



BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Finance Meeting held Remotely on Monday 11th May 2020 at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs Taylor (Chairman), Adams, Faraday, Marshall and Stannard, and the clerk Christine Downey.

- F1 To appoint a chairman of the Finance Committee for the year 2020/2021
RESOLVED: That Cllr Taylor be elected as Chairman of the Finance Committee for the year 2020/2021.
- F2 To receive apologies from members unable to attend
None.
- F3 To Receive and Record any member's Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in relation to any items on the agenda and to receive and decide members requests for DPI dispensations
None.
- F4 To agree the minutes of the previous meeting of 2nd January 2020
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of 2nd January be agreed and signed. Will be returned to clerk by Cllr Taylor by the end of the week.
- F5 Quarterly Internal Control checks, general. To discuss and agree how to perform whilst meetings are being conducted remotely.
It was pointed out that under the arrangements that are now in place to circulate accounts for payment twice a month, that at all future finance meetings members will already have seen (and have copies of) all invoices for payments in that quarter. It should, therefore, be possible for the finance committee to randomly select a number of invoices for checking, and confirm by reference to the copy cash book received with the summons, agenda and papers, that the payment transactions are fully and accurately recorded, in advance of the finance meeting.
It will still be necessary to randomly select several receipts for checking against the copy cash book at the remote finance meeting. This can be achieved by the clerk extracting the documentation for each selected receipt and presenting it to the camera, so as to be read by the members attending remotely.
RESOLVED: That at this meeting both receipt and payment transactions will be selected randomly for checking against the cash book, and that the clerk will present the documentation for each to the camera for viewing.
RESOLVED: That for future finance meetings, members will randomly select a number of payment transactions for checking in advance of that meeting, and will check that the payments are fully and accurately recorded in the cash book, upon receipt of a copy of the cash book with the finance meeting summons, agenda and papers.
RESOLVED: That at future finance meetings the members will randomly select a number of receipts for checking against the cash book, and that the clerk will present the documentation for each to the camera for viewing.
- F6 Quarterly Internal Control checks for the quarter to 31st March 2020
- 6.1 Payments and Receipts
RESOLVED: That the sample of payments & receipts checked were correct.
- 6.2 Bank reconciliation



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The bank reconciliation was checked against the spreadsheet for each account and the relevant bank statement.

RESOLVED: That the accounts reconcile with the March statements.

6.3 VAT returns

RESOLVED: That the VAT return for the quarter to March 2020 be signed as correct subject to the clerk checking the position re a 4p error.

6.4 Performance against budget

The 2019/2020 budget predicted a deficit of £6,220. The final position was that the income in the year exceeded expenditure by £777.21.

The difference between budget and actual figures is almost entirely attributable to special projects that were either completed under budget in the year (PHPF fence and Town Hall roof repair), or unfinished special projects to be continued in future years, or finalised in the current year, were the underspent budget is now in an earmarked reserve (street lighting renewal project, cemetery improvements, defibrillator programme, replacement public noticeboard and youth cafe door).

The 2020/2021 budget includes expenditure out of income of £5000 on updating the heritage trail and footpath. Current position is that following the walk of the trail by the footpaths group, Thomas Brown is now walking the route, and

A) All minor repairs are being undertaken while he is there and will be charged at his hourly rate for parish caretaker work as per his current contract, as this is the most economical way to deal with the minor matters,

B) He is preparing a quote for the larger repairs, to be presented to the council for consideration as soon as possible,

C) He is looking into a source for new trail marker discs (and costs) because it's becoming difficult to distinguish the Heritage Trail from other paths.

6.5 Legitimacy of direct debits and standing order checked (per F29 of last minutes)

RESOLVED: Clerk to update the direct debit list on the bank account tomorrow.

RESOLVED: Councillors to review the updated direct debit list and confirm their legitimacy by the end of the week.

6.6 To complete the Parish Council Internal Control Checklist

RESOLVED: To be completed and signed by Cllr Taylor by the end of the week as subject to item 6.5 above.

F7 To review position of allocated and unallocated reserves

This year's budget includes £8000 out of reserves for new benches. Current position is that the benches have been ordered and delivery is awaited from Glasdon.

F8 To discuss and agree arrangements for making payments by cheque whilst meetings are being conducted remotely

RESOLVED: That cheques may be signed "other than at a council meeting" in the current exceptional circumstances by virtue of Financial Regulation 6.6.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk will leave the cheque book with completed cheques (for which payment has been approved and a signed payments schedule is held) in the clerk's office and that two signatories will separately sign them this week.

F9 To discuss and agree arrangements for making grant payments in absence of Annual Parish Meeting

RESOLVED: Clerk to write to Bentham Carnival asking if the grant is still required, in view of the cancellation of the event for this year.

RESOLVED: To proceed with the other grant payments.



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- F10 To discuss and agree amendments to the NALC Model Financial Regulations
RESOLVED: That the proposed amendments to para 11.1.a.ii, footnote 3a, and footnote 3b are approved.
RESOLVED: That the proposed inclusion of the paragraph from the NALC Model Financial Regulations relating to charities to be included in the Bentham Town Council Financial Regulations.
RESOLVED: That, subject to some minor corrections to the proposed wording, that the paragraphs describing the robust and effective internal controls in use by the Council in relation to internet banking agreements, to be included in the Bentham Town Council Financial Regulations.
- F11 To discuss payment of Society of Local Council Clerks membership from 2020 (joining fee £15 + membership £227 = £242)
RESOLVED: Agreed and approval for payment to be made for subscriptions budget. But Clerk to try and get joining fee waived, argue that its renewal of a lapsed fee, not joining.
- F12 To discuss Clerk training for the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), and the costs involved, which are: -
SLCC course registration fee £360 (increasing to £410 Sep 2020), and
YHRTP (Yorkshire and Humber Regional Training Partnership) course mentoring/tutor fee £300.
RESOLVED: Agreed and approval for payment to be made form training budget.
- F13 To receive and consider Minor items and items for the next agenda
RESOLVED: Review of caretakers' performance to be conducted by Councillors Taylor and Faraday, to include review of hours worked and standard of deep clean of town hall.
RESOLVED: Clerk to forward checklist of caretake duties to Cllrs Taylor and Faraday.
- F14 Date of next meeting: **To be advised at full council meeting on 18th May 2020**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.21