

**Minutes of the meeting of Finance & General Purposes Committee held on
Thursday 10th October 2024 at 6pm
at the Parish Council Office, Market Street, Devoran TR3 6QA**

Members present: Cllr Mike Steel, Devoran ward (Chair)
Cllr Richard Brickell, Feock ward
Cllr Anne Allen, Devoran ward
Cllr Brian Yates, Carnon Downs ward
In attendance: Debra Roberts, Parish Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer

1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed those present.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Cllr Hambly-Staite.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

RESOLUTION: CLLR ALLEN PROPOSED THAT CLLR YATES BE ELECTED AS VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE, SECONDED BY CLLR BRICKELL AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLUTION: CLLR BRICKELL PROPOSED THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH APRIL 2024 BE APPROVED AS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF DECISIONS MADE AND SIGNED BY THE CHAIRMAN, SECONDED BY CLLR STEEL AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

7. REVIEW OF APPROPRIATE STANDING ORDERS, NEW FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The Clerk had circulate the Financial Risk Assessment and Investment Strategy to members of the Committee as these needed to be reviewed regularly. There were no changes to the Investment Strategy only the formatting of the document had been updated. Councillors reviewed the Risk Assessment document and did not have any changes to make.

The Financial Risk Assessment had had the following wording removed 'From April 2018 the power to pay for activities/purchases is detailed for each invoice on the monthly payments schedule taken to full Council'. The Clerk explained this was onerous and time consuming for staff and did not currently happen.

RESOLUTION: CLLR BRICKELL PROPOSED THE FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY BE APPROVED AS CIRCULATED, SECONDED BY CLLR ALLEN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

The Clerk explained that she would bring a report to a future meeting outlining the changes to the new Model Standing Orders together with a new version and had circulated a short report on the changes to the new Model Financial Regulations and again would bring these to a future meeting.

**8. APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR AND REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT
END OF YEAR 2023/24 AUDIT**

The Clerk had circulated the proposal letter from Steve Hudson, Internal Auditor and his audit report for the year 2023/24 for Councillors to review.

RESOLUTION: CLLR STEEL PROPOSED THAT STEVE HUDSON INTERNAL AUDITOR BE APPOINTED AGAIN FOR THE NEXT YEAR AND THE AUDIT REPORT ACCEPTED, SECONDED BY CLLR YATES AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

9. REVIEW OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR CONCLUDED EOY 2023/24 AUDIT

The Clerk has had circulated the external auditors report for 2023/24, this was reviewed and actions noted.

RESOLUTION: CLLR BRICKELL PROPOSED THE ACTIONS BE NOTED FROM THE EXTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT, SECONDED BY CLLR ALLEN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

10. PUBLIC WORKS LOAN

The Clerk updated the Committee that the outstanding balance on the public works loan was £82,264.11 and of this years loan repayment amounts.

11. CORNWALL COUNCIL CALL ACCOUNT

The Clerk advised that Cornwall Council had contacted us to check if we wished to withdrawn the money we had in the Call Account (just over £1000).

RESOLUTION: CLLR YATES PROPOSED THAT THE MONEY REMAIN IN THE CORNWALL COUNCIL CALL ACCOUNT, SECONDED BY CLLR BRICKELL AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

12. INTERNAL CONTROLS POLICY

The Clerk had circulated the Internal Controls Policy for review by Councillors.

RESOLUTION: CLLR YATES PROPOSED THE INTERNAL CONTROLS POLICY AS CIRCULATED BE APPROVED, SECONDED BY CLLR ALLEN AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

13. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2024/24

The Clerk had circulated to Councillors the draft budget with a column showing the current year actual v budget, together with a report explaining any amendments and proposals on the figures included. The Clerk had also circulated the current reserves position to Councillors for review and this was considered and discussed at the meeting. It was noted that there were two allocations that should be updated, both the promotional banner and website revamp had come in at a much lower cost than allowed for in reserves due to be done inhouse rather than by external companies.

The following items were noted:

The Council would like to put some money back into reserves this year, insurance may go up as may utilities costs and these needed to be taken into account when finalising the budget. There were maintenance works needed to assets, including the front door of the Parish Office and windows and the gates in Devoran Park.

The Committee made several amendments to the draft budget and to break even on projected costs the precept needed to be in the region of £155K.

The Clerk advised that we had until 31st December 2025 to submit our precept request to Cornwall Council and in November expected the taxbase figures to be available so that an accurate forecast could be made on the impact of any change to the precept on a band D property. Full Council needed to approve the budget and precept request and this could be looked at at the November meeting and if a decision was not made or more information needed there was still time to take this for a final decision to the December meeting.

RESOLUTION: CLLR STEEL PROPOSED THAT THE COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL BE THAT THE PRECEPT REQUEST FOR 2025/26 IS £160K WHICH WOULD ALLOW £5K TO BE PUT BACK INTO RESERVES, SECONDED BY CLLR BRICKELL AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

14. OPENING NEW TRADE ACCOUNT

Cllr Brickell requested that a new trade account was opened with MA Griggs for items such as timber and gates.

RESOLUTION: CLLR ALLEN PROPOSED THAT THE CLERK ARRANGE TO OPEN A TRADE ACCOUNT WITH M A GRIGG, SECONDED BY CLLR YATES AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.28pm.

The next meeting would be arranged when necessary.