

NORTHWAY PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on Wednesday 26th July 2023, commencing at 7.00 p.m. held in the Ray Shill Room at Northway Community Hub.

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

In Attendance: Mrs C Woodward, Clerk of the Council

FIN/50/23 Apologies for Absence

Cllr Phennah had tendered his apologies and there were no further apologies for absence.

FIN/51/23 Declarations of Interest

Cllrs Blackmore, Godwin and Roberts declared an interest in anything related to the Food Pantry and Cllr Godwin declared an interest in matters relating to the Northway Youth Club Trustees. 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/52/23 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

26th April 2023 - Cllr Shelton PROPOSED approval of the Minutes of the Meeting that took place on 26th April 2023. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: Cllr Shelton Cllr Godwin
Cllr MacTiernan Cllr Roberts
Cllr Terry

ABSTENSIONS: Cllr Blackmore

24th May 2023 - Cllr Shelton PROPOSED approval of the Minutes of the Meeting that took place on 24th May 2023. Cllr Blackmore SECONDED.

FOR: Cllr Shelton Cllr Blackmore
Cllr Godwin Cllr Terry

ABSTENTIONS: Cllr MacTiernan Cllr Roberts

FIN/53/23 Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes

FIN/37/23 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office – Laser Alarms had replaced three batteries for emergency lights and ordered three more for the remaining lights.

FIN/37/23 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office – Kitchenware Audit – Crockery and cutlery had been purchased to replace losses (still awaiting mugs).

FIN/39/23 Changing Room Facility – Tewkesbury Town Football Club had been advised that there was no further action required from them regarding the outstanding water bills and that the Council had covered these costs.

FIN/48/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 (AGAR) – The AGAR had been

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IN/53/23 **Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes** (Continued)

submitted to PKF Littlejohn LLP prior to 3rd July 2023 and an acknowledgement of receipt had been received.

FIN/43/23 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 (AGAR) – *The Public Rights Notice had been displayed online and, on several noticeboards, throughout the parish between 5th June and 14th July 2023 as required.*

FIN/54/23 **Parish Council's Accounts up to 30th June 2023**

- a. **Review of Statements** - Cllr Godwin undertook a review of the statements and invoices to ensure there were no discrepancies as part of the Council's Risk Management Programme and confirmed all was in order.
- b. **Bank Reconciliation and Balance Sheet** – It was noted that the Bank Reconciliation reconciled to the Bank Statement.

No queries were raised, and Cllr Roberts PROPOSED approval. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- c. **Budget Statement** – Members reviewed the Budget Statement, a couple of items were raised, firstly 1128 ADMIN Office Equipment – Printing costs had been mistakenly placed in this budget and needed to be moved to 1130 ADM-Stationery/Printing. It was also noted that 61.5% of the annual budget had already been spend on GP-Platinum Park. The Clerk explained this was as a result of two replacement bollards and the tree watering that would be reimbursed from the Build Back Better Grant funds. Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED approval. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/55/23 **Financial Regulations**

- a. **Petty Cash** - Members reviewed the amount held in petty cash. It was noted that the figure in 2000 was £75.00 and now in 2023 was still £75.00. Members agreed that this needed addressing and Cllr Shelton PROPOSED it was increased to £250.00. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- b. **Debit card** – Members considered the benefits of the staff having a pre-paid debit card to enable buying on-line easier. The Clerk had been investigating this but did not feel she had enough information available at this time to properly consider it. Another alternative was raised to set up an 'Amazon Business' account, this was a free to use but would allow an invoice and cheque system to be used. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that this account should be set up to trial how well it worked. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: Cllr Roberts Cllr MacTiernan
Cllr Godwin Cllr Shelton
Cllr Terry

ABSTENTIONS: Cllr Blackmore

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FIN/56/23 EMR Legal Fees

It was noted that there was a sum of £10,000 in the Legal Fees EMR, this had been placed there to cover the costs of the Judicial Appeal Review for 'the bridge to nowhere'. Also, there was to be a repayment of just over £9,000 expected from Tewkesbury Borough Council who lost the appeal and had to pay charges. This would elevate the Legal Fees budget to over £19,000. It was agreed that it would be pertinent to retain some funds in this ear marked reserve. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that £5,000 should be retained in the ear marked reserve and the rest of it should be moved to the EMR Rolling Capital budget. Cllr Shelton SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/57/23 Internal Auditor

The Clerk had not yet received any quotations for internal auditors, but it was noted that the Council were very pleased with the level of service and reporting received from Auditing Solutions. Upon questioning the Clerk she confirmed that they had been very easy to deal with, very helpful and were contactable all year round for any advice and assistance.

Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that on the grounds of best value as well as the fact that Auditing Solutions were independent, and met the criteria of the audit regime, they were reappointed for the current financial year. Cllr Roberts SECONDED

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/58/23 Direct Debits / Standing Orders

Members reviewed the Direct Debit Policy, and no amendments were made. The Clerk tabled details of the current direct debit and Standing Orders. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED approval. Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/59/23 Northway Community Hub & Parish Office

a. **Coronation Artwork** – Cllr Terry provided an update following her second meeting with Sam Morris (Artist). She tabled the ideas they had discussed which Members were happy with. Prices and sizes were discussed as well as the 'finish' on the artwork itself. Cllr Terry explained that the artist would scan the 200 pictures which would be very time-consuming. Cllr MacTiernan requested a small cow was included somewhere as this was a 'Sam Morris' trademark. Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that the Council should commission artwork on a 2 foot x 4 foot canvas at a cost of £500.00. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

b. **Benches** There were four benches at the front of the building, one in memory of a previous Councillor, a remembrance one and two that been upcycled by an ex-councillor. New locations needed to be considered prior to the garden building being installed. Members went outside the building so they could visualise it and it was agreed to put the remembrance bench in the place of the memorial bench and put the memorial bench at a right angle to it. It was noted that the other two benches had not worn very well and should be removed (they could be offered for use online). Cllr Roberts PROPOSED this action, Cllr Godwin SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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FIN/59/23 **Northway Community Hub & Parish Office** (Continued)

- c. **Fire Extinguisher Service** – The Clerk tabled a report following the servicing of the Fire Extinguishers at the Community Hub and no faults had been found.
- d. **Self-Closer for Back Door** – It had been agreed (Min Ref FIN/30/23 refers) to consider the benefits of having a replacement self-closer at the Community Hub in case the current one failed. This had already been replaced twice since it was installed in 2017 and the most recent replacement took a number of months to arrive from Europe. Members debated this and concern was expressed that such an expensive door closure should not fail so regularly. The Clerk explained that the fitter advised that self-closing doors should always be allowed to self-close, sometimes people get impatient and pull or push which can, with a lot of use, cause the closer to fail which was the most likely cause at the Hub. After further discussion Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Clerk speak with Joedan and get a full explanation of the problem and why they keep failing and this information should be brought back to the next meeting for further consideration.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

7.44 pm Cllr Roberts left the meeting,

- e. **Commercial Oven** – Members received a request from Luncheon Club for the oven to be professionally cleaned. The Clerk had contacted one firm and was waiting for a response, although she was uncertain as to whether they would work on industrial ovens.

7.45 pm Cllr Roberts rejoined the meeting.

Members agreed this was the Council's responsibility and had not been done since the opening of the Community Hub. Cllr MacTieman PROPOSED this was organised at a cost of no more than £200.00. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- f. **CCTV Monitor** – The monitor in the office had failed and required replacement which the Clerk arranged, although no invoice had yet been received. Cllr Terry PROPOSED this purchase was ratified.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- g. **SK Refrigeration Heating & Cooling** – The Clerk tabled a copy of the Maintenance Report following a service that had been undertaken. No faults were found.
- h. **Shutters** – The Clerk ran through the shutter history including its initial installation, the various firms that had serviced it and reported them to be non-compliant. The latest firm insisted that the shutter in the main hall needed replacing as it should be a fire shutter (at a cost of £3434) and that the fire shutter between the kitchen and atrium did not have a fall back protection and they wanted to retro fit one on to the existing shutter removing the barrel assembly, cutting out the dummy end and welding a new shaft and disc with a safety brake. This would be a cost of £750.00.

The Clerk had struggled to get independent advice but eventually a H&S Expert with A & E Fire and Security helped. He could not advise on the installations but confirmed the following:

'Fire resisting construction between the kitchen and hall is not required under the building regulations as the kitchen is not classed as a place of special fire hazard. This only applies in schools. Although it may be desirable for property protection. The fire shutter between the kitchen and escape corridor (referred to as atrium) is required as a barrier to smoke in the early stages of fire. Although corridors

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Northway Community Hub & Parish Office (Continued)

that provide escape in two directions are not required to be separated with fire resisting construction self-closing doors, they should be protected by doors and full height partition, Therefore, the shutter should be a barrier to cold smoke in the early stages of fire and maintained as per the manufacturer's recommendations.'

The Clerk had then contacted the original installers contracted by the builders and they advised the following: -

'When the doors were installed, they met current legislations unfortunately laws change all the time. What company has said they can remove the lost bobbin and replace with a safety brake because this would be the case if the door was a standard door but yours is a fire door that has been tested by Warrington Fire therefore no one is allowed to change the design of the door otherwise the door would no longer be deemed as a fire door.'

He had then asked for photos which the Clerk forwarded to him, to which he responded with the following:

'Looking at the photos I'm 99% sure there is no safety brake required within the new regulations, The slats of the door have to weigh over 24kg estimating from the photos our door would be under this but would need measurements to check, although your door has no chance of anyone walking through the door as it's a serving hatch so there is no safety brake required. I will check all this information through our governing body DHF (Door Hardware Federation) and get back as soon as I have a response with the relative information.'

After some debate Cllr MacTiernan PROPOSED that before any further action was taken the Council wait until the installers of the blinds come back with the information from the Door Hardware Federation and bring back to the next meeting. Cllr Roberts SECONDED.,

FOR: UNANIMOUS

It was also suggested that a quote should be obtained for a service.

FIN/60/23

Changing Room Facility

- a. **Insulation** - The Clerk informed Members that she had still not received a re-quote from Boniface for the insulation. No further action could be taken until this was received.
- b. **Legionella** – The Clerk had only been successful in obtaining two quotations. One firm quoted £90, £100 and £120 for the three buildings respectively to undertake an initial assessment.

The initial quotation was to provide a Legionella Risk Assessment Review for £95, to read through the existing risk assessment, visit the 3 premises and write up a covering review of the risk assessment. The second stage would be to provide a Legionella Control Management Plan where they would carry out a 3 monthly audit of the water systems within the 3 premises. To include temperature monitoring, shower head C&D, 1 Legionella sample, CWST inspections for £150 per visit to include a written report and certificate.

From the information provided Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that CDI Facilities was contracted to undertake the initial stage of the work and then it would be considered further at another meeting. Cllr MacTiernan SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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FIN/60/23 **Changing Room Facility** (Continued)

- c. **Fire Extinguisher Servicing** – The Clerk tabled the latest report provided by Edgefire Ltd. Two extinguishers were fine and two required powder exchange. An invoice was awaited.
- d. **Shower Room Surfacing** – The safety floor surfacing in both the home and away shower rooms had come to the end of its life, it had shrunk and come away from the walls as well as holes. The Clerk had met two firms on site so they could provide a quotation but was unable to get a third firm to attend.

Two quotations were received and although the first was a lower price of £1213. the second firm had provided a far more thorough report including the fact that the floor was wet under the existing surfacing and new surfacing could not be laid until this had been dried out – which could take approximately two weeks and would be at the expense of the Council. They appeared to have more knowledge of the subject, so the Council agreed it was best value to go with Coronium at a cost of £2140.80 and Cllr Terry PROPOSED this action.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

The Clerk reminded Members that Tewkesbury Borough Council held some remaining Section 106 monies which had been allocated to Northway and it had been confirmed that this could be used for the insulation. Due to the urgency necessary to replace the flooring the Clerk had checked with the Head of Economic and Community Development at the Borough about who had confirmed that the monies could be redirected to the flooring.

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Section 106 monies were redirected for this purpose.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

- e. **Changing Room Generally** – An email had been received from the Football Club with some matters they wanted addressing.
- **Damp** - What appeared to be damp rising on the wall on the right as you enter the building. Members were reminded that this damp area appeared due to a constant puddle on the floor in the boiler room (the other side of this wall) from the hosepipes they had hanging in the room. The football club had been informed that they must not allow water drip on this floor. When Cllr Roberts and the Clerk had inspected the building, it was noted that the hosepipes were all resting in buckets but the floor beneath the buckets did look a little damp – so there may be times when the water still drips on the floor.
- Following this inspection, the Clerk met with a contractor on site who confirmed it was not rising damp and that the explanation of the hosepipes would account for the wall looking like it did.
- **Bracket** - A broken bracket that should hold the shower head in the right position in the referee's shower. – Council to repair.
 - **Flooring in showers** – Already addressed above.
 - **Broken slat on bench** – Council to repair.
 - **Loose skirting board** – Council to repair.

The Clerk reminded Members that the internal decoration was the responsibility of the Football Club as stated in the Club's Lease.

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FIN/61/23 **Northway Village Hall**

- a. **Fire Extinguisher Servicing** - The Clerk tabled a report following the servicing of the Extinguishers at the Village Hall and no replacements or refills were necessary.
- b. **Entrance Gates to the Village Hall** – Cllr Godwin declared an interest and left the room.

The Council had received a request from the Trustees of Northway Youth Club that they be allowed to move the metal gates at the entrance to the hall. These gates sit just inside the porch and open inwards meaning that when the internal doors are opened, they hit the metal gate which is damaging the internal doors.

If the doors opened outwards this would mean they would rest against the handrail each side which would restrict the disabled access into the building. As a result of this Cllr Roberts PROPOSED that due to the obstruction this would cause to the disability access the request was refused. Cllr Blackmore SECONDED.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

Cllr Godwin rejoined the meeting.

FIN/62/23 **Northway Pantry**

As a lease would be required between Northway Parish Council and the Northway Food Pantry the Clerk had enquired with One Legal whether this could be undertaken by them but, as reported to Full Council, they did not have the capacity at this time. The Clerk had been asked to seek further quotations (Min Ref C/181/23 refers). Having made contact with a representative from DFS Legal the Clerk was advised that a License might work better than a lease in this situation, it was more of a 'light touch' and may be more beneficial to both parties.

The Clerk was awaiting a template of the License but also reported to Members that because this was a community project the Legal Advisor had offered to do the work 'pro bono'.

Cllr Blackmore pointed out that she was unable to open a bank account for the Pantry until she has this document which must include the address of the building and the name Northway Pantry.

Cllr Terry PROPOSED that the Council accept the offer and proceed in getting a License set up.

FOR: Cllr Terry Cllr MacTiernan
Cllr Shelton

ABSTENSIONS Cllr Blackmore Cllr Godwin
Cllr Roberts

FIN/63/23 **Correspondence for Action**

- a. **My Business Claim** – The Clerk had received several communications stating that the Council had been mis-sold energy in the past and rebates may be available. The firm they were referring to was Utilitywise and had been listed in a Government Report who the Council used in 2017. Cllr Roberts pointed out that the Council had been happy with the arrangement at the time and did not believe it had been over-charged. Also, the time that may be needed to deal with this claim may impact the office staff. Cllr Terry PROPOSED that no further action was taken.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

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FIN/63/23 **Correspondence for Action** (Continued)

- b. **DCK Accounting Solutions** – Cllr MacTieman PROPOSED approval for contracting DCK Accounting Solutions to undertake the VAT partial exemption calculations for 2022-2023 as required as part of the Council's Audit.

FOR: UNANIMOUS

FIN/64/23 **Correspondence for Information**

- a. **United Kingdom Debt Management Office** – The next payment on the Public Work Loan was due on 16th August 2023.
- b. **SSE Energy Solutions** – Members received a standard letter regarding a different display name on bank statements.
- c. **PC Rescue** – A copy of the 2023-2024 IT Maintenance Support Plan had been received.
- d. **The Public Sector Deposit Fund:**
- i. Members received statements for 30th April, 31st May and 30th June (with a dividend of £395.33 reinvested).
 - ii. Members received information relating to a change of transfer agent, account numbers and contact details associated with this fund.
- e. **Information Commissioners Office** – Members were advised that the next direct debit due by the ICO was on the 6th August for the annual subscription.
- f. **ESET NOD32 Antivirus** – This subscription had been renewed.
- g. **Boxing Clever** – The Clerk tabled two emails received from residents whose children attended the Boxing Clever Programme with very positive comments.

FIN/65/23 **Correspondence received after 20th July 2023**

- a. **Boxing Clever** – Adam Harper had enquired whether the Council would be happy for some of his members to undertake litter picking once a month in the parish. He had not yet asked the willingness of the young people but wanted to get the Council's opinion.

Whilst talking about boxing Cllr Blackmore pointed out how beneficial the boxing was and that Boxing Clever needed a more permanent base so that it could continue to coach young people who were over 18. This should be an agenda item for another meeting.

Members agreed this was a great initiative, advice from the Council's insurers should be obtained and a risk assessment would be necessary. Cllr Blackmore offered to help with this. This would need to go to another meeting.

- b. **Northway Centre Defibrillator** – A before and after photograph was tabled after a resident, Steve Ward, who had cleaned the Defibrillator. It was agreed that thanks should be passed on to him.

As there was no other business the meeting concluded at 8.45pm.