

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday, 23rd January 2019, in the Ray Shill Room at Northway Community Hub, commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Cllr J Roberts (Chairman) Cllr Mrs P Godwin
Cllr Mrs E MacTiernan Cllr G Shelton
Cllr S Ward

In Attendance: Cllr P Cox (from Min Ref *FIN/05/19)
Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council

FIN/01/19 Apologies for Absence

Cllrs Mrs D Bailey, Mrs S Terry and A Webber had tendered their apologies. No further apologies for absence were received.

FIN/02/19 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest, as required by the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Council on 11th July 2012 (Minute Ref C/159/12), including paragraph 12(2), were made.

FIN/03/19 Minutes of the Previous Committee

Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting that took place on 24th October 2018 be approved as a true and accurate record. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: Cllr Ward Cllr Shelton
Cllr Roberts

ABSTENTIONS: Cllr Godwin Cllr MacTiernan

FIN/04/19 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

FIN/76/18 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office – Items left in storage were removed by an ex-hirer.

FIN/76/18 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office – Cleaning – A trolley was purchased to help with the caretaking of the building.

FIN/76/18 Accounting Solutions from DCK Beavers – The Clerk used the services of DCK Beavers for additional assistance with the budgeting process.

FIN/74/18 b Community Hub Cleaning/Caretaking – GAB Waste had confirmed that they were agreeable to the new terms and hours beginning in April 2019.

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FIN/05/19 Parish Council's Accounts up to 31st December 2019

- a) **Review of Statements/Invoices** – Cllr Ward undertook a review of the statements and invoices to ensure there were no discrepancies. He pointed out one cheque that did not correspond with the invoice relating to the December PAYE which the Clerk agreed to look into. Otherwise everything was in order.
- b) **Spot check of Powers** – This was done on a monthly basis where the powers used for expenditure were shown on the 'Accounts to Council'.
- c) **Bank Reconciliation and Balance Sheet** – Members went through the Reconciliation and Balance Sheet and were satisfied that it was in order. Cllr Ward PROPOSED approval. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

7.05 p.m. *Cllr Cox joined the meeting.

- d) **Budget Statement (Detailed Income & Expenditure)** – Members went through the statement. It was noted that expenditure should be approximately 75% at this stage with a few exceptions that had been discussed at previous meetings (Min Ref FIN/69/18 refers). Cllr Ward PROPOSED approval. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- e) **Projected Over / Underspends** – It was noted that there was still a sum of £4207 available in the 4171 CAP Northway Community Hub and although it was a later agenda item Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that this sum was allocated towards the installation of a projector and associated items in the Main Hall.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/06/19 Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

Members went through every 'Expected Standard' in the document. It was noted that the Auditor's name needed to be amended but otherwise Members agreed with the statements and Cllr Shelton PROPOSED approval. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/07/19 Review of Risk Assessment

Members went through all the sections contained within the Risk Assessment. Cllr MacTiernan enquired how often GAB Waste undertook the Health and Safety check at the building. The Clerk admitted this had not been done for a while but there had been a professional contracted the previous year for a thorough inspection. It was felt that this should be undertaken quarterly and the Clerk should liaise with GAB Waste to ensure it happened regularly. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that an additional heading relating to GDPR was added stating that a working party had been put together to prepare policies. These were later adopted by the Parish Council

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FIN/07/19 **Review of Risk Assessment** (Continued)

(Min Ref C/297/18 refers) and would be reviewed annually.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/08/19 **Direct Debit Policy**

Members reviewed the current Direct Debit Policy and Cllr Roberts PROPOSED approval with no changes.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/09/19 **IT**

- i. Members received the Notes from the meeting of the IT Working Party that took place on Monday, 7th January 2019.
- ii. Members received the recommendation from the Working Party that, having fully considered the options and having met with various providers, the Council change its IT contractor. It was noted that the current provider had given an excellent service to the Council for many years and it had been a difficult decision but it was felt that a move to PC Rescue would be beneficial for the Council. The package would include new hardware, software, antivirus, public access wi-fi, including a monthly subscription for Office 365. Cllr Shelton PROPOSED approval of the recommendation. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/10/19 **Capital Projects Working Party**

- i. **Notes** - Members received the Notes from the Meeting of the Capital Projects Working Party that took place on Wednesday, 9th January 2019.
- ii. **Projects** - Members went through the suggested list of projects with the priority item being the Projector. Cllr MacTiernan expressed concern at the idea of solar panels on the Village Hall and Changing Rooms as there was a concern that they would get damaged, youths climbed on the roof and also the Council would not benefit financially from them it would be the leaseholders. Cllr Ward pointed out that this would not be the case as the leaseholders were rarely at the building when the panels were being charged by the sun so the Council would benefit as it would receive the feed in tariff. It was AGREED that no changes were necessary at this time.
- iii. **Priorities** – It had already been discussed earlier in the meeting (Min Ref FIN/05/19 refers) that a Projector was a priority. The Clerk added that she had been approached by a number of potential hirers during January who had enquired about a Projector. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that a Projector was installed as soon as possible.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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FIN/10/19 **Capital Projects Working Party** (Continued)

- iv. **Defibrillator** – Cllr Ward pointed out that Cllr Terry had made a suggestion that the Council fund the outstanding sum for the defibrillator to go in the telephone kiosk. There was £500 showing on the Balance Sheet EMR and the Clerk had recently banked a further £171.46 bringing the total to £671.46. This would mean approximately £750 was needed to purchase the machine as well as installation costs. Members felt this was a good idea and Cllr Ward PROPOSED that this was progressed and that the remaining funds should come from the Balance Sheet Rolling Capital. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/11/19 **Draft Council Budget and Precept for 2019 / 2020**

The Clerk tabled the updated details of all the bids from the various Committees as well as a couple of recommended scenarios for the precept one being for an increase of 2.92% which would mean the Council would need to draw on some of its reserves or alternatively an increase of 6.68% which would enable the Council to 'break even'. The Clerk informed the Committee that the Accountant had recommended the 'break even' option as a larger increase would be necessary next year to make up the shortfall. The Clerk also tabled details of the actual impact this increase would have on the electorate ([copy circulated to Members](#)), for a Band D property that currently pays £114.73 per annum the increase would take the figure up to £122.31 per annum an additional cost of £0.63 per month. It was noted that there were very few properties in Northway of Band D and higher, most were B and C so the impact would be less. It was also noted that running the Hub had been more costly than expected especially due to the increase in Business Rates. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that the Council opted for the 6.68% increase and asked Tewkesbury Borough Council for a precept of £172,819.00. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was suggested that the Precept could be included in the next newsletter with the opportunity of using the percentages and the actual difference this would make to the properties. Cllr MacTiernan was unsure whether this would be appropriate if it was before Tewkesbury Borough Council had finalised all the figures. The Clerk said she would approach Tewkesbury Borough Council and check.

FIN/12/19 **Changing Room**

The Clerk tabled the Landlord Gas Safety Record for the Changing Room which was inspected on 20th November 2018.

FIN/13/19 **Northway Village Hall**

The Clerk tabled the Landlord Gas Safety Record for the Changing Room which was inspected on 20th November 2018.

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FIN/14/19 **Northway Community Hub & Parish Office**

- i. **Painting** – Members received two quotations for redecoration to parts of the Hub. The Clerk said that the Hub may need to close for a weekend to enable the decorating to take place. Cllr MacTiernan enquired about the paint that would be used and asked that it was ‘scrubbable’ rather than ‘wipeable’. It was AGREED that the Clerk would go back to the painters to ask about this and bring the information back to the next Finance Committee Meeting. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council agree to paint the interior or parts of the building this year and await information regarding paint.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Heating and Cooling System** – The Clerk tabled the Maintenance Report Sheet from SK Refrigeration Heating & Cooling. The firm had been unable to clean the ceiling mounted cassette as the incorrect scaffolding had been provided but they were coming back to complete the job.
- iii. **Shutter doors** – The noise of the shutters in the kitchen had been an outstanding item on the ‘snagging’ list. Baldwin Developments had arranged for the installers to call and check them out. After visiting the Hub they informed Baldwin Developments that it was a criminal offence not to have the shutters regularly serviced. As a result of this information the Clerk sought a quote and they advised £142.00 for both shutters each visit. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that a regular 6 monthly inspection should be done of the shutters.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- iv. **Energy Performance Certificate** – The Clerk informed Members that when the EPC was presented to Council previously it was for 32 equating to a ‘B’ Rating but this excluded the solar panels. With the solar panels included the EPC was actually 28 equating to an ‘A’.
- v. **Gas Maintenance Service** – The Clerk tabled the service details from the maintenance service that took place in November 2018.
- vi. **Solar Panels** – The Clerk advised that all the forms had been sent to SSE, they had telephoned with a query and confirmed that the feed in had been accepted. The Clerk was waiting to hear further from them. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that the Clerk contact SSE and ask what time frame the Council was looking at and whether the ‘feed in’ started from when they received the completed forms or from when the system was installed. Cllr Ward SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/15/19 **Audit**

- i. **Annual Systems Audit / Internal Sub-Audit** – The Clerk reminded Members that this audit was not essential although it was cited on the Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit and was best practice. Previously sub audits had been done on VAT, Banking & Fraud, Staff & Time Management, Internal Financial Controls, Procurement, Risk Assessment, Assets and others. Members considered whether to undertake this task and if so what should be

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FIN/15/19 Audit (Continued)

audited. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that an audit was undertaken on the contractors used by the Council. Not so much for the one-off jobs but for the more regular contractors i.e. Countrywide, GAB Waste (there were also the contracts with Laser Alarms, SK Cooling & Heating, Trade Waste (TBC), CW Hygiene, DCK Accounting Solutions). The audit could check the Council was getting value for money, that the work was being done as and when agreed and how this could be monitored.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- ii. **Internal Auditor** – The Clerk tabled quotations from three firms, one being Mr Selkirk who had undertaken the internal audit for a considerable length of time, GAPTC Internal Auditors and also IAC. All three Auditors had no conflicts of interest with the Council or its Officers and were suitably qualified. Mr Selkirk's charges were £310, GAPTC were £350 and IAC was £690 but covered two full day visits. It was felt that with the two visits there would be no need for an additional person to carry out an internal sub-audit so the costs would not be any greater than existing costs. Cllr Ward PROPOSED that Mr Selkirk was contracted for the current financial year but going forward that IAC were contracted. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/16/19 Fraud Attempt

- i. The Clerk tabled the details of the fraudulent withdrawal of funds (via cheque) from the Council's bank account. Cheques were put in the franking bags and delivered to the Post Office at The Co-op in Northway. From there a few had never reached their destination, even though the envelope may have. This would suggest the possibility that something was happening to the cheques at Royal Mail. The Clerk had been unable to speak with the Fraud Department of HSBC, but when this had previously happened it was pointed out by them that cheque payment was the safest method to use. It was AGREED no further action was necessary.
- ii. The Clerk had contacted Royal Mail regarding the fraud and they advised she would have to make contact with the Police. She had made contact and was awaiting further information.

FIN/17/19 Correspondence for Action

- i. **Tewkesbury Borough Council** – Duty of Care Controlled Waste Transfer. The Clerk had completed this form and returned it to Tewkesbury Borough Council. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED ratification of this.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/18/19 Correspondence for Information

- i. **NEST (National Employment Savings Trust)** – The Clerk tabled confirmation that the

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FIN/18/19 **Correspondence for Information** (Continued)

contribution rates to the NEST Pension would be increasing from 1st April 2019 from 2% to 3% for employers and 3% to 5% for workers.

- ii. **WaterPlus** – The Clerk explained that it had come to light that no water rates had been paid for Northway Community Hub since the Council moved back in. This would date back to when Severn Trent Water passed the billing over to WaterPlus. The Clerk had completed a form and returned it and was awaiting further information.
- iii. **Information Commissioner** – Newsletter

FIN/19/19 **Correspondence received after 17th January 2019**

- i. **Public Work Loan Board** – Details of the next instalment of the loan and interest due February 2019 were presented.

As there was no further business the meeting concluded at 8.20 p.m.