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MINUTES of the Meeting of the FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 19 September 2023 at the Court Bushes Community Hub.

Members present: Duncan Ranger (Chair) Mark Froud
Rodney Jackson (Vice-Chair) Malcolm Llewellyn

Also present: Sarah Groom, Clerk to the Council & Responsible Finance Officer and Stephen Witchell, Estates & Facilities Manager.

F23/24.042: Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Claire Majsai and Cllr David Evans, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **ACCEPTS** the apologies for absence from Cllr Claire Majsai and Cllr David Evans.

F23/24.043: Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

F23/24.044: Previous Minutes: The minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting on 24 August 2023 were received and accepted by the Committee and signed by the Chair, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREED** the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting on 24 August 2023.

F23/24.045 Adjournment for questions from the public: There were no members of the public present so the meeting was not adjourned.

F23/24.046 Parish Council Financial Monitoring for Month 5 (August 2023): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £32,790.09 (EX VAT).
- (ii) Receipts of £46,041.46 (VAT N/A). This includes a £40,000 top up from the savings account.
- (iii) Bank Reconciliations. These were signed by Vice-Chair, Cllr Jackson.
- (iv) Balance Sheet. It was noted that fixed assets do not sit on the Balance Sheet but are included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).
- (v) Nominal Ledger.
- (vi) Income and Expenditure. A half year analysis will be prepared for the October Committee meeting.
- (vii) The funds held in CCLA shares on 31 August 2023 of £102,826.36.
- (viii) The deposits and investments accounts on 31 August 2023 were as follows, and it was:

Financial Institution	Account Type	Maturity Date
Unity Trust	Current Account	N/A
Unity Trust	Savings Account	N/A
Nationwide	95 Day Savings Account	95 Days notice
Cambridge & Counties BS	1 Year Fixed Term Bond	22/06/2024
Cambridge & Counties BS	1 Year Fixed Term Bond	28/11/2023
United Trust Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	19/12/2023
Redwood Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	17/02/2024

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREED** the Parish Council financial monitoring for Month 5 (August 2023).

F23/24.047 Village Centre Financial Monitoring for Month 5 (August 2023): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £1,253.71 (VAT N/A). A £1263.25 refund from SSE Scottish Hydro was noted.
- (ii) Receipts of £976.20 (VAT N/A).
- (iii) Bank Reconciliations. These were signed by Vice-Chair, Cllr Jackson.
- (iv) Balance Sheet.
- (v) Income and Expenditure.
- (vi) Bank accounts held on 31 August 2023 were i) CAF Cash Current Account and ii) CAF Gold Savings Account. Maturity dates do not apply, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Village Centre financial monitoring for Month 5 (August 2023).

F23/24.048: Parish Action Plan: The Committee reviewed the:

- i) **the Finance & Governance Action Plan:** The Committee agreed to send a reminder to those councillors that have not completed their training, and to add a review of the Emergency Plan to include the Parish Council's Winter Plan and what WSCC and MSDC do.
- ii) **the Estates & Facilities Action Plan:** The Committee noted the update regarding the drainage plans for Reeds Lane Recreation Ground and the ordinary watercourse consent that is now required from WSCC. Two Noticeboards have now been installed in Hurst Meadows, the third location is yet to be agreed. Advice is being sought on countryside stewardship grants that might be available to help fund the maintenance of Hurst Meadows. A liaison meeting has been arranged with the new Lost Woods Project Manager. Other discussions concerned the future of Cemetery provision and the crack in the brickwork above the Chapel workshop door, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the updated Action Plans for 2023/2024.

F23/24.049: Internal Auditors Engagement: The Committee considered the letter of engagement which proposed appointing Mulberry & Co as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 and recommend their appointment to Council. The length of engagement with the same internal auditor was queried, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council the appointment of Mulberry & Co as the Parish Council's Internal Auditor for 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026.

F23/24.050: Internal Controls: The Committee reviewed the findings from the September 2023 internal controls exercise including the recommendation to include an insurance/replacement value uplift on the 31 March 2024 asset register. An assessment of the value of the Parish Council's contents at all sites will be estimated to confirm whether the Insurance cover is adequate. A recommendation may also be made at November's Committee meeting to amend the delegations to the Clerk for purchases below a certain value. The Committee agreed to recommend the adoption of the Internal Controls to Council, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to assess the value of contents and if necessary include an insurance/replacement value uplift on the 31 March 2024 asset register, and to recommend the adoption of the Internal Controls by Council.

F23/24.051: Court Bushes Container Project: The Committee considered a briefing note setting out the proposals for the purchase of a storage container for Court Bushes Community Hub Car Park. The Committee favoured the purchase and installation of a new 20 foot ex-shipping container including the ground works and electrical connection at a cost of £10,055. A quote for additional electrical work was requested and a reduction in the purchases of twelve cages to six was proposed. It was agreed to recommend the purchase to Council in October 2023, once the half year financial picture was known, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council in October 2023, the purchase, delivery and installation of a new (one-trip) 20 foot ex-shipping container including the ground works and additional electrical works, plus six cages, as the total value is expected to be over £10,000.

F23/24.052: Estates & Facilities Update: The Committee received an update report on Estates & Facilities Management. The Committee noted that the two memorial oaks trees and one walnut tree were being delivered on 26 September 2023 and are due to be planted on 17 October 2023. The Hurstpierpoint Society has been informed as one of the oak trees is to commemorate the life of the founder Lady Barnes. The volunteer raking days in the orchard had been very successful and the orchard is being added to the official English Heritage Orchards Register. The results of the fixed wire testing at the Village Centre shows 27 items in categories two and three (one being urgent) and quotes will be provided for the next Trustees meeting. The white wooden finger posts signs have been assessed with the post at the Sportsman Pub , Goddards Green requiring at least £540 spend on 122 new letters. The preparations for the festive lighting continue with the structural test results awaited, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the Estates & Facilities Management update report.

F23/24.053: To note any further information items, correspondence received or requests.

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 21.38.

Chair