

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday 22nd May 2024, commencing at 7.00 p.m. held in the Ray Skill Room at Northway Community Hub.

Present: Cllr S Terry (Chairman) Cllr J Roberts (Vice Chairman)
 Cllr P Godwin Cllr E MacTiernan
 Cllr K Poole Cllr G Shelton

In Attendance: Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council
 Mrs L Stewart, Clerk's Assistant

FIN/35/24 Election of Committee Chairman

Cllr Godwin PROPOSED that Cllr Terry was elected as Chairman of the Finance Committee for the municipal year. Cllr Terry accepted the nomination. Cllr Shelton SECONDED. There were no other proposals.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/36/24 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

FIN/37/24 Election of Committee Vice-Chairman

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that Cllr Godwin was elected as Vice Chairman of the Finance Committee for the municipal year. Cllr Godwin accepted the nomination. Cllr Barnes SECONDED. There were no other proposals.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/38/24 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest, as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 12th April 2023 (Minute Ref C/85/23), were made.

FIN/39/24 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 (AGAR)

- a. **AGAR Submission** – It was noted that the AGAR was due for submission by Monday 1st July 2024.
- b. **Annual Governance Statement** – Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the following responses to the Statement (detailed below) were recommended to Full Council for approval. Cllr Barnes SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

	Agreed- Yes / No	'Yes' Means that the council:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Yes	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>

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2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Yes	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	Yes	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of elector's rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Yes	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risk, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Yes	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Yes	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Yes	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this smaller authority and, where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements.	Yes	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year-end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity, as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	N/A	<i>has met all of its responsibilities where it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

7.05pm – Cllrs MacTiernan and Poole joined the meeting.

- c. **Accounting Statements** – Members went through the Statements and no issues were raised. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Accounting Statements were recommended to Full Council for approval. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- d. **Accounts / Financial Statements for the Year ended 31 March 2024** – The Financial Statements had been circulated to Members ahead of the meeting. The Clerk pointed out that the Chairman's details were now incorrect, as well as figures relating to the Garden Building, which she would get amended. With these changes in place, Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Accounts/Financial Statements should be recommended to Full Council for approval.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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FIN/39/24 **Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 (AGAR)** (continued)

- e. **Public Rights** – The Clerk informed Members that the period for Public Rights to be displayed in noticeboards and on the website was from 14th June to 25th July 2024.
- f. **Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24** – The Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24 was tabled and no issues were raised. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED approval. Cllr Barnes SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- g. **Further Items** – Cllr Terry thanked the Clerk for her hard work.

FIN/40/24 **IT Support**

The Clerk confirmed that the Council was now in contract with BDR Group for its telephone and broadband supply after they confirmed a good, long-term, working relationship with Openreach (Min Ref: FIN/25/24 refers).

Members received information on IT support packages provided by BDR, PC Rescue and Charlton Networks. Members discussed the benefits of the various quotations and what was offered, as well as costings. It was also noted that PC Rescue had come back with a second quote offering a block of hours on a per-incident basis for smaller clients with lower demands, this would bring the cost down. However, this meant that the Council would not be treated as a priority, which Members felt might be a problem if there were any issues that needed to be addressed urgently. Members also considered the benefits of having IT support provided by the same firm that had already been given the contract for the telephone and broadband package, which was BDR who had also guaranteed no price increase during the term of the contract.

Cllr Roberts asked which company appeared to have the best response times. The Clerk said that BDR Group had, so far, been very fast with their responses to email, although this was no guarantee going forwards.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the Council accepted a three-year contract for IT support with BDR Group at a cost of £70 a month. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/41/24 **Correspondence received after 16th May 2024**

No items had been received.

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 7.27 pm.