



FAIR OAK & HORTON HEATH PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE** meeting held on Monday 9 July 2024
at 10.00 am at the Parish Office, 2 Knowle Park Lane, Fair Oak

Present: Cllrs Couldrey, Douglas (Chair) & Chivuchi.

Officers in attendance: Joanna Cahill, Responsible Finance Officer and Melanie Stephens, Clerk.

Apologies: Cllrs Barrett, Forfar, Higby, Marsh & Tennent

PUBLIC SESSION

No members of the public were present.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest raised in connection with an agenda item.

2. MINUTES OF MEETINGS (PAPER A)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2024 be noted.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Douglas moved that Cllr Couldrey be elected Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee for the ensuing municipal year. The motion was seconded by Cllr Chivuchi. There were no other nominations.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Couldrey be appointed as Vice-Chair for the ensuing municipal year.

4. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (REPORT B)

The Committee considered the Parish Council's current financial position against the approved 2024/25 budgets.

The total budget agreed by the Council for the 24/25 financial year was £645,438. Members were informed that all budget codes were currently within budget with the exception of business rates for Woodland Community Centre which was 25% above budget. Members requested that this be queried with Eastleigh Borough Council.

RESOLVED:

(a) That latest budget position as at 30 June 2024 be noted; and

- (b) That the Finance Officer query the business rate fee for Woodland Community Centre with Eastleigh Borough Council.

Action: Jo Cahill

5. FINANCE RISK ASSESSMENT (REPORT C)

The Committee considered the Council's Finance Risk Assessment.

In relation to the Council's fidelity cover, members queried whether this was sufficient and requested that the Finance Officer make enquiries regarding this and increase the cover should budgets allow.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council's Finance Risk Assessment be approved; and
(b) That the Finance Officer increase the fidelity cover for the Council.

Action: Jo Cahill

6. MARKETING STRATEGY (REPORT D)

The Committee considered the draft strategy for marketing of Council halls for hire and other services.

The strategy was requested by the Committee with the objective of increasing the hire of buildings, particularly the Parish Office, to maximize the Council's income.

Members suggested that further effort could be made to increase the Parish Office's roadside presence through large banners and reducing the hedges along Botley Road, signposting potential hirers to the building.

RESOLVED:

That the marketing strategy be approved.

Action: Carly Giles/Mel Stephens

7. WORK PROGRAMME

Members requested that the Budget Task & Finish Group scheduled to take place on 3 September be moved to 13 September and that the Finance Committee meeting scheduled on 6 December be moved to 2 December at 10am.

RESOLVED

- (a) That the Work Programme be noted; and
(b) That the Budget Task & Finish Group meeting scheduled to take place on 3 September be moved to 13 September and that the Finance Committee meeting scheduled on 6 December be moved to 2 December at 10am.

Action: Mel Stephens

8. ENERGY REPORT (REPORT F)

The Committee considered the progress made against the energy audit and proposed actions as a result of this such as the switch to cheaper and green energy suppliers, the installation of solar panels at the Pavilion and best practice methods for energy consumption.

Members were informed that the outstanding complaint with SSE regarding overcharging at the Horton Heath Community Centre was now being dealt with by the Energy Ombudsman. The Deputy Clerk was monitoring this matter and would report back as and when appropriate.

The success of the installation of the solar panels at both the Parish Office and Woodland Community Centre was noted, particularly the energy cost reduction to the Council. Due to the success of these installations, and the increase in the usage at the Pavilion, members were happy to support the commencement of a solar retrofit project at the Pavilion, with the Deputy Clerk investigating outside funding support for this.

In considering other energy saving methods, and particularly the proposal for clothes drying cupboard at the Parish Office, members requested that a full project proposal be submitted as part of the budgeting process. Members suggested that light sensors could be added to community buildings to reduce electricity consumption.

Members passed on their thanks to the Deputy Clerk for a thorough report and the progress made against the energy action plan.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report and the energy saving measures set out in the Energy Audit at Appendix 1 be noted;
- (b) That the Deputy Clerk be given delegated authority to commission green energy suppliers, seeking the best tariffs for all parish owned sites;
- (c) That the Deputy Clerk be instructed to seek quotations for solar installation with battery storage at Lapstone Pavilion and investigation outside funding sources; and
- (d) That Officers submit a project proposal as part of the budgeting for 2025/26 to the Budget Task & Finish Group for the installation of a drying cupboard at the workshop.

Action: Michelle Leadbitter-Allen

Signed

Chairman

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