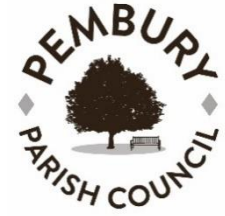


Minutes of the **FINANCE & HR COMMITTEE** meeting held in the Parish Office, Lower Green Road, Pembury on **Monday 22 January 2024** at 11:30am.



Councillors Present:

Cllr N Stratton (Chair)
Cllr A Birch

Cllr K Brooks (Vice-Chair)

Also in attendance:

Helen Munro (Clerk)

23/384. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** There were none.

23/385. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** There were none.

23/386. **MINUTES.** The minutes from the committee meeting held on 17 November 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

23/387. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.** There were none.

23/388. **CLERK'S REPORT.** The following report was **noted**:

- a. Insurance Renewal. The insurance renewal is due from 5 April 2024 and three providers will be approached to quote. Due to the timing of the renewal and FHR Committee meeting schedule, it will not be possible to review the renewal at a Committee meeting. Therefore, quotes will be obtained in time for the March Full Council meeting.

23/389. **OPEN SESSION.** There were no members of the public present.

23/390. **GOVERNANCE & POLICIES.** The following policies were reviewed, and it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the amended policies to Full Council.

- a. Standing Orders.
- b. Financial Regulations.
- c. Publication Scheme.
- d. Complaint Policy.
- e. Press Policy.
- f. Investment Strategy.
- g. Grievance Policy.

- h. Disciplinary Policy – a review of this policy was deferred to the next committee meeting.

- i. IT Policy Disclaimer – it was **RESOLVED** that this should be recommended to Full Council and signed by Councillors at each Annual Parish Council meeting.
- j. Scheme of Delegation – a review of this policy was deferred to the next Committee meeting.

23/391. **TERMS OF REFERENCE.** The following Terms of Reference were reviewed, and it was **RESOLVED** they be recommended to Full Council at the Annual Parish Council meeting:

- a. Terms of Reference – Finance & HR Committee
- b. Terms of Reference – Open Spaces Committee
- c. Terms of Reference – Planning & Highways Committee
- d. Terms of Reference - Internal Audit

23/392. **RISKS.**

- a. There were no new risks.
- b. There were no new risk assessments.
- c. The draft annual Council risk assessment was reviewed, and minor amendments agreed, and it was **RESOLVED** it be recommended to Full Council for approval.

23/393. **SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL.** The system of internal control was reviewed, and it was **RESOLVED** that the system of internal control be recommended to Full Council and that the system is effective.

23/394. **INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT.**

- a. The Interim Internal Audit report highlighted the following:
 - Supporting meeting papers should be published with all Council and Committee agendas with effect from May 2024.
 - Cash balances with NatWest exceeded the Financial Services Compensation Scheme limit of £85,000 and consideration be given to transferring funds to maximise the protection.
 - A review of the fidelity guarantee amount was required as cash balances had grown.
- b. The findings of the report were discussed, and it was **RESOLVED** that a recommendation be made to Full Council to publish all supporting

papers. Discussion of banking arrangements to follow later in the meeting.

- c. It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that a three year agreement be entered into with the Internal Auditor, Mulberry & Co.

23/395. **BANKING.** The banking arrangements were reviewed. Further research would be undertaken on additional bank accounts and reported at the next Committee meeting.

23/396. **FINANCIAL INFORMATION.** Reports to 31 December 2023 were reviewed. It was **RESOLVED** that they be recommended to Full Council:

- a. Income and expenditure report. There was a projected deficit on the budget. Part of the deficit was due to the approved £10,000 spending on converting streetlights to LEDs.
- b. Bank reconciliations. The bank reconciliations had been checked by Cllrs Brooks and Stratton for September to December 2023.
- c. Reserves. Clarification of the calculation for general reserves was reported. No changes were required to the Earmarked Reserves.
- d. Unbudgeted Memorial repair costs for unsafe memorials. One quote for £8,050 had been obtained and another was being sought. The additional quote would be ready for the next Full Council meeting.
- It was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to the Open Spaces Committee that they consider reducing the height of future memorials to 2 foot or under.
 - It was **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the work be phased to reduce the impact on the budget.
 - It was **RESOLVED** that the additional quote would be shared with Committee members and a recommendation for Full Council agreed by email.
 - It was **RESOLVED** that funds would be allocated in each future budget for remedial work to memorials.

23/397. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS OR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.** There were none.

23/398. **NEXT MEETING DATE.** Monday 15 April 2024 at 2:00pm in the Parish Office.

23/399. Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960 it was **RESOLVED** to excluding the public and press from the meeting for the next items of business on the grounds that it will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information at 12:45pm

23/400. **HR MATTERS.**

- a. Salaries for 2024/25 were reviewed and it was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council.
- b. Office Staffing and workload was discussed. A written request to be made before the matter was progressed. If the written request was received, it was **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation Full Council.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 13:22.

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair