Minutes of the Resources & Personnel Committee Meeting

Held on 2nd December 2024 at 7.30pm in the Parish Office

Present: Cllr Mills (in the chair), Cllr Gregory, Cllr Booth, Cllr Sullivan, Cllr Simkin, Cllr Alker, and Jayne Cooper, Chief Officer

Public Open Forum

None present.

1. **To receive apologies and record absences**

   Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Ingram and Cllr Payne.

2. **To record any declarations of interest**

   Cllr Simkin declared an interest in personnel related discussions, as her mother is an employee of the Parish Council, as well as discussions around the request for a donation received from the Memorial Village Hall.

3. **To receive and confirm the minutes of the last meeting held on 8th October 2024**

   The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. **To consider any matters arising not elsewhere on the agenda**

   Since the last meeting, councillors were informed there had been a change to the photocopier lease. Further negotiations with the approved supplier and meant a Sharp laser copier had been delivered rather than an XBM ink jet copier at a reduced monthly cost. This was noted.

5. **To report of staffing and increase in National Insurance**

   The Chief Officer reported that the recently appointed Council Support Officer and Deputy Caretaker/Cleaner were both managing their roles very well. They are both also willing to help with council events and ad hoc duties such as the recent Christmas Lights Switch on.

   Bradleys Accountancy Services that manage the council's payroll services had submitted information relating to the increase in National Insurance which had been used to calculate the employment costs for 2025/26. The Chief Officer was asked to contact Bradleys to check if the council was eligible for any reduction as a small employer.

6. **To note new bank charges for community accounts**

   The Chief Officer reported that from January 2025, Lloyds Bank would be introducing charges to community accounts. The Parish Council has five accounts with Lloyds and the monthly fee of £4.25 would apply to them

all ie a charge of £51 per annum per account. Other costs for depositing and withdrawing funds may not apply to four of the accounts as they have very few transactions however the Allotments account would incur additional costs as some tenants pay allotment rent by cash or cheque (soon to be chargeable) rather than BACS. All tenants would be asked to pay by BACS but it is known that some tenants (mainly older tenants) do not use internet banking and would not be able to do this. This was noted and understood. The Chief Officer was asked to inform leaders of the community groups for which the Parish Council manages its funds about the new fees ie Best Kept Village, Public Rights of Way and Tow Path Restoration. The charges would be deducted from the funds they raise.

The Council has other accounts with the Cooperative Bank but as discussed in previous meetings, it is not possible to have additional community accounts with The Cooperative Bank.

7. To consider audit fees for the next three years

Details of a fixed fee received from the internal Auditor, Sandie Morrie, were discussed. It was agreed to use the services of the same auditor for the next 4 years. It was noted that the audit fees would remain the same for auditing the accounts for the current financial year, 2024/25. It was agreed to accept the quotation of a fixed price of £250 plus VAT plus milage for auditing services for the years 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28.

8. To consider a budget and precept for 2025/26

A draft budget was reviewed which had been calculated with figures presented from Open Spaces & Burial Ground Committee, Grosvenor & Events Committee and directly from suppliers who had confirmed fees for 2025/26. The Chief Officer, Chair and Vice Chair had calculated other costs taking into account inflation. The budget was discussed in detail and further amendments made. Subject to amendments as discuss and agreed, the budget for 2025/26 was approved.

To achieve a balanced budget, it would be necessary to increase the precept to £122,631.90.
This was agreed. Details of the reasons why the precept has increased would be published on the council's website and in GPN in the new year.

The budget and precept would be presented to Council at its meeting on 9th December.

9. To discuss insurance for 2025/26

The Chief Officer reminded councillors that in the new year it would be necessary to meet with insurers to discuss the Council's insurance requirements in time for renewal in May. Cllr Mills offered to assist.

10. To report on any funding applications

Cllr Webb is sourcing funding for Open Spaces projects and for the Heritage Group. The Neighbourhood Plan Working Group had received a grant of £3298.

11. To consider any requests for donations

Two requests had been received, one from the Memorial Village Hall requesting £500 towards the cost of refurbishing the floor and one from Katharine House Hospice to purchase three lockable boxes to retain medical equipment at £114 each.

As there was £600 remaining in the budget, it was agreed to donate £300 to both the Memorial Village Hall and Katharine House Hospice.

12. **To consider any Policy or Risk Assessment reviews**
    There are currently no policy or risk assessments due for review.

13. **To agree the date and time of the next meeting**
    21st January 2025 at 7.30pm