RESOLVED to present the budget changes discussed to full council for consideration.

All in favour

8. To consider the office requirements for supporting the new Deputy Clerk - Ref: 3341

Noted that the new Deputy Clerk would require a desk and pedestal, and also that the current storage space in the office is limited and damaged.

RESOLVED to allocate up to £800 for office furniture. As this is an overspend to the budget it will need to be approved by full council.

All in favour

9. To ensure the councils procedures for preventing sexual harassment in the workplace are fit for purpose considering the new legislation (s40A Equality Act 2010) - Ref: 3342

It was noted that revised legislation will take effect from 26th October. LALC have offered several options for training for councillors and staff including a zoom session and an on-demand webinar. Cllrs Bowman and Milner volunteered to attend the training. It was agreed to add the agenda item onto a future meeting when more detail is understood about the implications of the change.

10. To consider the councils responsibility for health and safety and agree a plan of action - Ref: 3343

It was noted that the council has a duty to comply with health and safety legislation and to protect employees, members and volunteers by making arrangements to adequately manage health and safety and to control workplace risks. It was noted that the budget proposal for 25/26 included some provision for health and safety, but that this is not yet quantified. It was noted that Cllr Davey has extensive experience of health and safety and agreed that the new deputy clerk should work with Cllr Davey to produce a health and safety policy which considers all aspects of risk and suggest arrangements to mitigate/manage the risks. It was noted that appropriate training may be required.

11. To resolve to go into closed session due to the personal and sensitive information to be discussed - DPA 2018 and UK GDPR - Ref: 3344

RESOLVED to move into closed session.

All in favour

12. To consider the clerks request to amend current employment contract to reflect the industry standard for holiday entitlement - Ref: 3345

RESOLVED to set the clerks holiday entitlement at the level recommended in the green book.

All in favour

13. To consider the clerks request for a salary review - Ref: 3346

The Town Clerk role had been assessed against the SLCC/NALC assessment criteria for parish clerks and noted that the town clerk is 5 grades below the recommended pay scale.

RESOLVED to recommend to full council that the clerk is paid at the correct rateable level for the role.

All in favour

14. To consider and approve the draft contract of employment for the Deputy Clerk - Ref: 3347

The contract had been drafted on the SLCC/NALC recommended contract with a few minor amendments and circulated to councillors prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED to approve the draft contract of employment with a start date of either 4th or 11th November.

All in favour

15. To consider whether to progress a vexatious complainant with regard the further complaint and FOI request about the sports field - Ref: 3348

It was noted that the council has a duty to respond to FOI requests unless they are deemed as vexatious/repeated per ICO criteria. However, it was agreed that the criteria for vexatious complainant had been met and the vexatious policy should be invoked, starting with a warning letter from the clerk as per the policy.

All in favour

Signature:



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Meeting closed at 9:15pm

Signature: