



Finance Committee Meeting - Minutes Monday 25th March 2024

Meeting held in Rogate Village Hall Pavilion starting at 7.00pm.

Parish Councillors in attendance: Chairman Adrian Collins (AC), Max Harwood (MH) and Angie Simonds (AS).
Clerk: Debbie Harknett.

There were no members of the public in attendance.

Chairman: Adrian Collins adrian.collins@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk	www.rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk	Clerk: Debbie Harknett clerk@rogateparishcouncil.gov.uk
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- 1) **It was noted the meeting would not be recorded.**
- 2) **Election of vice-chair** – AC nominated MH which was seconded by AS; MH agreed to do it for a year.
- 3) **Apologies for absence** were received and accepted from Octavia Pollock (OP).
- 4) **Declarations of interest** – none.
- 5) **The Minutes of last meeting** held on Monday 27th November 2023 were approved to be signed by the Chairman as a true record.
- 6) **There were no representations from the public.**
- 7) **Chairman's report** – AC had nothing to report not covered elsewhere on the agenda.
- 8) **Review of expenditure against budget 2023/24**
 - a) AC went through the expenditure now we are almost at year end which had been in line with expectations though interest received while holding the Operation Watershed funds had been a bonus. He explained there are some expected costs to come: playground/outdoor gym leases and maintenance which should be no more than £200; Unity Bank charges £18 but we should also receive some bank interest.
 - b) AC noted the accounts are reasonably healthy and should increase reserves by £9,000 with general reserves increasing by almost £7,000 bringing them to £31,000. Ideally these funds should be equivalent to a one year's precept or at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of a year – our precept was £39,850 this year so the £25,000 reserves we held had fallen quite a lot below the ideal because the precept hadn't been increased for a number of years reserves were spent instead. We are now trying to address this shortfall and understand the importance of maintaining reserves.
- 9) **To consider council pre-payment card**
 - a) AC reminded the meeting the council should have its own payment card and should not rely on that of a Clerk or Councillor for meetings its payments. He then explained the Soldo card is no longer available but the Unity Bank offering through Lloyd's bank seems to be favoured by Parish Councils. There is an initial set up fee of £50 with a monthly cost of £3. VAT cannot be reclaimed from unnamed receipts (like stationery) but it can be if the payment is made by a card in our name which should slightly increase the amount of VAT reclaimed.
 - b) A single card would be issued to the Clerk/RFO who has responsibility for safeguarding the card; controlling its use; obtaining and retaining VAT receipts and producing a monthly record of transactions. It will be authorised for purchases/payments that cannot be invoiced to the PC or paid by BACS and web-based purchases that require a payment card. It will not

be used for cash withdrawals without prior approval from the Chair or Chair of the Finance committee.

- c) We can appoint two program administrators, who both have the same access and he suggested the Clerk and the Chair of Finance.
- d) Normal working pre-payment amount held on the card to be £500 but it can be increased to cover an exceptional expense with the authority of the chair/chair of the finance Committee. BACS transfer to the card from the Unity Bank Account will be authorised monthly as per other transactions.
- e) Monthly reconciliation of card usage by reference to spreadsheet, supporting receipts and up-to-date statement of amount help on card produced by the issuer. Reconciliation to be undertaken by 2 PC members as part of the monthly bank statement reconciliation process.
- f) After discussion, AC's proposal of **resolution 'to apply to Unity Bank for a pre-payment card'** was seconded by MH and approved by AS.
- g) AC/Clerk will produce a policy on its use.

10) Zoom/Teams/Microsoft 365

- a) AC explained we currently pay approximately £150 per year for zoom which is still used for regular planning meetings and at other ad-hoc times. At the start of covid Zoom was the best option for remote meetings but Microsoft Teams is now also a good option and included within the Microsoft 365 package.
- b) The Clerk had personally had more than one Microsoft 365 licence so had provided one (without cost) to the Council but it was agreed this should be regulated and the PC have its own licence which currently costs £59.99 per year.
- c) After discussion, AC's proposal of **resolution 'PC to purchase a Microsoft 365 licence for use on its laptop'** was seconded by AS and approved by MH.
- d) Agreed to do a trial meeting using Microsoft teams and if it works to stop the zoom subscription.

11) Risk management

- a) Risk Management Policy review including new format for the risk register – this had been circulated prior to the meeting. AC explained we already had a register in place but this new format was recommended by our internal auditor.
- b) Review of risk register – members went through the register and agreed it was a living document that needed regular review.
- c) After discussion, AC's proposal of **resolution 'to accept the revised risk register'** was seconded by MH and approved by AS.

12) The next Finance Committee Meeting was scheduled to be held at 7.00pm on **Monday 29th April 2024 at Rogate Village Hall pavilion.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.33pm.

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Chairman

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Date