



Studley Parish Council Minutes of Finance Committee meeting 27th July 2021, 6.30pm Council chamber, Studley Village Hall

Committee members present Cllrs A Smith (Chairman), J Beard (vice-Chairman),
M Osborne, C Summers

...and not present Cllr P Beaman

In attendance Cllr D Collett (Non-committee councillor)
Gill Lungley, Acting Clerk/RFO

Min #F064 Agenda item 1 – Welcome from the Chairman
The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Min #F065 Agenda item 2 - Apologies
Apologies were received from Cllr P Beaman (other commitments)

Min #F066 Agenda item 3 - Declarations of Interest
None.

Min #F067 Agenda item 4 - Grant of dispensation following DPI / ORI declaration
None

Min #F068 Agenda item 5 - Public Forum
No representation.

Min #F069 Agenda item 6 - Approval of draft minutes from previous meeting
RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the committee meeting held 21/06/2021
as a true record of proceedings.

Min #F070 Agenda item 7 – Updates from the Clerk/RFO

- a) Un-used IT equipment
A router and supporting wi-fi equipment purchased by the council in 2016 had not been installed and had been stored away instead. It appears the village hall had at the same time obtained grant funding to install their own system which is also used by the council. Members were asked to advise on disposal of the equipment.
- b) Cemetery committee expenditure
The Cemetery committee wish to carry out a small amount of tree surgery and had agreed to ask this committee for approval to do so, however as the budget information is now made available regularly to the committee, it should be free to work within its budget and terms of reference without having to seek such approval. Quotes for the work would not be necessary as they are deemed to be a variation to the grounds maintenance contract.

Min #F071 1st quarter budget review
The budget for the first three months of the financial year was reviewed and members agreed to vire;

- a. £15,000 from the general reserve to cover future staffing costs.
- b. £11,500 from 's137 grants' to a new 'Grants' budget heading (as not all grants may be allocated to s137 expenditure), leaving £600 as 's137'.

Min #F072 Agenda item 9 – To review the Governance Action Plan

Action reference 1a – review of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

- a. The current standing orders require adjustment to paragraphs 18f and 18g to revise the value limits in accordance with public contracts regulations. The Acting Clerk will edit and present to council for approval.
- b. The Financial Regulations are to be similarly edited and presented to council for approval.

Action reference 2 – implementation of improved operating practices and control process:

- c. Members are to undertake quarterly checks of the bookkeeping.
- d. During the 3rd quarter, each committee is to be asked to provide their budget requirements for the coming year to inform the council's annual budget and assist the precept-setting process.
- e. For insurance, there was a question as to whether the parish council insures the village hall, in compliance with the lease.
- f. For asset management, Cllrs A Smith, C Summers and A Rainbow would meet to review all leases to ensure they are being complied with appropriately and to check all assets are being appropriately managed.
- g. For the procurement process and record management, office procedures have been introduced to enable a clear audit trail from decision to purchase in compliance with Financial Regulations, via receipt of quotes (when required), council or committee minuted decision, purchase order, receipt of goods, council record of approval of payments list, signed record of payment and bank statement.
- h. Regular budget monitoring with a report to be published at least quarterly.
- i. On-going risk awareness.

Min #F073 Agenda item 10 – Update on street lighting contract / tender and agree next steps.

The current contract was to have terminated in April 2021 but this was put back, in agreement with the current contractor, to September 2021. A tender document was prepared and it was intended this would start in September 2021, however despite being issued to seven contractors, not one was returned. Feedback from several of the contractors indicated the document was more complex than the size of the contract warranted and that some of the obligations within it were not achievable.

It was agreed to:

- a) Approach Warwickshire CC street lighting department for assistance in this matter, and
- b) Speak to current contractor to request further extension to current contract.

Min #F074 Agenda item 11 – Update on renewal of website

The current website needs to be upgraded to ensure compliance with the accessibility regulations; the current provider on being asked if the current website can be brought up to standard, advised a new site is required. Members discussed the advice contained in the Practitioners' Guide regarding the merits of a GOV.UK website and associated email.

It was agreed to seek three quotations for a GOV.UK website that will comply with the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 and at the same time to provide a related GOV.UK email address for each council member and member of staff.

Min #F075 Agenda item 12 – To note position of all council policies including review dates.

This continues as work in progress, however it was agreed to review the following five policies at the next meeting of this committee:

- Grants and Donations
- Loans
- Investment
- Reserves and Balances
- Marking the death of a senior national figure

Min #F076 Agenda item 13 – To note and suggest items for the next agenda

To review progress with cemetery matters
 Continue with policy reviews
 Assess website progress
 Assess position with street lighting contract
 Review the position with regard to insurance cover

Members were asked to consider what to do with unused IT equipment that had been found in the stock cupboard; it was suggested that the Chairman of the Village Hall committee should be asked to explain the position as it would appear the village hall and the parish council had both bought IT equipment at the same time in 2016 for the same purpose, thereby rendering the council's equipment, totalling £642 with installation costs of £600, redundant and unused. However, it had not been returned for a refund or sold on and was most probably now out of date.

Min #F077 Agenda item 14 - Date and time of next Finance Committee meeting

It was agreed to meet as scheduled on 22/09/2021.

This meeting ended at 8.25pm

Signed Date.....
 Chairman, Finance Committee