

Minutes of the Fressingfield Parish Council Finance Committee meeting held in Sancroft Hall, Fressingfield on Tuesday 1 October 2024 at 2pm

Present: Councillors Hilary Day, Garry Deeks, Tom Lindsay and Nick Stolls.

Also in attendance: No members of the public; Andy Parris, responsible finance officer (RFO).

- 1 Cllr HD chaired the meeting and welcomed everyone.
- 2 Apologies for absence: There were none.
- 3 Members' declarations of interest and requests for dispensations. There were none.
- 4 Notification by councillors of any lobbying related to an agenda item. There were none.
- 6 To discuss the RFO report and review the second quarter payments and receipts Having discussed a new style of reports, the committee was satisfied that payments and receipts (actuals) were in line with the council's budget, after the second quarter. It agreed that at future meetings, the 'actuals compared to budget' report would include comparisons to the full year's budget. The committee noted that when the budget is revised in December, it will record the £10,000 grant received for the review of the neighbourhood development plan. Councillors were able to see what different reports that can be produced within the Scribe, the council's new accounting package. The committee agreed that in the future, the RFO should combine several standard reports. The combination would include a reconciliation report, payments to be approved and receipts to be acknowledged, and the current levels of the reserves (general and earmarked). The committee discussed the community infrastructure levy (CIL) reports, including when payments will be made for the Red House Farm estate. All CIL payments need to be spent over a period of five years from receipt. The committee discussed the reserves that are currently part of the council's budget plan. It agreed to i) discuss with the organisers a grant that is being held for the Good Neighbours Scheme ii) discuss with the organisers whether Playtime will use this year a grant allocated to it for new storage facilities.
The committee was informed that due to a clerical error, HMRC imposed a £100.00 fine on the council. After an appeal, HMRC did not reduce the fine.
- 7 To consider a proposal from Fressingfield Bowls Club The committee agreed to join a project with the club to carry out the annual maintenance on the bowling green. As part of the project, the council will buy topsoil up to a value of £999.00. If the topsoil will cost more than that, the matter would be moved on to the full council to discuss.
- 8 To review the council finance regulations The committee discussed the recommendations from the RFO regarding the new Finance Regulations, as drawn up by the National Association of Local Councils. The committee agreed on changes and will propose these to the full council on 15/10/2024. Many of the changes could be summarised as, 'more ways to prevent misuse of the public money.'
- 9 To review the arrangements for staff performance reviews The council has separated the clerk and RFO jobs. Therefore the staff performance review policy needs amending. The committee will propose to the full council changes that will cover this new staffing structure.



- 10 To conduct risk assessments of the council's responsibilities The committee reviewed the amended risk assessments and confirmed they were an accurate description on the council's procedures.
- 11 To receive the external audit report for 2023-24 The council noted that the external auditor report for 2023-24 had no additional matters to record. The committee congratulated the RFO on his management of the audit process.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.50pm.

Signed:

Chair

Date