



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Thursday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7pm at Cuxton Library, Bush Road**

**Present:** Cllr Chalker (Chair), Cllr Jensen, Cllr Thorley, Cllr Wilson and Cllr White.

**In attendance:** Cllr Burley, Cllr Nightingale and Cllr Chamberlain. Mrs N. Jackson, Clerk,

There were no members of the public present.

**9. Apologies for absence**

None.

**10. Declarations of Interest (DPI, conflict of interest and personal interests) and alterations to the Register**

None.

**11. Minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2023 - for approval**

No amendments were required. Cllr Chalker proposed to accept these minutes as a true record of the meeting. Cllr Thorley seconded the proposal. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved to accept these minutes as a true record of the meeting.*

**12. To elect a new Vice Chairman for the finance committee**

Cllr Chalker stated that he intends to stand down as Chair of the finance committee and explained that he will do so at the end of the next full Council Meeting. Cllr Chalker said that he would be voting for Cllr Burley as the next Chair of the Finance Committee, and suggested therefore that it would be easier to elect both a Chair and a Vice-chair at the same time. This matter was therefore deferred by Cllr Chalker.

**13. Review of bank balances held in relation to the compensation limit of the financial services compensation scheme**

Cllr Chalker requested to look at this matter later when discussing the reserves. Cllr Thorley stated that there was no need to defer this point as all bank balances were within the limit of £85,000. Cllr Chalker questioned the amount of the limit but after clarification, all councillors agreed.

*It was resolved to accept that all bank balances were within the compensation limit of the financial services compensation scheme.*

#### **14. Approval to transfer money into Barclays community account**

Cllr Thorley explained that she is currently dealing with pre-approved payments in liaison with the new clerk, whilst the changes to the mandates are occurring. She explained the system being used, how checks are occurring and that she is prepared to continue giving her time to do this, whilst the new clerk is brought onto the payment system. Cllr Thorley also explained that the community account balance is running low and will require a transfer of money into this account urgently.

Cllr Burley suggested that there used to be a regular payment of £5000, that was transferred into this account on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. Cllr Thorley clarified that that process had not been occurring for the last few months. Cllr Chalker proposed that this process is reinitiated. Cllr Wilson seconded the motion. All councillors voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved to transfer £5000 into the community account on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month, to ensure regular payments can be made.*

#### **15. Review of CPC reserves**

Cllr Chalker stated that he wanted to discuss this matter after discussing the budget, as he felt that it would be a more appropriate order of business. Cllrs moved on to discuss the next agenda point.

At the end of the meeting, after the Budget and Precept were discussed, Cllr Thorley requested to revisit the agenda item of reserves approval.

There was a discussion surrounding why none of the recommendations from the previous Finance Committee meeting had been implemented. Cllr Chalker explained that he had asked for them to be deferred because they had not been brought to council as individual agenda items. Cllr Thorley asked if they could be considered now. Cllr Chalker stated that he would rather wait to discuss them at the next Full Council meeting as he has some suggestions of his own that he would like to make, including the renaming of some and potentially the creation of new reserves for land acquisition.

Cllr Thorley stated that councillors need to be mindful that those reserves had been developed and earmarked for specific reasons, some of which are still ongoing and some of which are not. Cllr Thorley also stated that Cuxton Parish Council are now in receipt of parishioner feedback in the form of the survey responses and that future actions/ projects should be closely linked to that feedback. Cllr Wilson agreed and mentioned the recommendations of the internal auditor.

Cllr Chalker proposed that decisions about reserves be deferred to December's Full council meeting. Cllr Thorley seconded. All councillors remaining at this point (4) voted in favour of this proposal.

*It was resolved to discuss the reserves at the main Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023.*

## **16. Budget 2023/2024**

A substantial conversation occurred regarding proposed expenditure for each area of council business. Including: staffing costs, street furniture, traffic surveys, woodland maintenance, playground equipment, maintenance of the pavilion and ongoing projects.

*Councillor Wilson needed to leave at 9pm and made her apologies.*

With all expenditure discussed, Cllr Thorley proposed that the proposed budget for the year totalled £65,761. This was seconded by Cllr Jensen. All councillors present voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved to recommend the draft budget for adoption at the main Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023.*

## **17. Precept 2023/2024**

Given that the proposed budget is broadly in line with the precept received in 2023/24 and that Cuxton Parish Council possess reserves of funds, it was recommended that no additional demand from the precept be made. Cllr Thorley wanted to make it clear that whilst Cuxton Parish Council will not raise their demand, Medway Council are likely to raise theirs, so parishioners' Council Tax may well increase overall, but the precept aspect of that will not increase.

Cllr Chalker made the proposal to keep the precept demand for 2024/25 at the 2023/24 rate. This was seconded by Cllr White. All councillors present voted unanimously in favour of the proposal.

*It was resolved to recommend that the precept demand for 2024/25 remain at the 2023/24 rate. This recommendation will be made at the main Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2023.*

## **18. Information Exchange**

A discussion occurred about the planning proposals for housing in Port Medway Marina. Cllr Nightingale confirmed that the clerk had invited representatives of Port Medway Marina to the February main council meeting.

