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Porlock



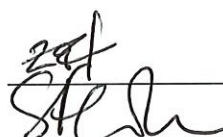
Parish Room
Old School Centre
Porlock
Somerset, TA24 8NP

Parish Council

**Minutes of the Porlock Parish Council Finance & HR Committee Meeting,
The Old School Centre, Thursday 5th December 2024, 6:30 pm**
Copies of minutes and non-confidential reports are available on request

Councillors Present: D McCanlis, S Colson and D Heath

Also present: Clerk Johnathan Jones

Signed:  Dated: 29/1/25

Min Ref:	Minutes	Action
FH-2024-138	Apologies S McCanlis	
FH-2024-139	Declarations of interest & pecuniary interests No declarations were made.	
FH-2024-140	Items to be dealt with after the public and press have been excluded. The Chair asked if there were any items that they felt should be discussed in closed session. There were no items proposed requiring the public, including the press to be excluded.	
FH-2024-141	Minutes for the FHR Committee meeting held on the 25th September 2024 Committee RESOLVED to approve the minutes with no amendments. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair. PROPOSED: Cllr. D McCanlis SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTED: IN FAVOUR	
FH-2024-142	Action Log Update The Clerk gave an update to the committee on key FHR specific actions: FHR-2024-133 - Opening of Amazon prime account – still outstanding C-2024-231-a & b - Banking Signatories – Still working with NatWest on the addition of the two new signatories. There is a contradiction who has and who hasn't completed the registration. New registration emails will be issued and once completed ID checks are carried out allowing additions and changes to be completed.	
FH-2024-143	Public Participation There were no members of the public in attendance at the meeting.	
FH-2024-144	Finance and HR Committee's role and responsibilities There was a discussion about the role and responsibilities of the Committee and its significant role in regard to financial review, reporting and stewardship of public funds. To support these aims, the Clerk is producing some guidelines to help with transparency, consistency of approach and encourage greater challenge where appropriate.	

In addition there is now a monthly RFO report to help Council better understand any financial matters and work continues on the financial processes that Council use to make and authorise payments and processes. These processes will be brought to committee for consideration in January (As noted in item 14 - Outstanding items).

- FH-2024-145** The Clerk agreed to have first draft guidelines for the stewardship process by the January Q3 budget review **JJ**
- FH-2024-146** **Update on the Q2+1 Budget report**
The Clerk gave an update on the Q2+1 budget review. All previously reported errors have been corrected. Spend against budget in many areas is on plan however there are some areas where they are exceeding plan, however some of these are one off payments. To provide an additional level of clarity there is a requirement to understand forecast spend for the remainder of the year.
- FH-2024-147** Clerk & Cllr. S Colson will do a piece of work at the end of Q3 in the beginning of January to forecast Q4 spend providing a forecast on year end. **JJ/SC**
- FH-2024-148** Clerk to look into Rialtas system to understand if there is an easier, more transparent way to run the budgets that includes forecasting and earmarked reserves. **JJ**
- FH-2024-149** **Earmarked Reserves Report**
The Clerk took the Committee through the new Earmarked Reserves Report. The purpose of the report is to record actual, committed and forecast spend. The report has been created to help Council understand the status of the Earmarked Reserves. Earmarked reserves should be used for specific projects and not recurring year on year operational spend. Current EMR forecast includes known spend in 2025-27. Further work is required to understand how Council 'top up' reserves in budget forecasting from 2026 onwards, understand what reserves are required for specific projects and agree what recurring costs should be managed through the operational budget.
- FH-2024-150** **Allotment Trust Report**
The Clerk took the Committee through the report. Invested stocks are due to mature in March 2025 and the Committee will be asked to consider and make recommendation to Council in the new year once notice and options have been received. It was also noted that historically when the fund was set up in 1976 it was resolved that 2/3rds of the dividend should be used for the benefit of the community and 1/3rd should be reinvested to provide additional capital and income. Currently grants from the community are paid from the Unity Trust Account and not the NatWest Allotment trust Account.
- FH-2024-151** Clerk will review how allotment trust fund dividends are better administered. **JJ**
- FH-2024-152** **Line by Line 2025/26 Budget Review**
Committee went through the budget line by line, making a small number of amendments to the draft budget.

General Observations

- Basis of 2.6% inflation rate forecast inflation, source budget statement CPI.
- Grounds maintenance additional works still to be determined by Council.
- Earmarked Reserves policy and process needs review including how to continue replenishing reserves year on year.
- How to fund grants/community projects on an ongoing basis.

- Unsafe memorials repair costs insufficient funds in EMR, needs further work to understand phased plan and true year on year maintenance cost.
- Devolution priorities to be funded from EMR in the first year once known.
- Free parking in both car parks on Saturdays to be considered by Working Group.

FH-2024-153 8.42pm Meeting Extension

Committee RESOLVED to run the meeting as long as needed to finish the line by line review of the budget and the remaining items

PROPOSED: Cllr. S Colson SECONDED: Cllr. D McCanlis VOTED: IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-154 Committee summarised that in this 2025-26 budget the majority of the increase in budget and therefore precept is driven by salaries. This is as a direct result of taking back into the office operational tasks/duties that have historically been carried out by Councillors.

JJ

FH-2024-155 2025/26 Budget first draft to Council

Committee resolved to recommend the 2025/26 Budget first draft to Council subject to the agreed amendments.

PROPOSED: Cllr. S Colson SECONDED: Cllr. D Heath VOTED: ALL IN FAVOUR

FH-2024-156 Admin Officer Recruitment

The recruitment advert is live with postings on the Council website and Facebook page as well as on the Porlock Facebook page. An advert will be published in the West Somerset Free Press on the 6th December for one week. Subject to interest and applications received an advert will be posted on the jobs website Indeed on the 2nd of January if required. In the first two days there have been four requests for the job profile and application forms.

FH-2024-157 Outstanding Items

Committed noted the agenda items deferred to the next committee meeting:

- To consider the procedures for making and reporting payments (ref: FH-2024-036)
- To consider/receive an update on Business Risks - Old School Centre security (ref: FH-2024-012)
- To receive an update on the Old School Centre Heating System Review (ref: FH-2024-011)
- To receive an update on banking arrangements (ref: FH-2024-048)

FH-2024-158 Any Other Business (for information only)

There were no other items

FH-2024-159 Budget Working Meeting on the 16th December 2024

Committee confirmed they would hold the budget working meeting in their diaries and a decision would be taken following the first review of the budget on the 11th December if the meeting was still required.

JJ

FH-2024-160 Next Meeting

Committee noted the next meeting would be held on the Tuesday 29th January 2025 at 6:30pm in the Parish Room, the Old School Centre

Meeting closed at 9.14pm

