

## Batheaston Parish Council

### Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance Committee held at 8:30pm on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at the Rhymes Pavilion

**Present: Councillors: Alexis Pavlou (Chair), Peter Bryant, Sue Peachey.**

In attendance: Richard Maccabee (Clerk).

#### PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1. There was no **public participation**.
2. The committee approved **apologies for absence** from Cllr Arif Butt
3. There were no **declarations of interest from Councillors**.
4. **The committee approved** the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022.
5. **The committee reviewed** the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

5.1. The Clerk proposed the following:

- 5.1.1. To add: "To oversee the production of reports for the AGAR process for Council approval, and appointment and liaison with Internal and External Auditors"
- 5.1.2. To remove "To consider and report to Full Council on matters of complaints against Clerk".
- 5.1.3. The Clerk undertook to suggest this as an addition to the HR Committee Terms of Reference.

5.2. **The Committee resolved** to recommend these changes to Council.

**Clerk**

6. The Committee reviewed the schedule for meetings in 2024 and proposed timetable for major topics to be addressed.
  - 6.1.1. It was noted that the deadline for informing Bath and North East Somerset of the Precept required for 2024/25 is 6<sup>th</sup> February 2024.
  - 6.1.2. It will be necessary therefore for the Committee to advise the Council meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> January about the budget impact of Precept figure(s) to allow it to make a properly informed decision.
  - 6.1.3. They noted therefore that a meeting will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> January.

#### BUDGET AND PRECEPT SETTING FOR 2024/25

7. **The Committee noted** the paper "Process for setting the budget for 2024-25", previously approved by Full Council at its October meeting.
  - 7.1. They commented that in future years the timetable should begin at least one month earlier.

- 8. Council approved** the proposed list of potential projects and development initiatives for 2024/25 and beyond, for more detailed by financial assessment by nominated Councillors assisted by the Clerk.
- 9. Council reviewed** projects to be included in the budget for 2024/25, with detailed financial assessment.
- 9.1.** It was noted that in all cases the assumption is that the Council will not be able to provide the major part of the funds required; grants will need to be secured.
- 9.2.** The options for the future of the Rhymes Pavilion are still subject of consultation with the community, and therefore there is no clear picture of the likely project.
- 9.3.** It is hoped that the next phase of the improvement of the playground will take place in 2024/25.
- 9.4.** The Committee noted that it was unlikely that more than two of the projects listed in the document would be taken forward in a single year, and hence the budgetary total of would not be feasible.
- 9.5. The Committee resolved** to recommend to Council for its consideration in its forthcoming meeting.
- 10. The Committee reviewed** the first-cut budget for 2024/25, with options for saving or additional spending, and indicative Precept (Council Tax) impact.
- 10.1. Councillors noted** that in spite of the increase of 90% in the Precept this year, without a further increase in the Precept, the current expectation for next year is that there will only a small surplus of ca. £20,000 on recurrent operations to fund projects.
- 11. The Committee reviewed** the paper previously presented to Council, summarising major expenditure categories for day-to-day operations, including staffing, informed by the HR Committee, and the top 5 contracted services, with recommendations of any savings identified.
- 11.1.** It was noted that the range of IT Services should be added to the list as areas of focus.
- 11.2.** With this addition, the paper was approved. The Clerk will take forward the various actions, seeking assistance from Committee Members as appropriate.

**Clerk**

## **FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **12. Monthly transactions**

- 12.1. The Committee approved** transactions undertaken in November 2023.
- 12.2.** The Clerk indicated that he had not been to complete the Bank Reconciliation for November 2023.

### **13. Interim Internal Audit**

- 13.1. The Committee received** the report of the Interim Internal Audit conducted recently, and noted the action plan to address the actions identified in this report, and in the full audit of 2022-23.

#### **14. Asset and Risk Management**

**14.1.** The Clerk apologised that he had not had time to provide the proposal for the completion of the asset register, including valuation and maintenance, and to complete risk assessments.

**14.2.** He outlined his intended approach; to focus on each aspect of the Council's facilities, one at a time, with the assistance of a Councillor(s) for each, to assure the process.

**15.** The Clerk noted that he had not brought forward a review of the current Financial Regulations and Standing Orders but noted that these were re-approved in the Annual Parish Council meeting in May of this year.

**16.** The Committee agreed that the Clerk should seek approval from Council to update the list of Councillors authorised to approve bank transactions to be the Members of the Committee.

**Clerk**

**17.** The Clerk noted that he had not brought forward a review of the current actions from Council meetings that now fall under the purview of this Committee. He will do at the next meeting.

**Clerk**

#### **STANDING ITEMS AND REPORTS**

**18.** The Committee received a short verbal report from the Clerk.

**The meeting closed at 9:27pm**

#### **Forthcoming Meetings:**

Council Meeting, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023

HR Committee, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Finance Committee, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Council Meeting, 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Council and Committee meetings are open to the public, and members of the public are welcome to join and may speak by invitation.

Signed by Cllr Alexis Pavlou, Chair of the Committee:

Date: