



SPEEN PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & HR COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD AT SPEEN PAVILION SPEEN RECREATION GROUND ON WEDNESDAY 13TH MARCH 2024
STARTING AT 7PM

Parish Councillors present	Charlotte Winton (Acting Chair for meeting), Linda Barrett & Shalini Philip
In Attendance	No Members of the Public present
Clerk & RFO	Becki Hannington

Resolution	Item	Action
	<p>1. Apologies: Cllr Gourley & Cllr Wilson.</p> <p>2. Declaration of Interests - None declared.</p> <p>3. Open Session</p> <p>4. Minutes – to approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 21-12-23 (draft) Proposal: To approve the minutes as a true reflection of the last meeting: Proposer: Cllr Barrett Seconder: Councillor Philip In Favour: 1 Abstention: 2</p> <p>5. To discuss any matters arising from the previous meeting. No matters were discussed.</p> <p>6. Financial Report</p> <p>6.1 Bank balance as at 31-01-24 was reported as £48,163.17. The bank balance was duly noted by all members of the committee.</p> <p>6.2 To retrospectively note payments for December 2023, January 2024 & February 2024 December, January and February payments duly noted by all members of the committee.</p> <p>6.3 To Review Finance Reports to 31-12-23 Reports duly noted by all members of the committee.</p> <p>6.4 To Review Finance Reports to 31-01-24 Reports duly noted by all members of the committee.</p> <p>6.5 To Review Finance Reports to 29-02-24 Reports duly noted by all members of the committee.</p> <p>7. Speen Recreation Ground – to review quotation for hedge cutting at Speen Recreation Ground. Proposal to approve costs for the hedge cutting: Proposer: Cllr Winton Seconder: Cllr Barrett All in Favour.</p>	

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8. AFC Newbury Contract Renewal, Speen Recreation Ground – To agree the renewed contract for the 2024/25 season.

The committee were happy with the terms of the renewed agreement but felt that that the rate may be slightly low, particularly as this has not been increased in several years however, The Pavilion is not the best/most modern space and AFC Newbury are good hirers, keep the grounds well and are accommodating when there are other events on at Speen Recreation Ground. The committee were unsure if now is the right time given the economic circumstances to be putting up rates.

Proposal: To refer to Full Council to agree the renewed contract for the 2024/25 season:

Proposer: Cllr Winton
Seconder: Cllr Barrett
All in Favour.

9. Streetlighting Contract Renewal – To agree the renewed contract for streetlighting with current provider for 2024/25.

Proposal to approve to renew the contract with the current provider:

Proposer: Cllr Winton
Seconder: Cllr Barrett
All in Favour.

10. Audit

10.1 Interim Internal Audit– To review findings of interim internal audit and agree any actions.

All members of the committee duly noted the findings of the interim internal audit.

It was noted that although the internal auditor noted that there was a degree of risk in the current payment system as the clerk sets up and approves all payments, the committee felt that having the payments checked after being made on a monthly basis was adequate and as this process is compliant with Financial Regulations, therefore there are no plans to make any changes to the current payment system, at this time.

It was discussed that the internal auditor noted that the council maintains financial records on an Excel spreadsheet and they would support a move to an accounting system such as Scribe or RBS Alpha which they believe would improve financial reporting and save time in producing reports.

The Clerk advised that they have looked into the two systems recommended by the auditor and whilst the specifications are much the same, Scribe seems to be more user-friendly and is less expensive. The Clerk went through price comparisons for both systems.

The Clerk advised they were keen to support a move to an online accounting system as this would save a lot of time when it comes to reporting and year end/audits. Also, the risk of data entry errors would decrease.

Whilst looking at the comparisons, the clerk and the committee felt that Scribe Professional would be the most suitable package to meet the council's requirements as this enabled more users (which would be beneficial at audit time to give the auditor access and not have to provide a large number of manual files. It also allows invoices to be created within the same system, allowed attaching files to records and digitalised the VAT reclaim process.

The clerk and the committee agreed that it would be best to begin using the new system from the beginning of the next financial year (1st April 2024) and the committee therefore proposed to approve the purchase of this system at a monthly cost of £49 + a one off set-up fee of £349 and put this to full council for approval.



Proposal to approve costs for new accounting system & recommend to full council for approval:

Proposer: Cllr Winton
Seconder: Cllr Barrett
All In Favour.

10.2 Internal Auditor – To appoint April Skies Accounting as the internal auditor for 2024/25.

It was agreed by the committee that the current internal auditor's rates were extremely competitive.

The Clerk advised that they were happy with the service provided by them at the recent interim internal audit in December and the previous clerk was also extremely happy with the service provided during previous audits.

Proposal: To appoint April Skies as the interim internal audit for 2024/25 at a cost of £290 + travel expenses.

Proposer: Cllr Winton
Seconder: Cllr Philip
All in Favour.

11 Finance and HR Committee Terms of Reference – To agree draft ToR's and recommend to full council for approval (subject to any changes by the committee).

The Clerk advised that there was one small proposed change to the Finance and HR Committee's Terms of Reference. This was to change the membership from consisting of 5 members to consisting of up to 5 members to allow the committee to continue should one member resign from the committee.

Proposal: To agree the draft ToR's and recommend to full council for approval.

Proposer: Cllr Winton
Seconder: Cllr Barrett
All in Favour.

12 Risk Management Assessment – To approve latest Risk Management Assessment.

The committee reviewed the latest Risk Management Assessment and approved this with no proposed changes.

Proposal: To approve the latest Risk Management Assessment and recommend to full council for approval.

Proposer: Cllr Winton.
Seconder: Cllr Barrett.
All in Favour.

13 Fixed Assets Register – To review and approve Fixed Assets Register.

The committee reviewed the latest version of the Fixed Assets Register and approved this with no changes.

Proposer: Cllr Winton.
Seconder: Cllr Philip
All in Favour.



<p>14 Risk Assessments – To approve the latest Risk Assessments.</p> <p>The committee reviewed the latest Risk Assessments and approved these on the basis that the spelling error in the work ‘virus’ on page 7 is rectified. Clerk to action this.</p> <p>Proposal: To approve the latest Risk Assessments with rectification of spelling mistake:</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Secunder: Cllr Barrett All in Favour.</p> <p>15 Matters for information only arising after the preparation of the agenda which the Chair agrees to take as urgent.</p> <p>The clerk advised that she had finalised with the Landlady of The Starting Gate Public House where the second community defibrillator was to be installed (to the right-hand side of the building as you are looking at it in the beer garden). The public house has agreed to cover the costs of heating the defibrillator cabinet (approx. £5 per annum).</p> <p>The clerk advised that the cheapest quote received from an electrician to install this is £365 + VAT. The clerk declared that this quotation has come from a company of which her husband is a director and she is a paid employee.</p> <p>Proposal: To approve the quotation to install the second community defibrillator at The Starting Gate Public House at a cost of £365 + VAT and recommend to full council for approval.</p> <p>Proposer: Cllr Winton Secunder: Cllr Barrett All in favour.</p> <p>16 Date of Next Meeting – TBA</p> <p>The clerk advised that future dates would be set at the Annual Council Meeting in May.</p> <p>Cllr Winton closed the meeting at 20:17</p>	
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Signed:	Name (print):	Date:
	Position:	

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