



**Minutes of the Meeting of Finance & Administration Committee held at 19:30
on Tuesday 8 April 2025 in the small hall of the Village Hall**

Present: **Councillors**
J Lortie (Chair)
A Craven
S Florek
L Hardy
V Papilio
D Sowry-House

In Attendance: Catherine Horsley (Town Clerk & RFO)
Daryl Pearce (Deputy Town Clerk) – Minute taker

Public Participation

There were no members of the public present.

FA 24/62 To Receive and Accept apologies for absence (LGA 1972 s85 (1))

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Joyce due to a prior commitment.

FA 24/63 To Record any declarations of interest Members to declare any interests, including Disclosable Pecuniary Interests they may have in agenda items that accord with the requirements of the Town Council's Code of Conduct and to consider any prior requests from members for Dispensations that accord with Localism Act 2011 s33(b-e) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

FA 24/64 Paper A - To Approve minutes of meeting held on 7 January 2025 LGA 1972, sch 12, para 41

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 January 2025 were **APPROVED**.

FA 24/65 Paper B – To Approve Accounts for Payment

Members raised the following queries:

- Line 14: Was the replacement padlock for grounds unit compound due to vandalism. The Clerk confirmed the padlock was replaced due to general wear and tear.
- Line 29: What was the Institute of Cemetery & Cremation Management (ICCM). The Clerk confirmed as the Burial Authority, the office team were able to seek guidance and advice from ICCM relating to any burials and/or transfer of burial rights in Corfe Mullen Cemeteries.

The Accounts for payment totalling £12,711.89 were **APPROVED**.

Paper C - To Receive and Note the Budget Monitoring Report for the quarter ended 31 March 2025

The Clerk presented the report, noting the report was not the final year end position and was for information only. The final year end accounts would be presented to the Full Council meeting on 27 May 2025. There was a predicted underspend up to 31 March 2025 of circa +£153,500. It was noted circa £80,000 would be used to meet the deficit of the 2025/26 financial year budget/precept.

The Clerk confirmed the Council was in a strong financial position up to 31 March 2025. However, the Council's general reserves were at the higher limit of the recommended amount to hold of between 3-6 months operating costs.

Members raised the following queries:

- Could the predicted underspend be utilised on outstanding projects such as road safety improvements i.e. pedestrian crossings in the village. The Clerk confirmed £20,000 had been allocated in the 2025/26 financial year budget for road safety improvements. However, Cllr Sowry-House noted pedestrian crossings came under Dorset Council as the Highways Authority who had £2.66m allocated in their 2025/26 financial year for road safety improvements across Dorset including Julians Bridge improvements.
- Could the predicted underspend over and above amount required to meet the deficit of the 2025/26 financial year budget/precept, Village Hall/Council Office improvements and proposed transfer of General Reserves to the Earmarked Reserves for the Sports Pavilion Redevelopment Project be allocated to Capital & Exceptional expenditure for the Men's Shed initiative.

Members discussed the benefits of the Men's shed initiative and felt accelerating the project with additional funding would be beneficial to both young and older generations and joined up with some of the Council's other initiatives.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval to Full Council to allocate any underspend over and above the amount required to meet the deficit of the 2025/26 financial year budget/precept, Village Hall/Council Office improvements and proposed transfer of General Reserves to the Earmarked Reserves for the Sports Pavilion Redevelopment Project be allocated to Capital & Exceptional expenditure for the Men's Shed initiative.

The Budget Monitoring Report and Reserves Balances Report up to quarter ended 31 March 2025 was **NOTED**.

Paper D – To Review and Note Actions from the Internal Audit Report

The Clerk presented the report, noting updates to the open actions as follows:

- Line 3: Consideration of the impact on the budget/precept levels going forward, as a result of the likelihood of Public Works Loan repayments for the proposed Sports Pavilion Redevelopment Project.
- Line 6: Asset Register had been updated, with items listed above £250.
- Line 8: IT policy to be drafted and reviewed at the next meeting scheduled on 8 July 2025.
- Line 9: Transaction Testing policy to be drafted and reviewed at the next meeting scheduled on 8 July 2025.
- Line 10: Reappointment of Internal Auditor to be discussed on his next site visit scheduled on 30 April 2025 to complete year end work.

Members discussed the timeline for the proposed Sports Pavilion Redevelopment Project, along with funding opportunities and potential phasing of any Public Works Loan. The Clerk confirmed the Project & Community Engagement Officer was due to

start on Tuesday 22 April 2025 who would be leading the community engagement for the proposed project as well as supporting the Planning Consultant with developing the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Actions from the recent Internal Audit Report were **NOTED**.

FA 24/68 Paper E – To Consider and Approve Funds Transfer from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserves

The Clerk presented the report, noting the following updates:

- Grants – Village Hall underspend is £31,732.67 due to works to Village Hall/Council Office enclosed porch and small hall extension being incomplete.
- Transferring underspend from the 2024/25 financial year from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserves for the Sports Pavilion refurbishment/rebuild project, reduces the amount required via an application for a Public Works Loan and provides monies immediately available to engage with the Project Manager/Architect to get the project underway.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval to Full Council as follows:

- Transfer underspend of £31,732.67 under Cost Centre 69 – Grants/CMVH into Capital Earmarked Reserves under Office Porch, retitled Council Office/Village Hall Improvements.
- Transfer of £70,000 from General Reserves to Earmarked Reserves for the Sports Pavilion Refurbishment/Rebuild Project.

FA 24/69 Paper F – To Review and Approve Fund Transfers

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval to Full Council fund transfers from October 2024 to February 2025 from the Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF) to top up Co-operative Bank Operating Account.

FA 24/70 Paper G – To Review and Approve Grants to Local Organisations Policy for the 2025/26 Financial Year

The Clerk presented the report, noting during the budget setting process, the Council agreed to increase the Small Grants Programme budget line from £8,500 to £12,000 to enable awarding small grants twice yearly and/or provide smaller grants to smaller organisations who may not have all the necessary requirements, i.e. financial accounts.

Discussion took place relating to the flexibility of the funds to be awarded based on the strength of the application and the Committees awareness of grants awarded in each round. Members felt a £200 limit should be set for smaller organisations as detailed under 2.4 of the Grants to Local Organisations Policy.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval to Full Council the Grants to Local Organisations Policy, application and monitoring forms, setting the limit to £200 for small organisations who may not have the necessary requirements as detailed under 2.4 of the Policy.

FA 24/71 Paper H – To Consider and Approve Purchasing of IT Related Items

The Clerk presented the report, noting the following updates:

- a) Replacement DECT (Digital) Phone Handsets:** Current phone system did not have the capacity for two new starters.
- b) Replacement Network Switch:** Current switch did not have the capacity for two new starters.

- c) **Additional Office Hardware/Software for New Starters:** Hardware and software for Corfe Mullen Youth Trust new starter to be reimbursed.
- d) **Office/Grounds Mobile Phone Contract:** Cancellation notice had been provided to the current mobile phone provider. Upgraded mobile phone to be progressed due to the current phone not fit for purpose.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend approval to Full Council for the following:

- a) **Replacement DECT (Digital) Phone Handsets** at a total cost of £511.25+VAT.
- b) **Replacement D-Link Switch** at a total cost of £525+VAT.
- c) **Additional Office Hardware/Software for New Starters** at a total Cost for hardware £2626+VAT (£1353+VAT to be reimbursed by Corfe Mullen Youth Trust) and software £54.52+VAT per month (£27.26+VAT per month to be reimbursed by Corfe Mullen Youth Trust).
- d) **Office/Grounds Team Mobile** at a total annual cost of £38.16 for a 30-day rolling sim only Lebara contract.

FA 24/72 **Matters for forthcoming agendas** No decisions can be taken¹

There were no matters for forthcoming agendas.

FA 24/73 **To Agree a date and time for the next meeting** – Tuesday 8 July 2025 at 19:00 in the Small Hall of the Village Hall, Towers Way, Corfe Mullen.

FA 24/74 **Close of Meeting at 20:36**

Signed as a correct record of the meeting.....*Date*.....

¹ Councils cannot lawfully decide items of business which are not specified in the summons/agenda (LGA1972 sch 12, paras 10(2)(b) and Longfield Parish Council v Wright (1918) 88 LJ Ch 119)