

Minutes of the Finance Committee

A meeting of the **Finance Committee** was held on **Tuesday 26th March 2024** at **19:00 hrs** at the **Council Chamber, Garth House, Launton Rd, OX26 6PS**.

Present:

Cllr Paul Wheatley (Chairman)
Cllr Donna Ford
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Alisa Russell
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Damien Maguire (Substitute)
Cllr Nicholas Mawer (Substitute)
Cllr Christopher Pruden (Substitute)

In Attendance:

Helen Pool – Responsible Finance Officer
Jodi Clarke – Finance Assistant

17/2 Apologies for Absence

324 RESOLVED that apologies be received from the following Committee members alongside their substitutes:

- Cllr Tom Beckett – Cllr Damien Maguire substituted.
- Cllr Rachel Mallows – Cllr Chris Pruden substituted.
- Cllr Nick Cotter
- Cllr Sam Holland

18/2 Declarations of Interest

324 RESOLVED that no declarations were received.

19/2 Minutes of the Finance Committee

324 RESOLVED to **CONFIRM** the minutes of the Finance Committee meetings:

- **FIN04/2324** held on 19th December 2023 at 19:00hrs
- **FIN05/2324** held on 13th February 2024 at 19:00hrs

20/2 Public Session

324 RESOLVED that the Committee received no representations.

21/2 Finance Report

324 RESOLVED that Committee **NOTED & REVIEWED** the Income, Expenditure and Variances Report to the **First 10 months of the current financial year**.

Councillors asked what the cost of the next by-election is going to be, the Responsible Finance Officer informed the Committee that the cost would be £5,500.44.

Cllr Donna Ford expressed concerns regarding the cost of Temporary Staff (4003/105 pg.16) for a Locum Responsible Finance Officer compared to the current condition of the accounts.

Cllr. Alisa Russell **REQUESTED** a further report showing the key performance indicators (KPI) illustrating the percentage of the expenditure over income per cost centre.

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Signed

Dated

19:08 – Cllr Mawer arrived as a substitute for Cllr Holland.

5.3 . Other Information

i. Why was the Cherwell Lease regarding Whitelands, not yet signed?

We are waiting for it to be resubmitted by Cherwell District Council, they have passed it to a committee within Cherwell for approval.

The Town Clerk is **REQUESTED** to investigate the progress of the lease.

22/2 Bank Balances

324 **RESOLVED** that Committee **APPROVED** the bank balances.

The committee **NOTED** the bank balances for the year to 31st January 2024.

23/2 Payments

324 **RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** the payment schedules, totalling £376,679.91 since those reported to Finance Committee on 13th February 2024.

24/2 Aged Debtors

324 **RESOLVED** that the Committee **NOTED** the payment schedules, totalling £376,679.91 since those reported to Finance Committee on 13th February 2024.

Cllr Ford asked whether invoices have been sent for CAB, the Town Clerk informed the Committee that normally they apply for Grant Aid to cover their rent but have not applied this year.

25/2 Aged Creditors

324 Councillors **REQUESTED** the Responsible Finance Officer ask Cherwell District Council for a Statement of any outstanding invoices. Based on the outcome of the statement, Councillors will be asked to **APPROVE** one of the following three options:

- i. Record the cost as a creditor on the Balance Sheet for 7 years per date of the debt.
- ii. Write off the consolidated creditor.
- iii. Pay the invoices if they appear on the statement.

Cllr Mawer stated that if Sheep Street bollards are on this statement then they need to contested as these bollards do not work.

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTE & APPROVED** option 3.

26/2 Bank Mandates

324 **RESOLVED** that the Committee **APPROVED** the following to go to Full Council on the 20th May 2024:

- The request for the Responsible Finance Officer to be included on the Bank Mandates.

27/2 Grant Aid Applications

324 Grant Aid 23/24

RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** that the remaining Grant Aid for 23/24 be used on the basis that there will be no impediment for approving for the following applicants:

- Orchard Baptist Church.
- Claypits Community Allotments.

Grant Aid 24/25

Committee **REQUESTED** that the following applications for both 23/24 & 24/25 Grant Aid be investigated and brought back to the next Finance meeting:

- i. Hindu Society – 23/24 Grant Aid.
- ii. Bicester Hindu Society – 24/25 Grant Aid.
- iii. Bicester Pride – 24/25 Grant Aid.
- iv. Launton Village – 24/25 Grant Aid.
- v. Nai's House – 24/25 Grant Aid.

RESOLVED that Nai's House is to be deferred to the Policy Committee.

The Councillors **APPROVE** the expenditure of the Grant Aid applications received with the Reopening of Grant Aid Applications 2023/24 be taken from the 2024/2025 budget as there will be insufficient time for the funds to be spent, as per the Grant Policy, within the year they pertain to.

The Committee **REJECTED** the following application for Grant Aid 24/25:

- Heyford Park Social Committee – Unanimous vote from Councillors

RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** that the following applicants for Grant Aid for 24/25 with ARCh being reduced to £1,000:

- 1st Bicester Intrepid Scout Association.
- ARCh (Assisted reading for Children)
- Bicester Athletic
- Bicester Autism
- Bicester Evergreens
- Bicester Food Bank
- Bicester Widows/Widowers
- Bure Park Primary PTA
- One-Eighty
- Trinity Camera Orchestra
- Home Start Bicester
- Hanover Gardens

28/2 Utilities

324

RESOLVED that the Committee **NOTED** the report.

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Signed

Dated

29/2 Insurances
324

RESOLVED that the Committee **APPROVED** that the Responsible Finance Officer agree a minimal contract & enlist a broker to search for alternative options.

The Responsible Finance Officer is to correspond with the insurer following this meeting.

30/2 Nai's House
324

RESOLVED that the Committee **DEFFERED** this item of utility costs to the following Finance meeting after it has gone to the Policy Committee.

31/2 Fee's and Charges Review
324

The Committee **APPROVED** the increase for the Allotments with an increase for adults to pay £25.00 per annum and the OAP concession rate to remain at £22.00 per annum.

RESOLVED that the Chairman **DEFFERED** changes to fees for sports facilities to the following Finance meeting.

CLOSE OF MEETING: 20:26 hrs