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MINUTES of the Meeting of the FINANCE, GOVERNANCE & ESTATES COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Thursday 20 February 2025 at the Sayers Common Village Hall.

Members present: Cllr Duncan Ranger (Chair) Cllr Claire Majsai
Cllr Malcolm Llewellyn Cllr Annette Street
Cllr Rodney Jackson

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

F24/25.095: Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were received from Cllr David Evans and Cllr Julia Shorrocks, and it was:

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

F24/25.096: Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

F24/25.097: Previous Minutes: The Committee considered the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting on 16 January 2025, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee **AGREED** the minutes of the Finance, Governance & Estates Committee meeting held on 16 January 2025.

F24/25.098: Adjournment for questions from the public: There were no members of the public present.

F24/25.099: Parish Council Financial Monitoring for Month 10 (January 2025): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £13,660.48 (EX VAT). This did not include the January 2025 salaries.
- (ii) Receipts of £19,269.90 (VAT N/A). This included the Q3 VAT claim of £9,721.08.
- (iii) Bank Reconciliations. These were signed by Cllr Street.
- (iv) Balance Sheet.
- (v) Income and Expenditure.
- (vi) Nominal Ledger.
- (vii) The funds held in CCLA shares on 31 January 2025 were £110,577.15.
- (viii) The deposits and investments accounts on 31 January 2025 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	27/11/2025
United Trust Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	19/12/2024
Redwood Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	01/03/2025

- (ix) The Committee considered the renewal offer from the Redwood Bank for the account that matures on 1 March 2025 of 4.5% plus other available savings accounts. The Committee agreed to close the Redwood Bank account and reinvest the £100,000 for 12 months with the Hampshire Trust Bank at a fixed interest rate of 4.36%, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Parish Council financial monitoring for Month 10 (January 2025); and to close the Redwood Bank Account and invest £100,000 with the Hampshire Trust Bank for 12 months with a fixed interest rate of 4.36%.

F24/25.100: Village Centre Financial Monitoring for Month 10 (January 2025): The Committee noted:

- (i) Payments of £1,386.75 (VAT N/A).
- (ii) Receipts of £3,256.40 (VAT N/A).
- (iii) Bank Reconciliations. These were signed by 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 10 (January 2025).

F24/25.101: Reserves Policy: The Committee reviewed the Reserves Policy and agreed to recommend its re-adoption to Council, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the Reserves Policy and to recommend it to Council for re-adoption.

F24/25.102: Savings and Investments Policy: The Committee reviewed the Savings and Investments Policy. The Committee acknowledged that the 2025/26 budget would most likely exceed the 500,000 Euro limit (subject to exchange rates at the time) to qualify for the Financial Services Compensation Scheme protection (up to £85,000 in each account) and the Policy would need re-wording accordingly. The Committee therefore agreed not to recommend its re-adoption to Council until the Policy was updated, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED that the Savings and Investments Policy required additional work and not to recommend it to Council for adoption at this time.

F24/25.103: Parish Action Plan: The Committee reviewed the:

- (i) The Finance & Governance Action Plan: The Committee noted the actions and progress against the 2024/25 Action Plan. The Committee considered the draft action plan for 2025/26 which would include a new reference to devolution under the Parish Strategy action, an expansion of the councillor training item with reference to a new Learning and Development Policy, plus an item to monitor the development of the new MSDC District Plan with reference to its impact on updating the Parish Neighbourhood Plan.
- (ii) The Estates & Facilities Action Plan: The Committee noted the 2024/25 Action Plan and progress against tasks. The Committee noted that the draft action plan for 2025/26 contained reference to the key actions required but the content will be developed further.

The Committee noted progress against the 2024/25 Action Plans and considered the draft Action Plans 2025/26 based on the new budget, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the updated Action Plans for 2024/2025 and the draft Action Plans for 2025/26 that were in development.

F24/25.104: Estates & Facilities Update: The Committee noted the very comprehensive update report. Cllr Llewellyn praised the Maintenance Officer for the work done to clear the ditches near Bellows Nose but noted the stone path through Bellows Nose was becoming over-grown and may need cutting back so it remained 3 metres wide. Cllr Llewellyn also suggested that the Parish Council logo, similar to the ones produced for the Green Circle signs, were attached to the wooden finger post signs. The results of the latest Speed Indicator Device data would be fed into the relevant Sussex Police Officer. The repairs to the Nursery staff toilets at Court Bushes Community Hub was in hand, and it was:

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

F24/25.105: Hurst Meadows Working Group: The Committee noted the 6 February 2025 minutes of the Hurst Meadows Working Group, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the 6 February 2025 minutes of the Hurst Meadows Working Group.

F24/25.106: Streetlight Testing: The Committee considered a briefing note seeking the appointment of a contractor to carry out structural testing of the Parish Council streetlights, village signs and flagpole. The Committee agreed to appoint Intratest at a cost of £1,712.50 plus VAT for structural testing of the Parish Council streetlights. The Committee agreed not to appoint House of Flags for flagpole testing, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the appointment of Intratest at a cost of £1,712.50 plus VAT for structural testing of the Parish Council streetlights.

F24/25.107: To note any further information items, correspondence received or requests.

F24/25.107.1: Methodist Church: The Clerk gave a verbal update on the old Methodist Church which had not sold at auction on 6 February 2025.

There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

Chair