



**SPEEN PARISH COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**HELD ONLINE ON THURSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2021 STARTING at 7PM**

<b>Present</b>	<b>Parish Councillors</b>	Cllr Black (Chair). Cllr Newell-Hart, Cllr Gourley. Cllr Clifford
	<b>WBDC Councillor/Employee</b>	None
	<b>Members of the Public</b>	None
	<b>Clerk &amp; RFO</b>	Jean Lindsell

**Meeting started at 7.00pm**

Resolution	Item	Action
Resolved	<p><b>1. Apologies:</b> Apologies received from Cllr Dudman</p> <p><b>2. Declaration of Interests –</b> Cllr Clifford declared an interest in Item 15. Cllr Clifford is Chair of St Barts Foundation who's treasurer is married to an individual connected to Item 15 although not personally know to Cllr Clifford.</p> <p><b>3. Open Session –</b> no Members of the Public present</p> <p><b>4. Minutes –</b> to approve the minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020 (draft)</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Black Seconder: Cllr Newell-Hart Abstention: 1 In Favour: 3</p> <p><b>5. 2020/21 Budget Forecast to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021</b></p> <p>The Clerk advised that two further revisions to original budget figures had been applied as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recreations Grounds increased by £2500 as the Members' Bid grant for the Stockcross Recreation Ground footpath had now been received in respect of that amount already paid by SPC out of this budget category</li> <li>- Miscellaneous increased by £768 already received from Stockcross Tennis Club for lease legal fees already paid by SPC out of this budget category</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk added there was an increase to the General Maintenance overspend due to unforeseen costs for the new swing cradle seats at Speen Recreation Ground this expenditure having already been approved by Full Council.</p> <p>The Clerk asked the Committee is they were in agreement these costs be assigned to this budget category rather than being funded from Earmarked Reserves as these were already allocated to various projects and there was an overall forecasted underspend of SPC's operating costs budget at year end.</p> <p>All members of the Committee agreed.</p> <p>Cllr Clifford asked if the budget underspend could be carried forward into the new financial year operating costs budget.</p> <p>The Clerk advised this was not possible but when the final underspend was known this would be classed as unallocated funds and would be available for Earmarked Reserves subject to Full Council approval.</p> <p><b>6. 2021/22 Budget Categories –</b> to discuss whether the Committee wished to see Clerk's salary breakdown i.e. salary, employers NIC and employers pension</p>	



	<p>contribution</p> <p>The Clerk advised as part of the budget preparation the Clerk’s salary was broken down into salary, employers NIC and employers pension contributions but during the course of year when reviewing Budget v Actual these costs were consolidated into one and there was no recording of these individual costs and asked if the Committee was happy with this or would like to see the breakdown throughout the year to better monitor performance against those individual costs.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart felt as the Clerk’s salary was one of the largest numbers in the budget it was important to show these costs separately as these were statutory costs incurred by the Council and should be visible to parishioners.</p> <p>Cllr Black felt there might be a GDPR issue in publishing detailed information about the Clerk’s personal salary but added he did not feel strongly either way.</p> <p>Cllr Clifford was unsure how important this level of detail was to the Council particularly if it involved additional work. Cllr Clifford added as the total cost was published and its significance recognised if Council had queries the detail could be produced.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley stated most businesses would breakdown these costs and show the net salary and the contributions that organisation was responsible for paying that were attributable to the total salary costs of an individual.</p> <p>The Clerk went through the separate budgeted costs that had been agreed for Clerk’s salary 2021/22 and advised that as these were then consolidated for the quarterly budget reporting there was no ongoing monitoring of how good those individual budget figures were.</p> <p>The Clerk suggested as the Committee was uncertain whether they wished to see the detail she would present the breakdown at the first Committee meeting in the new financial year and the decision could be reviewed at that time.</p> <p>All members of the Committee agreed.</p> <p><b>7. Finance Reporting</b> – to discuss review of finance reporting in preparation for 2021/22</p> <p>The Clerk advised the charts produced were simple examples of how high level visual finance reporting could be presented in the future.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart thanked the Clerk for the charts and felt they were exactly what the Council needed.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley queried the Projected Bank Balance chart as the calculations were unclear.</p> <p>The Clerk went through the calculations but agreed this particular chart needed to be reviewed as it was not intuitive and might not lend itself to visual interpretation.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley advised the Budget v Actual bar chart was good and it was very easy to read.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart felt the only chart requiring revision was the Projected Bank Balance.</p> <p>The Clerk advised it was not her intention to introduce these to Full Council until the new financial year and would like to work with the Committee prior to that in reviewing and finalising the charts.</p> <p>Clerk to continue to work on new reports for review by the Committee.</p> <p><b>8. Reserves Bank Account</b></p> <p>The Clerk asked as she had been unable to transfer SPC’s General Reserves to a separate account to date if it would be acceptable to wait until April following year end close to complete this action.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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<p>Resolved</p>	<p>All members of the Committee agreed.</p> <p><b>9. Appointment of Internal Auditor</b></p> <p><b>Proposal:</b> To recommend the appointment of David Weller as Internal Auditor for 2020/21 to Full Council for approval</p> <p>The Clerk advised as David Weller had been the internal auditor for a number of years now the Committee might wish to appoint a new auditor but advised there might be budget implications as other auditors' costs were currently unknown.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart stated it was best practice to change auditor every few years as there was a danger an auditor could become too close to a business or individuals.</p> <p>Cllr Black advised his company was not permitted to have the same auditor for longer than three years.</p> <p>The Clerk advised she knew of two other potential auditors and the decision could be deferred whilst further information and costs were obtained.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart suggested as the budgeted cost for the internal auditor had been based on David Weller's charges he should be appointed for 2020/21 but a change of auditor should be planned for 2021/22.</p> <p>Cllr Black agreed and suggested SPC's Internal Audit Policy be amended to include a maximum period of time for the same auditor to be appointed being 3 or 5 years.</p> <p>All members of the Committee agreed to this should be 3 years.</p> <p>Clerk to amend policy.</p> <p>The Committee agreed to recommend the appointment of David Weller as Internal Auditor for 2020/21 to Full Council for approval.</p> <p>The Committee also agreed to recommend to Full Council that an alternative internal auditor be sought for 2021/22</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Black Seconder: Cllr Newell-Hart All in Favour</p> <p><b>10. Policies</b> – to agree the following policies be reviewed by the Finance Committee in accordance with the Committee Terms of Reference for recommendation to Full Council for approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial Regulations</li> <li>• Financial Risk Assessment</li> <li>• Reserves Policy</li> </ul> <p>The Clerk advised at the outset of COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 it had been agreed in the interests of keeping meetings shorter that policies would be reviewed and adopted via email however particularly in the case of financial policies it was best practice to have the adoption of these formally minuted.</p> <p>The Clerk suggested she email the updated policies to all members of the Committee well in advance of the next meeting to enable any queries to be answered beforehand.</p> <p>All members of the Committee agreed.</p> <p><b>11. Correspondence: To receive &amp; consider correspondence (all relevant correspondence is circulated electronically on receipt and where possible dealt with by the Clerk) None to report</b></p> <p><b>12. Matters for consideration and information arising after the preparation of this Agenda which the Chair agrees to take as urgent (all Councillors)</b></p> <p>The Clerk asked the Chair if it would be acceptable to discuss matters relating to</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
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Resolved	<p>invoicing AFC Newbury for Stockcross Recreation Ground in light of COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>The Chair agreed.</p> <p>The Clerk advised AFC Newbury's quarterly invoice for Stockcross Recreation Ground for £200 for November, December and January was due to be sent out and asked the Committee for their views on this as AFC Newbury had been unable to play during this time due to lockdown. The Clerk added that in 2020 SPC had not charged AFC Newbury for both Stockcross and Speen for the period of lockdown.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart asked if the Clerk could look into recouping SPC's loss of income through WBC as he understood there were funds available to organisations where revenue had been lost due to COVID-19 restrictions.</p> <p>The Clerk advised she had submitted a projected loss of income of £1000 via NALC who had requested this information from parish councils last year to assist in their representations to the Ministry of Housing, Communities &amp; Local Government for funding support.</p> <p>The Clerk added although the MHCLG had put together Local Government COVID support packages it was not clear if these funds were available at the parish level however would follow this up with WBC.</p> <p>Cllr Black felt AFC Newbury should not be charged but asked although football matches were suspended had training still been permitted.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley thought there was a slight difference in the rules regarding children's football training in November but felt in light of SPC's projected unallocated reserves the club should not be invoiced as a gesture of goodwill.</p> <p>Cllr Clifford asked if there was any information available regarding the club's financial position and whether SPC awarded grants.</p> <p>The Clerk advised she did not have any information regarding the club's financial position and SPC did have an s137 grant policy but these grants did not apply to running costs.</p> <p>Cllr Gourley felt that as this money was income rather than parishioners' money SPC should support children's sport and not invoice particularly as a precedent had already been set last year.</p> <p>Cllr Clifford felt AFC Newbury was a valuable partner who SPC had a good relationship with.</p> <p>Cllr Newell-Hart felt the club should not be invoiced but if lockdown were to continue indefinitely SPC might wish to re-consider its position regarding charging.</p> <p>The Clerk advised the same issue would arise when the next quarters invoice was due as it was uncertain as to when current lockdown restrictions might change.</p> <p>It was agreed the matter be raised with Full Council for resolution.</p>	Clerk
	<p><b>13. Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 7pm</b></p> <p><b>14. Exclusion of the Press and Public</b></p> <p>To Resolve: That in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and in the public interest the Press and Public be excluded for Agenda Item 15 under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Black Seconder: Cllr Newell-Hart All in Favour</p> <p><b>The meeting closed at 8.50pm</b></p>	Clerk



<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Name (print):</b>  <b>Position:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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Abbreviations Used:

SPC = Speen Parish Council

MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

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