

Minutes of the **FINANCE & HR COMMITTEE** meeting held in the Parish Office, Lower Green Road, Pembury on **Friday 18 August 2023** at 2:00pm.



Councillors Present:

Cllr N Stratton (Chair)
Cllr S Harris

Cllr K Brooks (Vice-Chair)

Apologies:

There were none

Also in attendance:

Helen Munro (Clerk)

23/132. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** There were none.

23/133. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** There were none.

23/134. **MINUTES.** The minutes from the committee meeting held on 24 April 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

23/135. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.** The Chair welcomed Cllr Harris to the Committee meeting.

23/136. **CLERK'S REPORT.** The following report was **noted**:

- a. Accountability & Governance Return (AGAR). An update from the external auditor, Mazars, was still awaited.
- b. Computer Software. The Clerk reported that Parish Online software would shortly be purchased at a cost of £290 per annum.

23/137. **OPEN SESSION.** There were no members of the public present.

23/138. **GOVERNANCE & POLICIES.** The following were reviewed:

- a. Safeguarding Policy & Procedures. Following a review, it was **RESOLVED** that no changes were required.
- b. Code of Conduct. Following a review, it was **RESOLVED** that no changes were required.
- c. Councillor Co-option policy. Following a review, one minor amendment was agreed. It was **RESOLVED** that the amended policy be approved.

- d. Equality & Diversity Protection Policy. Following a review, one minor amendment was agreed. It was **RESOLVED** that the amended policy be approved.
- e. Information and Data Protection Policy. Following a review, one minor amendment was agreed. It was **RESOLVED** that the amended policy be approved.
- f. Whistleblowing Policy. Following a review, it was **RESOLVED** that no changes were required.
- g. Recruitment & Selection Policy. Following a review, it was **RESOLVED** that no changes were required.
- h. Social Media Policy. Following a review, minor amendments were agreed. It was **RESOLVED** that the amended policy be approved.
- i. Web Accessibility Statement. Following a review, minor amendments were agreed. It was **RESOLVED** that the amended policy be approved.
- j. Absence Policy. Following a review, it was **RESOLVED** that no changes were required.
- k. Capability Policy. Following a review, minor amendments were agreed. It was **RESOLVED** that the amended policy be approved.

23/139. **INTERNAL AUDITOR.** Quotes were circulated and discussed. It was **RESOLVED** that a recommendation would be made to Full Council for Mulberry & Co for 1 year.

23/140. **FINANCIAL INFORMATION.** Reports to 30 June 2023 were reviewed. It was **RESOLVED** that they be recommended to Full Council:

- a. Income and expenditure report.
- b. Bank reconciliations.
- c. Reserves.
- d. Concern about increasing costs and inflationary pressures was raised. As part of the budget process for 2024/25, it was agreed to review neighbouring local councils' earmarked reserves and how they built up funds for future requirements. To be added to the agenda for consideration at the next Committee meeting.
- e. Following a resident's suggestion at the Annual Parish Meeting in 2023 about accounting for earmarked reserve sinking funds, a review was taking place. This would be discussed at the next Committee meeting.

23/141. **RISKS.**

- a. There were no new risks.
- b. The risk assessment for Pembury in the Park was noted.
- c. The quarterly strategic risk register was reviewed, and it was **RESOLVED** that minor amendments be made.

23/142. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS OR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.** There were none.

23/143. **NEXT MEETING DATE.** Friday 17 November 2023 at 2pm in the Parish Office.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 3:13pm.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair