

Minutes of a Meeting of the FINANCE COMMITTEE**Held in the Council Offices on Tuesday, 3rd December 2024, commencing at 6.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr. R. Kellaway (Chairman)
Cllrs. B. Perry, M. Brar and H. Pleming
D. Kanthi (Clerk) and H. Holder (Locum Minute Taker)
No members of the press or public were present resulting in no open forum

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were noted for Cllrs T. Caen, M. Howard, J. Moore and A-L. Regan.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

3. To approve the minutes of the meeting of 22nd October 2024

These were **approved**.

4. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on this agenda

There were none.

5. To note the resignation of the Chairman as RFO and the appointment of the Clerk as RFO

The resignation of the Chairman as Responsible Financial Officer was noted and the Clerk, Deepa Kanthi, was **appointed** as the new Responsible Financial Officer by unanimous decision.

6. To review the internal auditor's interim report

Mrs. Holder reported that the Internal Auditor had undertaken an interim audit just before the new Clerk started her duties. He was happy with the revised financial record keeping but had commented that it was important to ensure every financial decision taken at a meeting recorded where the monies were to be taken from if it was outside its budget – that is, either from Reserves or General Funds. He also emphasised the importance of avoiding accruals and of careful record keeping for allotment receipts.

7. To agree the budget for 2025/26

The Chairman had prepared and circulated the proposed budget for 2025/26. He explained that most items would roll on from previous years expenditure and income with inflationary increases but that specific and substantial provision had been made to allow for projects to improve the allotments and the Alfred Major Recreation Ground identified by Cllrs. Pleming and Edwards. Following discussion the budget was unanimously **approved**. The budget was designed to result in a substantial deficit based on the rate of the Precept for the 2024/25 financial year.

8. To agree the Parish Precept for 2025/26

The Chairman outlined the need to increase the Precept to help reduce the projected deficit. He recommended an increase in the Precept of 5% to the sum of £168,196. He noted that the tax base had increased from 2955.4 to 2961.92. Accordingly, the amount of tax the average Band D householder in the Parish would pay would increase from £54.07 to £56.79 for the year 2025/26. This was **agreed**.

9. To approve the tender document for the Grounds Maintenance contract

Cllrs. B. Perry and H. Pleming had recently submitted comments which would need working through. It was **agreed** to recommend to Council that they be tasked with finalising the document with a view to starting the tender process by the end of the week if possible.

10. To approve the revised Risk Management Policy document

This had been circulated prior to the meeting and was unanimously **approved**.

11. Any other business for which no decisions can be made

The Chairman moved that from the New Year there was only a need to have two scheduled meetings a year – namely in June to finalise the audit and in December to approve the budget and precept.

The meeting closed at 7pm.