



## **Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance Committee held at Bishopstoke Methodist Church commencing at 7:35pm on 10 October 2023**

**Present:** Cllrs C McKeone, Hillier-Wheal, Lyon (Vice-Chair) and Thornton

**In Attendance:** Mrs S Thorogood (RFO to Bishopstoke Parish Council)  
Mr David Wheal (Clerk to Bishopstoke Parish Council)

**Public Attendance:** 0 members of the public were present.

**FIN\_2324\_M03/**

### **Public Session**

#### **19 Apologies for Absence**

19.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Winstanley

#### **20 To adopt and sign Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023**

20.1 The Minutes of the above meeting had been circulated prior to the meeting.

20.2 Proposed Cllr C McKeone, seconded Cllr Thornton, **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2023 be adopted as a true record.

#### **21 Declarations of Interest and Requests for Dispensations**

21.1 Cllr Thornton declared an interest in item 5 due to being involved with 12<sup>th</sup> Eastleigh Scout Group.

#### **22 To approve reports on Council finances**

22.1 The payments lists, statement of accounts and budget monitoring reports for August and September 2023 had been included with the document pack for the meeting.

22.2 The RFO also gave an update on current overtime spend for August and September 2023.

22.3 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Lyon, **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the reports on Council finances.

#### **23 To discuss the CIP list and agree any additions**

23.1 The CIP list spreadsheet and a report on the projects were included in the document pack distributed in advance of the meeting.

23.2 It was agreed to remove the following projects from the CIP list:

- Brookfield open space play area
- Church Road play area
- Outside Book of Remembrance

- Village WiFi
- Charging points at bus shelters

23.3 It was agreed to keep the following projects on the CIP list

- Community Trails/Wayfinding
- Brookfield MUGA – put to request a new estimate on costs
- Glebe Meadow skate ramp and zone enhancement
- Sewall Drive allotments
- Stoke Common Cemetery
- Bow Lake Gardens allotments
- Bird / Bat Boxes
- Walk signs
- Solar Panels
- Bishopstoke Memorial Hall
- Parish Council Office
- St Paul's Church
- Peter Dibden Memorial Scout Hut
- Whalesmead shopping area
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Digital noticeboards / public art
- Replacement bin / street furniture project
- Sensory Garden
- Defibrillators
- Community Development Workers
- Bottle filling stations / drinking fountains
- Sheltered respite benches
- Bulb planting
- Verge parking protection
- Dropped, kerbs and tactile paving around Bishopstoke Whalesmead and other locations
- Public Art

23.4 It was agreed to ask for an additional column on the spreadsheet to include a BIFFOH-wide project and move the following projects to be BIFFOH-wide and not only applicable to Bishopstoke

- Enhance public access to and use of Stoke Park Woods
- Y Zone youth centre
- Community Cinema

23.5 It was agreed to ask for the following projects to be moved to the Fair Oak & Horton Heath list

- Outside games tables (M/S/S)

23.6 It was agreed to ask for the following projects to be added to the CIP list

- Glebe Meadow Project
- Cemetery Boardwalk
- Underwood Road Allotment Shop
- Village Map boards
- Community Planters
- Book Swap/Library boxes
- Bishopstoke Beach rebanking

23.7 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr C McKeone, **RESOLVED** unanimously to approve the changes to the CIP list as detailed above.

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## 24 To consider savings accounts arrangements and agree bank mandates

24.1 The RFO has researched a range of potential new ethical savings accounts, details of which were included in the document pack

24.2 The recommendation of savings accounts arrangements was the following:

- To open a savings account with the Co-operative to put aside allotment deposits and keep some savings. This account would mirror the current account bank mandate.
- To keep £85,000 with the EBC savings account
- To invest £85,000 in an ethical 1 year bond with the Charity Bank
- To invest £85,000 in a limited access account with Coventry Building Society
- To invest £85,000 in an instant access account with Ecology Building Society

24.3 The Clerk was asked to email the Chief Financial Officer of EBC to get written clarification of the arrangements for the amount in the temporary loan/savings account should anything happen, as the FSCS limit of £85,000 would not apply in this scenario **Action: Clerk**

24.4 Except for Co-operative mandate, which has to mirror that of the current account, the mandates for the new accounts would include the Clerk, RFO, Cllrs Lyon and Thornton, with Cllr Winstanley also expressing an interest in joining any mandate required.

24.5 Proposed Cllr Lyon, Seconded Cllr Thornton, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously that the Council opens a number of new savings accounts as detailed above.

## 25 To recommend burial board fees for the year 2024/25

25.1 As the September Assets Committee meeting was cancelled, the recommended burial board fees for 2024/25 were brought to Finance Committee for approval. The full list of fees was included in the document pack.

25.2 Proposed Cllr Thornton, Seconded Cllr Lyon, **RECOMMENDED** unanimously to approve burial board fees for the year 2024/25.

## 26 To discuss the first draft budget for 2024/25 financial year

26.1 The first draft budget had been included with the document pack for the meeting. It included 6 months actuals and 6 months forecast for the full year 2023/24 as a basis to look forward to 2024/25. It also included a 4% increase to the grounds maintenance contract.

26.2 The budget was colour coded, as was requested during last year's budget process, into 3 colours:

- red for items that cannot be changed, such as salaries and insurance;
- orange for items that cannot be removed from the budget, but the figures could be amended from their original estimate;
- green for items that could be taken out of the budget completely such as events, travel tokens.

26.3 Since the document pack had been distributed, the Clerk had highlighted a number of changes required to various nominals:

- Increasing staff training costs by £1,000
- Increasing printer ink by £500
- Increasing Councillor training costs by £2,000
- Increasing noticeboard purchase costs by £2,500, although this would be funded by an ear-mark reserve
- Increasing noticeboard installation costs by £300, although this would be funded by an ear-mark reserve

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- Increasing Neighbourhood Plan costs by £4,000
- Decreasing travel tokens 2023/24 forecast and 2024/25 budget by £1,000
- Increasing bus shelter maintenance costs by £2,000
- Decreasing bins purchase costs by £2,500 as a budget exists for 2023/24 so unnecessary to buy similar number of bins in 2024/25
- Increasing play area equipment purchase costs by £5,000
- Carnival expenditure to be re-named events – the Full Council to discuss if £8,000 budget is too much
- Carnival income to be-named events income and an income budget increased £2,000

26.4 The salary negotiations between the NJC and the Government had not been finalised at the time of the Finance Committee meeting so forecasts would be adjusted accordingly when the final rates are agreed, hopefully in time for the Full Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November.

26.5 The RFO was asked to split out the potential new member of staff away from a red salary cost to a separate orange section as this potential new role has not been discussed or agreed by the People Committee. Current impact to the budget is just over £34,000 across salary, employer’s NIC and employer’s pension contributions, training and other staffing costs.

26.6 There were some discussions over the free reserves to precept percentage and potential precept rise needed to bring this percentage to the minimum 25% required. It is likely with not much other changes, a minimum of 10% precept rise needs to be considered.

26.7 Discussions for Full Council need to include funding of the Glebe Meadow project, the required amount for youth provision, and play area funding

26.8 The RFO was asked to make the required changes list above before the Full Council meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> November **Action: RFO**

## 27 Date, time, place, and agenda items for next meeting

27.1 The next meeting of the Finance Committee will take place at 7:30pm on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at the Bishopstoke Methodist Church.

27.2 Agenda items with supporting papers to the RFO by Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December.

*There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting at 21:35pm*

Chair's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clerk's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_