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MINUTES of the Meeting of the FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Thursday 17 October 2024 at the Hurstpierpoint Village Centre.

Members present: Duncan Ranger (Chair) Claire Majsai (via Teams) Julia Shorrocks
Malcolm Llewellyn Rodney Jackson Annette Street

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

F24/25.040: Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr David Evans, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **ACCEPTS** the apologies for absence from Cllr Evans.

F24/25.041: Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

F24/25.042: Previous Minutes: The Committee considered the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting on 15 August and noted the September meeting was cancelled as it was not quorate, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREED** the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting held on 15 August 2024 and **NOTED** the 19 September 2024 meeting was cancelled.

F24/25.043: Adjournment for questions from the public: There were no members of the public present.

F24/25.044: Parish Council Financial Monitoring for Month 5 (August 2024): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £26,881.73 (EX VAT). This included July salaries but did not include August salaries
- (ii) Receipts of £51,756.00 (VAT N/A). This included £44,854.26 of S106 funds for the Drainage Project.
- (iii) Bank Reconciliations. These would be signed by Vice-Chair Cllr Street.
- (iv) Income and Expenditure.
- (v) The funds held in CCLA shares on 31 August 2024 were £108,331.54, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREED** the Parish Council financial monitoring for Month 5 (August 2024).

F24/25.045: Parish Council Financial Monitoring for Month 6 (September 2024): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £54,071.42 (EX VAT). This included August and September salaries.
Receipts of £188,194.16 (VAT N/A). This included the second half of the year precept payment of £159,080.
- (ii) Bank Reconciliations. These would be signed by Vice-Chair Cllr Street.
- (iii) Balance Sheet.
- (iv) Income and Expenditure.
- (v) Nominal Ledger.
- (vi) Q2 VAT Claim 30 September 2024.
- (vii) The funds held in CCLA shares on 30 September 2024 were £108,794.95.
- (viii) The deposits and investments accounts on 30 September 2024 were noted, 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	24/06/2024
Cambridge & Counties BS	1 Year Fixed Term Bond	28/11/2024
United Trust Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	19/12/2024
Redwood Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	01/03/2025

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Parish Council financial monitoring for Month 6 (September 2024).

F24/25.046: Village Centre Financial Monitoring for Month 5 (August 2024): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £4,345.81 (VAT N/A).
- (ii) Receipts of £1,198.80 (VAT N/A).
- (iii) Bank Reconciliations. These would be signed by Vice-Chair Cllr Street.
- (iv) Balance Sheet.
- (v) Income and Expenditure, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Village Centre financial monitoring for Month 5 (August 2024).

F24/25.047: Village Centre Financial Monitoring for Month 6 (September 2024): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £8,106.99 (VAT N/A).
- (ii) Receipts of £6,916.16 (VAT N/A).
- (iii) Bank Reconciliations. These would be signed by Vice-Chair Cllr Street.
- (iv) Balance Sheet.
- (v) Income and Expenditure.
- (vi) Bank accounts held 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 6 (September 2024).

F24/25.048: Parish Action Plan: The Committee reviewed the:

- (i) the Finance & Governance Action Plan: The Committee noted the Action Plan and progress against tasks. A questionnaire was being drafted for the Parish Strategy and an update will be given at Council. Despite reminders, a number of councillors have still not completed their training agreed by the Parish Council. Those that have completed their training will be named and added to the internal controls document. It was discussed whether to expand the training requirement to, for example Chairs of Committees, or those on the Planning Committee.
- (ii) the Estates & Facilities Action Plan: The Committee noted the Action Plan and progress against tasks. Two of the four new benches in Hurst Meadows will have backs. Securing grants for Hurst Meadows is proceeding as quickly as the Government timescales permit. The Bin Audit will remain on the Action Plan until fully completed. Work is proceeding to agree the new play equipment for Reeds Lane Recreation Ground, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the updated Action Plans for 2024/2025.

F24/25.049: Estates & Facilities Update: The Committee noted the very comprehensive update report and progress to date regarding plans for a Christmas Tree for Sayers Common. Cllr Llewelyn reported a broken Speed Indicator Device on Wickham Hill, and it was:

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

F24/25.050: Reeds Lane Ephemeral Pond Fencing: The Committee considered a briefing note on the proposal to fence in the ponds at Reeds Lane Recreation Ground, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the appointment of Greenscene Landscapes to install post and rail fencing around both ephemeral ponds in Reeds Lane Recreation Ground, at a total cost of £3,633.00 plus VAT and to reclaim the funds from S106 Contributions. The Committee also AGREED the purchase 2 x padlocks and 3 x safety signs (with new logos) at a total cost of £91.46.

F24/25.051: Tree Works 2024/25: The Committee considered a briefing note on tree works required resulting from the surveys of the Recreation Ground trees, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the tree works required resulting from the surveys of the Recreation Ground trees at a total cost of £6,010.00 plus VAT.

F24/25.052: Review of 2023/24 External Audit Report: The Committee noted the External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2024 accounts and agreed to recommend it to Council for adoption, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the External Auditor's (Moore West Sussex) Certificate for the 31 March 2024 accounts and AGREED to recommend it to Council for adoption.

F24/25.053: Internal Controls and Asset Register: The Committee reviewed the internal controls completed in September 2024 and noted the updated asset register, and that the Asset Register Policy will be reviewed in May 2025, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend the September 2024 Internal Controls and updated Asset Register to Council for adoption.

F24/25.054: Parish Council Half Year Financial Analysis: The Committee reviewed and assessed the Parish Council's financial position at the half year stage. The actual spend left in the Professional Support budget code will be confirmed. A fuller review of the costs of Court Bushes would be useful to be clear whether the Parish Council wishes to transfer funds into the Court Bushes "end of lease" Earmarked Reserve. A review of all the National Non-Domestic Rates that the Parish Council pays may result in a switch of the one building the Parish Council chooses to claim relief on, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Parish Council Half Year Financial Analysis.

F24/25.055: Village Centre Half Year Financial Analysis: The Committee reviewed and assessed the Village Centre's financial position at the half year stage. There were no specific recommendations for the Trustees but the cleaning and utility costs will be monitored to try to avoid over-spending, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Village Centre Half Year Financial Analysis.

F24/25.056: Internal Audit: The Committee considered the report of the first internal audit of 2024/2025, which took place on 7 October 2024 and noted there were no improvements required. The General Reserves figure of £126,000 on page 7 will be clarified. The Auditor had called the systems the clerk has put in place "a model of exemplary good practice and it is especially encouraging to see the councillors taking an active role in reviewing internal controls, this is to be applauded", and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the first internal audit of 2024/2025 and AGREED to recommend it to Council for adoption.

F24/25.057: Budget and Precept Setting Timetable: The Committee reviewed the proposed timetable, principles and assumptions to commence the budget setting exercise for 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The CPI figure will be amended to September 2024's "excluding owner occupiers' housing costs", at a rate of 1.7%. The detailed definition of the use of Reserves only for one-off expenditure or capital items will be clarified, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Budget and Precept Setting Timetable, as amended, and to recommend it to Council for adoption.

F24/25.058: To note any further information items, correspondence received or requests. There were no further items.

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 9.10pm.

Chair