



Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee held on 1 August 2023 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, East Street, Wareham at 7.00pm.

Committee Members Present: Councillors K Critchley (Chairman), D Budd (Vice Chairman), M Cotton, Z Gover, V Green, M Russell, D Robinson, C Turner

Officers present: N Gray, Town Clerk, G Pettifer, Deputy Clerk

PRF 014/23 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr K Green.

PRF 015/23 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

PRF 016/23 Public participation time

There was 1 member of the public present who spoke in respect of item 13.

PRF 017/23 Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee, held on 20 June 2023, were **APPROVED** subject to the following amendments and would be signed by the Chairman following the meeting.

Minute No. PRF 009/23 should read "Wareham Burial Joint Committee" not Wareham Burial Board.

PRF 018/23 Matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

PRF 019/23 Grant of Monies to Alison Campbell Trust

The Chairman proposed with the Committee's agreement to move agenda item 13 to the next item to be discussed to allow the member of the public to leave the meeting should they wish.

Members considered the request from Cllr Russell and a number of viewpoints were given in respect of the mayor's expenses.

The Clerk noted that the Mayor's expenses budget was to cover the costs incurred for carrying out mayoral duties and was not an allowance. An allowance would incur PAYE and NI obligations, whereas expenses did not. Furthermore, it is not in the gift of any Councillor to grant Council monies without a formal resolution from Council.

Cllr Cotton proposed that the Mayoral expenses remained for that purpose only and the Alison Campbell Trust be encouraged to apply for a grant through the Council's formal grant process.

It was **RESOLVED** that the request be declined with the Mayor's expenses being contained for the purposes of expenses only and the Alison Campbell Trust be encouraged to apply for a Grant through the Council's formal grant awarding process.

PRF 020/23 Payment of outstanding creditors

Members queried transaction number 250 in respect of the budget it had been allocated to, and transaction number 246 which wasn't clear why the entry was against the VAT and not the Net amount. The Clerk confirmed she would follow these up by email with members.

PRF 021/23 Bank Reconciliation – June 2023

Cllr Budd noted the name of the Wareham Burial Joint Committee was incorrect on the reconciliation. The Clerk noted she had changed the details in the accounts system so would look into why this had not pulled through on to the report.

The Clerk noted that the totals for the receipts and payments on the reconciliation were dated from 1 April 2023, but the transactions provided were for the respective month being reconciled.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the bank reconciliation for June 2023 and was signed by the Chair.

PRF 022/23 Quarterly Budget Report

The budget report for quarter 1 was received with no queries.

PRF 023/23 Investment Policy

Members considered the Investment Policy which the Clerk noted provided compliance with Financial Regulations and provided better protection for the Council finances.

Cllr Budd noted there should be a capital R for resources at 3.7(i).

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendment the Investment Policy was approved.

PRF 024/23 Grants to Local Organisations Policy and Application Form

Members considered the policy, and the following amendments were agreed:

- Grant Application Process, amend No.7. to read “.... however, the Committee may accept applications at other times for consideration at its meeting in November.”
- Conditions of Funding, No.5. “in adequate” be changed to “inadequate”.
- Conditions of Funding, No.5. Full stop at the end of the paragraph.
- Conditions of Funding, No.8. To state “.... in any one Town Council Financial year.”
- Conditions of Funding, No.15. To state “.... the end of the Town Council’s financial year in which....”
- Notes to application form. 5(e) change “village” to Town.
- Notes to application form. 5(d) and (e) to be a separate section 6 and 7, with further revised numbering.
- Application form. Correct the numbering on the application form which showed two number 5’s and no number 10.
- Application form. Remove the Clerk’s name at the bottom of the form to enable continuity of the form in future years.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Grants to Local Organisations Policy and Application form with the above amendments.

PRF 025/23 Review of Internal Audit

The Clerk provided further quote information which had been received from the two Auditors who had not responded before the papers had been sent out. These were £1,925 + VAT and £1,250 no VAT, which added to the quotes of £1,400 no VAT, £885 + VAT and Mileage.

Members discussed the quotes and struggled to find an equitable comparison between them.

The Clerk noted that the current Auditor had not had the benefit of one complete year with her as Clerk and RFO, and the new accounts system, which had provided greater transparency and efficiency, so would recommend that the Auditor not be changed if Members were unsure.

Cllr Critchley felt this was a pragmatic approach and noted it would be a new Council next year, and they may wish to appoint accordingly. Cllr Cotton proposed the Clerk's recommendation as the sensible way forward.

It was **RESOLVED** to not change Auditor for the current financial year.

PRF 026/23 Remembrance Sunday Road Closure

Members considered the quote provided and agreed the service had been very good in 2022, and there were not enough resources to cover the closure inhouse.

It was **RESOLVED** to accept the quote for the road closure management provided by Amberon Ltd at a cost of £2,320.72 inc VAT, to be paid from the Civic Events budget.

PRF 027/23 Any other items the Chairman deems urgent

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the nature of the business to be transacted.

The Clerk provided a verbal update and read a letter from a leaseholder tenant of the Council which had been received the day of the meeting and advised that a meeting of the Buildings Project Working Party would be called as soon as possible, with recommendations returning to both Policy Resources and Finance and Full Council as appropriate.

PRF 028/23 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee was scheduled to be held at 7.00pm on 12 September 2023.

Chairman.....

Date.....