



MINUTES

Committee: Finance and Policy Committee
Date: Tuesday 18 March 2025
Time: 10.00am
Venue: Parish Council Office

Present

Cllr Jan Evans (Chairman)
Cllr David Bridger
Cllr Catherine Fileman-Wright
Cllr Mike Warner

Also Present

Samantha Parkin (Clerk)

08/2025 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hodges.

09/2025 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS / REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No declarations of interest or requests for dispensations were received.

10/2025 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Warner, seconded by Cllr Bridger, and **resolved** to **accept** and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 11th February 2025 as a correct record.

11/2025 STANDING ITEM – CLIMATE AND ECOLOGY EMERGENCY:

The committee noted the Council Declaration to embed the climate and ecology emergency declaration across all Council services, activities, plans, and other relevant work, considering the environmental impact of decisions, ensuring a fully integrated approach to mitigating the impact of climate change.

12/2025 GRANT APPLICATIONS

A summary of the Grant Applications had been circulated prior to the meeting.

Moretonhampstead Twinning Association – Acknowledged the 50th Anniversary, committee wishes to support.

Community Swimming Pool – Acknowledged as a fantastic asset for the community.

Green Hill Arts (MDT) – Some of the application is for revenue cost such as room hire and staff costs. The committee wishes to support the carnival with a small grant.

Moretonhampstead Association for Youth – The Clerk noted that no supporting documentation had been received. However the committee would like to help them as it is a great initiative for the youth of Moretonhampstead.

It was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Fileman-Wright, and **resolved to recommend the award** of the following grants:

Moretonhampstead Twinning Association - £250.00

Community Swimming Pool - £500.00

Green Hill Arts (MDT) - £100.00

Moretonhampstead Association for Youth - £450.00 subject to providing the requested documentation.

Total Awarded £1,300.00.

13/2025 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Model Financial Regulations reviewed by the Clerk and circulated with the agenda. Cllr Fileman-Wright noted that the regulations are a good reminder of the extent of the Responsible Finance Officer's (RFO) responsibilities.

It was proposed by Cllr Fileman-Wright, seconded by Cllr Evans, and resolved to **recommend** to the full council to **approve** the Financial Regulations.

14/2025 STANDING ORDERS

The Standing Orders reviewed by the Clerk had been circulated with the agenda. Cllr Fileman-Wright suggested adding the following sentence 'The Council will consider value for money in its decision-making process' to standing order 18.e

It was proposed by Cllr Fileman-Wright, seconded by Cllr Evans, and **resolved** to recommend to the full council to **approve** the Standing Orders with the suggested amendment to standing order 18.e.

15/2025 RISK ASSESSMENT

The Risk Assessment reviewed by the Clerk had been circulated with the agenda. The clerk suggested amending the Best Value Accountability figure of £2,500 to £3,000 to be in line with the updated Financial Regulations. Cllr Fileman-Wright suggested moving the risk rating column to the end to clarify that it reflects assessment after mitigation.

It was proposed by Cllr Fileman-Wright, seconded by Cllr Evans, and **resolved** to recommend to the full council to **approve** the Risk Assessment with the suggested amendments.

16/2025 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Statement of Internal Control reviewed by the Clerk had been circulated with the agenda. The clerk clarified that the only amendment she had made was to remove the internal checks on cheques as the council no longer use them.

It was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Fileman-Wright, and resolved to **recommend** to the full council to **approve** the Statement of Internal Control.

17/2025 TENDERING PROCESS

The committee reviewed the recent open spaces tendering process, acknowledging it as an excellent process aligned with NALC best practice and Financial Regulations.

It was proposed by Cllr Evans, seconded by Cllr Bridger, and resolved to **recommend** to the full council to **note** that the recent tender process had been reviewed in line with the model Financial Regulations. A minor improvement would be to ensure a councillor is present when tenders are opened. A key lesson learned is that the Financial Regulations make it clear that only the RFO can communicate with contractors. In the future, if any councillor is approached by a potential tenderer or contractor, they must immediately refer them to the clerk. The council can only make decisions on tender information provided to it by the Clerk as our RFO.

18/2025 FUTURE BUDGET PRESSURES AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The clerk had circulated a report outlining potential future budget pressures and funding opportunities with the agenda.

The committee discussed staffing costs, such as appointing a locum clerk in the clerk's absence, should be considered and identified that the current reserve of £1,000 is too low and should be increased to £5,000 in next year's budget. The committee emphasized that staffing levels should be reviewed when undertaking new projects or considering future funding opportunities. A business case should be conducted, including a workload assessment and consultation with the clerk regarding impacts on day-to-day tasks. The staffing committee should conduct regular job evaluations following SLCC guidance.

The committee will monitor funding opportunities and commercial sponsorship, balancing opportunistic vs. need-based funding. A standing item will be added to the Finance and Policy agenda to review potential funding opportunities.

It was proposed by Cllr Fileman-Wright, seconded by Cllr Evans to **resolve to send the report to the full council to consider and note** that as part of the 2026/27 budget setting process the committee will take into consideration the report including the staffing costs discussed.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 10.53am.