



## **DRAFT MINUTES OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024, 10.00am, The Hub**

**In attendance:**

**Parish Councillors:** Cllr Sylvia Holyoake, Cllr Ian Joynson (Chair), Cllr Paul Martin, Cllr Peter Mantle.

**Public:** None

**Clerk:** Clare Male

1) **APOLOGIES** – all present.

2) **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Members are invited to declare a previously undisclosed interest relating to any item on the agenda and to ask for a dispensation to vote on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest or other non-financial interests – none.

3) **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** – Agreed the accuracy of the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting of the **14<sup>th</sup> November 2023**. Signed by the Chair.

4) **PUBLIC FORUM** – no members of the public were present.

5) **MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION** – none.

6) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

As at the 14th March 2024 noted bank balances of:

i) Unity Bank current account	£2,247.86
ii) Unity Bank instant access saver	£33,487.95
iii) Redwood Bank	£10,000.00
iv) CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund	£88,114.68
Total in bank	£133,850.49
Wherry Gardens 10-year maintenance fund	£83,869.00
General reserves	£30,000.00
<b>Working balance</b>	<b>£19,981.49</b>

Last bank reconciliation was at Full Council and with the introduction of Scribe these will now take place monthly at Full Council.

7) **END OF FINANCIAL YEAR & AUDIT**

a) Reviewed figures approaching financial year end. Net underspend of c£20K – issue is lack of Councillors to run projects and undertake smaller maintenance task. Agreed there needs to be a shift to paying contractors to do work such as repairing benches and weeding.

Receipts – about 5% (c£5K) less than budgeted. “Interest” and “other receipts” below the forecast. In “interest” this is due to a smaller amount of cash being deposited into the Redwood bond as previously anticipated and the interest not paying out until the end of the 2-year term. In other receipts the Parish Partnership (NCC) funding for a new SAM2 has yet to be announced, which may now fall in the next financial year. Clerk needs to resolve issue within Scribe with receipting VAT before end of financial year.

Payments – overall underspent by 22% (£24,571.69). All cost centres underspent, except “street spaces” which was over budget. This is due to a long-standing issue with invoices for bin emptying which resulted in last financial years invoice being paid this year. Footway lighting is also overspent due to energy costs. In “Recreational Spaces” the Caen Meadow budget was overspent due to repeated vandalism and work to the main gate. This was balanced out by an underspend on emergency tree work. The “Wherry Gardens” revenue budget was underspent due a lot of project work being undertaken as this is the first year of adoption. It is likely to take another year before there is a proper understanding of costs. In “Administration” we are overspent on IT support and subscriptions. IT support is due to escalating cloud storage and email costs which will be addressed next year. Subscriptions is due to two years’ worth of support service subscriptions being paid this year. Grants is 50% underspent (£500) due to a lack of local applications. Agreed to carry over remainder. Employment costs are on budget. Projects were very underspent due to the lack of Councillors and Clerk time. See update below.

- b) Agreed to appoint Dave Crimmins of Heelis & Lodge as this year’s internal auditor. PKF Littlejohn are this year’s external auditor. Deadline for submission for 23/24 accounts is the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024. Clerk will bring audit to Full Council in May. **ACTION CLERK**

## 8) ACTION PLAN UPDATE

- a) 23/24 ongoing projects update:
- i) Wherry gardens adoption (supplementary sum) – £9724 (82%) spent on grit bin, noticeboard and tree works. Outstanding work to reseed grass where leylandii has been removed and removing grass around trees in public open spaces as per tree report. To carry over remainder of this budget and the remaining maintenance budget from this year. To consider a request for a place name sign.
  - ii) Caen Meadow management plan – budget is unspent due to time lag appointing a consultant to undertake the work. This has now begun, and it was agreed to roll the full amount over to the next financial year. However, the amount allocated to next financial year will now be put back into the main pot.
  - iii) Village tree planting – not been able to get agreement to plant trees in public places. One tree still to be planted in St Mary’s Churchyard. Agreed to carry over £100.
  - iv) Tree management – a detailed survey was undertaken, and all the work required in Wherry Gardens has been completed. This has been taken from the Wherry Gardens budget. Agreed to carry over the remainder of this budget to next season. Need to meet and decide on tree works for next winter.
  - v) Village sign & war memorial gardening – to be continued within revenue funding.
  - vi) Replacement SAM2 – still waiting for Parish Partnership grant from NCC.
  - vii) Cemetery extension memorial trees – carry over remaining to pay for hurdles to prevent cars turning on the grass.
- b) 24/25 review potential project list:
- i) Wroxham Neighbourhood Plan review – continue as planned.
  - ii) Castle staithe – Cllr Mantle briefed the Committee on the meeting with the Broads Authority (BA) and the Trafford Estate (TE) following the BA’s decision to withdraw from the staithe from the 1<sup>st</sup> April. Subject to a vote at Council, WPC would be willing to register the land and then lease it to BA at a peppercorn rent. BA agreed to do the quay heading work, maintain the staithe and police it using their staff and byelaws. TE would be prepared to do some minor repairs in the interim. Agreed to budget for legal work to take possession. Clerk to enquire with solicitors. **ACTION CLERK**
  - iii) Churchyard – retaining wall. There are various issues - cracking, bowing and missing flints being the most serious. Surveyor has reviewed the site informally. The biggest problem is it is not possible to see the extent of the work required due to undergrowth. Agreed to get quotes to clear away the undergrowth and then review the wall again. Agreed to allocate the remainder of the budget to this project. **ACTION CLERK**
  - iv) Defib for Wherry Gardens – to be included in the ongoing adoption project work. Cllr Martin to contact Highways for permission to mount a unit on a lamppost and take power. Could apply for a District/County Council grant. **ACTION CLLR MARTIN**

- v) Traffic strategy – Cllr Mantle arranging a presentation. Budget currently focused on the church wall. Keep in the budget but with zero allocation.
- vi) Agnes Gardner King playground – signage and line markings inc basketball hoop – continue as planned.
- vii) Bench refurbishment – Cllr Mantle & Joynson to do a condition survey.  
**ACTION CLLR MANTLE & JOYNSON**
- viii) IT support services – no plans yet.

9) **POLICIES for review and approval**

- a) Expenses policy – Cllr Mantle has written a policy that includes an allowance of £30 per Councillor. Agreed to add this to the members allowance for next financial year. Cllr Mantle to circulate the policy for agreement at Full Council. **ACTION CLLR MANTLE**
- b) Investment policy – agreed to renew as it stands.
- c) Update on Pension policy – have chased Norfolk Pension Fund for support in updating this but not had any response. Clerk feels she is unable to take this any further.

10) **INVESTMENTS** – reviewed investments. At the last meeting we agreed to move additional funds into the Redwood 2-year bond. When the Clerk went to do this, it had closed. Agreed to leave investments as they are for the moment to keep capital free for 24-25 projects. Noted that the CCLA account is now marginally over the £85K limit, agreed to accept the risk.

11) **MULTIPAY CARD** – to agree the Clerks proposal to increase the credit limit from £1,000 to £2,000.

12) **GRANTS** – reviewed a new application from “Making Connections Hoveton and Wroxham”, dementia café at Hoveton village hall. Agreed to donate £250. **ACTION CLERK**

13) **ITEMS FOR NEXT AGENDA – 21st May 2024 at 10.00am**

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