



FAIR OAK & HORTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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**Minutes of the FINANCE COMMITTEE meeting held on
Monday 10 July 2023 at 10.00am
at the Fair Oak Parish Office, 2 Knowle Park Lane, Fair Oak**

P – present, Pt – part of the meeting, Ab – absent, Ap – apologies.

P	Cllr Barrett	Ap	Cllr Forfar
P	Cllr Douglas (Chair)	Ap	Cllr Higby
Ab	Cllr Chivuchi	Ap	Cllr Marsh
P	Cllr Couldrey	P	Cllr Tennent

Officers in attendance:

Joanna Cahill, Responsible Finance Office and Melanie Stephens, Clerk

PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public were present.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

2 MINUTES OF MEETINGS (PAPER A)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023 be noted.

3 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next meeting.

4 QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING (REPORT B)

The Committee considered the Parish Council's current financial position against the approved 2023/24 budgets.

The total budget agreed by the Council for the 23/24 financial year was £605,130.

The Finance Officer and Deputy Clerk were currently investigating electricity charges across all sites due to higher-than-expected charges and discrepancies in invoices. An action plan which included installation of smart meters across all sites, online billing, change in tariffs and contracts was in place and would be shared with members. Staff were also investigating cost of additional solar panels and battery storage at the Parish Offices to support the electric vehicles and hand-held machinery.

Members were also informed of an oversight in the budget. Unfortunately, the splashpad maintenance budget had not been included in this years' allocation.

The Finance Officer explained that these costs could be covered by using the additional income from interest rates. The Council had received £4,273 for interest income for the first 3 months of the financial year against a full-year budget of £3,000 and was on track to receive approximately £17k for the full financial year. This was supported by members.

The Chairman requested, for transparency, that a one-off grass cutting in part of her field would be undertaken at her property. This work would be fully invoiced at the usual rate and would be paid in full.

The Chairman announced that due to the Council's involvement in the resurfacing of the car park to the Twynams cottages, the costs for the retrospective planning application would be met by the Council and take out of general reserves. All members supported this suggested.

RESOLVED:

That latest budget position as at 30 June 2023 be noted.

5 FINANCE RISK ASSESSMENT (REPORT C)

The Committee considered the Council's Finance Risk Assessment.

RESOLVED:

That the Finance Risk Assessment be approved.

6 FINANCES REGULATIONS (REPORT D)

The Committee reviewed the Council's Finance Regulations.

RECOMMENDED:

That the Council adopt the Finance Regulations set out in Report D.

7 STAFF RECOGNITION AWARDS (REPORT E)

The Committee considered suggested amendments to the staff recognition award policy which included an additional layer of review by the Chairman and Clerk as part of the annual appraisal process.

Members supported the changes but suggested that rather than have awards come

sporadically throughout the year, the Clerk bring all proposals annually, to the March meeting at the end of the financial year and following completion of the appraisal process.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the suggested changes be approved; and
- b) That all allocations be considered at agreed annually at the March Finance Committee meeting.

8 STAFF BENEFITS

The Clerk had, under instruction from the Chairman, undertaken a desk-top exercise of the cost of BUPA for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk as well as other benefits to all employees such as reduced rates for Council services and cost of staff eye tests.

Members requested that further investigation be undertaken with regard to BUPA including costs of tax contributions.

Members were happy to support the costs of staff sight tests and a 25% discount on Council services such as hall hire, allotments & tennis.

RESOLVED:

- a. That the Clerk investigate BUPA costs for update at the next Committee meeting; and
- b. That additional staff benefits be approved to include the costs of staff sight tests and a 25% discount on Council services such as hall hire, allotments & tennis.

9 STAFF TOIL/OVERTIME

The Finance Officer reported that the way in which staff toil/overtime was being managed needed review as different approaches were being undertaken for Operations and Admin staff in that all overtime recorded on timesheets for Operations staff was being paid, whereas overtime for admin staff was just being logged and take as time off in lieu.

In order to have a standard and fair approach for all staff, the Clerk was asked to undertake a benchmarking exercise to ascertain how other Town and Parish Council's manage staff overtime and report back to the next Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk undertake a benchmarking exercise to ascertain how other Town and Parish Council's manage staff overtime and report back to the next Committee meeting.

10 BANK MANDATE

RESOLVED:

That all Finance Committee members and Senior Officers be signatories for the Council's bank mandate.

11 WORK PROGRAMME (REPORT F)

Members requested that an additional meeting be scheduled in September due to the additional actions for officers arising from the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the work programme is noted; and
- (b) That an additional meeting be scheduled at the beginning of September 2023.

Signed.....Chairman

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