



## PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL

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### **MINUTES OF A FINANCE & POLICY MEETING OF PULBOROUGH PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON THURSDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 AT THE SPORTS & SOCIAL CLUB**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Hands (Chair), Court, Lee & Mote

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr H Quenault (Clerk)

*The meeting opened at 7.34pm.*

**74. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and reasons were received from:

Cllr Cambell (HDC Commitment)

Cllr Hunt (Personal Commitment)

Cllr Clarke (Illness)

Cllr Ellis-Brown (HDC Committee)

**75. Declarations of Interest and Changes to Register of Interests**

There were no changes to Councillor's register of interests.

There were no changes to the declarations of interests.

**76. Minutes**

The Committee **RESOLVED** to approve the Minutes of the Meeting Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 as a true and accurate record of the proceedings, and that the Committee Chairman sign them.

**77. Public Speaking**

There were no public speakers present, therefore the Chair moved onto the next item on the agenda.

**78. Parish Council Finances**

During the review, it became evident that our accounts were generally in line with our expectations. However, there was a significant underestimation of the interest received, which was offset by higher-than-anticipated salary expenses. Notably, the Elections bill of over £8,000 hasn't been factored into the budget yet.

Several pre-meeting considerations by Councillors were also discussed. The issue of paying rates on the Sports Pavilion and whether it should be continued in the future, is under scrutiny. The Deputy Clerk is currently investigating this matter, utilising her expertise in council tax to determine its necessity.

There was a discussion about the perceived level of support from the IT department, with the decision to increase spending on IT this year yielding positive results. The actual support cost received was deemed incredibly reasonable, surprising the Clerk.

It was acknowledged that pantry income might lag due to accounting delays and stationery expenses are expected to decrease significantly in the next financial year,

as much of the expenditure was incurred early on. Additionally, there's anticipation of a reduction in the salary for village sweeping.

A council member raised concerns about the £11,242 remaining unspent in the youth club budget, noting it as a significant underspend. The Clerk clarified that this surplus could be allocated to earmarked reserves pending committee decision.

In a separate discussion, the allocation of funds for Christmas trees was debated regarding its benefit. Some questioned whether the significant expenditure on the trees could be better utilised in other budget lines for community grants. However, others argued that the Christmas trees have always been a tradition in the community.

It was proposed that at the start of the next financial year, the Council should reconsider whether to continue funding Christmas trees or allocate the budget to other community improvements, such as enhancing Swan Corner and creating a year-round mural.

It was **RESOLVED** that the decision on whether to continue funding Christmas trees will be brought to the Full Council for discussion.

Overall, the Clerk expressed satisfaction with the outcome, deeming it a positive budget and predicting a small surplus by year-end.

Members **NOTED** bank reconciliations for Cashbook 1, Cashbook 2 & Cashbook 3, a summary of income & expenditure and the statement of earmarked reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

#### **79. Pulborough Pantry – Creation of Ringfenced Amount**

The Clerk spoke about the need for the creation of the ringfenced amount as it serves several crucial purposes in financial management and accountability. It ensures transparency and accountability by allowing for the clear tracking of funds specifically allocated for the pantry. This transparency is vital for ensuring that funds are used appropriately and in accordance with the intended purpose.

Additionally, having a separate account designated for the Pulborough Pantry enables more effective financial planning and management. It allows organisers to allocate resources strategically, budget for upcoming expenses and ensure adequate funds are available to sustain the initiative over time.

From an auditing perspective, the separation of funds for the Pulborough Pantry facilitates the auditing process significantly. Auditors can easily trace the flow of funds in and out of the designated account, verifying that transactions are legitimate and in compliance with relevant regulations or organisational policies.

This segregation of funds helps maintain integrity and accuracy in financial reporting, reducing the risk of errors or mismanagement.

Separating funds for the Pulborough Pantry ensures clarity in financial reporting. It distinguishes the pantry's financial activities from those of other initiatives or departments within the organisation, preventing confusion and enabling stakeholders to understand the specific financial performance of the pantry. Clear reporting also enhances communication with donors, supporters, and other stakeholders, as they can see precisely how their contributions are being utilised.

It was mentioned that by partnering with Horsham Matters who are funding dry goods, this now streamlines the service meaning less spend will occur going forward.

It was **RATIFIED** new ringfenced fund for the Pulborough Pantry and to ratify opening a new account within our current bank account specifically for the Pantry.

**80. Cricket Club – Potential Resolutions & New Lease Details**

It was proposed that before bringing it back to the finance committee, a joint meeting should be arranged to ensure fairness for all the sports clubs utilising the field and other vested interests. This would address any discrepancies in service provision. Concerns were raised regarding the higher expenses faced by the Cricket Club compared to other clubs. There is a shared desire to support all our sports clubs. The chair expressed willingness to lead such a meeting.

Members **RESOLVED** to set up a meeting, made up of the Finance committee for the sports clubs and have an open-discussion over service provision.

**81. Payments**

Elizabeth Hunt Expenses	£73.54
Harry Quenault Expenses	£59.72
Natalie Smillie Expenses	£25.00
Len Ellis-Brown	£27.90

***The meeting closed at 8.08 pm.***

.....Chair

.....Date