



Studley Parish Council

Minutes of Finance Committee meeting

29th April 2021, 7.30pm online via zoom

Committee members present Cllrs A Smith, J Beard, S Redman, C Summers

In attendance Cllrs B Dixon, M Osborne, P Hencher-Serafin (arrived at 8pm)
(Non-committee members of the council)
Gill Lungley, Acting Clerk/RFO; Linda Stanton, Assistant Clerk

Min #F021 Agenda item 1 - Election of Chairman

Cllr A Smith was elected Chairman.

Min #F022 Agenda item 2 – Election of vice-Chairman

Cllr J Beard was elected vice-Chairman

Min #F023 Agenda item 3 - Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr P Beaman (work commitments)

Min #F024 Agenda item 4 - Declarations of Interest

None.

Min #F025 Agenda item 5 - Record of grant of dispensation following declaration of DPI / ORI

None

Min #F026 Agenda item 6 - Public Forum

No non-committee member wished to speak.

Min #F027 Agenda item 7 - Approval of draft minutes from previous meeting

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the committee meeting held 23/02/2021 as a true record of what took place.

Min #F028 Agenda item 8 - Updated financial information from the RFO for noting

- End of financial year budget comparison if available
 - Not yet available
- Latest bank reconciliation if available to 31/03/2021
 - Not yet available
- Latest position regarding NDO / Community Development Grant
 - This had been provided by Cllr P Beaman to the council meeting held the previous evening; there had been little movement since his report to this committee on 23/02/2021.
- Latest position regarding the general grants budget and allocations
 - The allocation of s137 monies ie money spent on doing something for which the council has no other power to spend, needed to be revised for the year-end to ensure it was not misrepresentational.
- Latest position regarding the insurance claim for Loss of a Key worker
 - The insurance broker had advised there would be no payout to cover the extra costs incurred as a result of the loss of keyworker.

- Progress of Internal Audit
 - The internal auditor was making progress and the report with recommendations is expected imminently.

Min #F029 Agenda item 9 - To recommend approval of overtime payment to Assistant Clerk

At meeting held 17/02/2021 the council's Staffing Committee resolved to recommend approval of payment of 18 hours of overtime to the Assistant Clerk accrued over November 2020 – January 2021.

RESOLVED to recommend approval of payment of 18 hours of overtime to the Assistant Clerk accrued over November 2020 – January 2021.

Min #F030 Agenda item 10 - To receive and decide grant requests from:

- Studley Scout Group**
- Aunty Jen Productions**

a) **Studley Scout Group.** The Scouts request for £1,500 grant funds to improve the building (installation of an access ramp) would not be supported via the council's grant scheme criteria, however it was **RESOLVED** to recommend to council that it supports the provision of a ramp subject to clarification of building ownership and landlord duties. It was noted the council does not have the budget this year to award a grant of this nature.

b) **Aunty Jen Productions.** Aunty Jen Productions' request for £500 grant was supported. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend payment of £500 grant to support the provision of workshops and performances of 'Romeo and Juliet' to all schools in the local area.

Min #F031 Agenda item 11 - To discuss current banking arrangements and consider alternatives to allow internet banking.

The current payment process is by cheque which is not welcomed by payees, incurs postage costs and is not time effective.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend the move to internet banking using a bank that has appropriate council-required checks in place so that at least three people are involved in the payment process and there is a clear separation of duties.

Min #F032 Agenda item 12 - To receive JPAG advice relating to website and councillor email addresses

The updated practitioners' guide issued by the Joint Panel for Accountability and Governance (JPAG) recommends councils use the GOV.UK suffix for their websites and appropriately secure email accounts for all council members and staff.

Members expressed concerns relating to use of the email accounts via gmail and associated Chromebooks, that they felt were not sufficiently secure or robust enough for the work required of them.

It was also noted the existing website is not accessibility compliant (now a legal requirement) and the website providers have stated they will need to provide a new website in order to provide compliance.

An idea of the comparative costs would be required for the different email accounts and website provision, which would be obtained if possible for the council meeting on 18/05/2021.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend changing from the free g-mail accounts to a more secure system using .org.uk via the IT provider in the short-term. The quote from the IT provider of £340pa is for 13 email accounts and to reset the Chromebooks to default setting.

Min #F033 Agenda item 13 - To consider whether to renew zoom subscription on an annual or monthly basis

After 07/05/2021 councillors attending council meetings must be present in the same room. During the ongoing coronavirus restrictions up to 21/06/2021 at the earliest that even if a room is found large enough to accommodate all council members and staff whilst allowing for social distancing, it is unlikely that members of the public would be allowed in the meetings. As members of the public are entitled to be present at meetings, then it would be possible to live-stream the meeting using the zoom software.

It was **RESOLVED** to subscribe to zoom for one year for £119 to allow for online participation; the account to be managed by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk.

Min #F034 Agenda item 14 - To agree replacement of lantern and internal control gear at footpath light column 4, Allendale Crescent

It was **RESOLVED** to replace the lantern and internal control gear at footpath light column 4, Allendale Crescent. The contractor would be notified.

Min #F035 Agenda item 15 - To agree to prepare finance-related policies

- Risk Management Policy
- Internal Controls arrangements
- Balance and Reserves Policy
- Loan Policy
- Investments Policy (review and update if necessary)

It was **RESOLVED** to prepare the above policies for ratification by the council.

Min #F036 Agenda item 16 - Date and time of the next Finance Committee meeting will be agreed at the Annual Council meeting to be held on 4th May 2021.

It was agreed to also recommend the council adopts a calendar of council and committee meetings.

This meeting ended at 21:25hrs

Signed Date.....
Chairman, Finance Committee