



Goostrey Parish Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes for the meeting on Tuesday 4th April 2023, at 7.30pm
in the Village Hall Lounge

Present: Cllrs. Morris (KM) (Chairman), Sulej (JS)(Vice-Chairman), Rathbone (TR), Freeman (AF), O'Donoghue (IOD)

In Attendance: E Bambrook, Clerk to the Council

1. **Declaration of Interests:** No interests were declared.

2. **Apologies for absence:** None.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of 17th January 2023:**

Resolved: *The minutes of the meeting on 17th January 2023 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.*

4. **Actions from the Meeting of 17th January 2023:** All updates appear as items on the agenda.

5. **Financial Position vs. Budget for the year ended 31st March 2023:** The budget document was scrutinised by the committee and the Clerk's comments noted. It was agreed that the report produced by the accounting package was difficult to read in terms of the summary information. The Clerk was asked to provide additional figures within the summary or ask Scribe whether this could be provided. It was agreed that the Clerk would make this available for the next council meeting.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the Financial Position vs. Budget for the year ended 31st March 2023 subject to minor amendments to the style and presentation of the report.*

6. **Draft Unaudited Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023:** The unaudited accounts were received and scrutinised by the committee. The Clerk advised that the final Santander statement had not yet been received so the final balance for this account was not yet available. The Clerk was asked to look at the presentation of this report, particularly the labels for some of the headings so that it is clear that the majority of the council's reserves are earmarked. The Clerk will work with KM on this in readiness for the next council meeting and the Annual Parish meeting.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the Draft Unaudited Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 subject to the final Santander bank balance being confirmed.*

7. **Bank Reconciliations for the year ended 31st March 2023:** All bank reconciliations had been signed by the Chairman of the committee as an accurate record prior to the meeting, apart from the final Santander and year end reconciliation, as the final statement was still awaited. This would be completed before the next council meeting.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the bank reconciliations for the year ended 31st March 2023 subject to the final Santander statement being received and the final bank reconciliation signed by the Chairman.*

8. Reserves: The Councils Capital and Earmarked (Revenue) reserves were considered by the committee and the recommendations provided by the Clerk as follows:

- i. To use the £8,000 in the Support for the Village Hall Reserve to replenish the General Fund, which had been used to cover lost income caused by closures due to the pandemic, and earmark for further projects.
- ii. To transfer £10,000 from the General Fund into a new reserve for the Village Hall Recharge 2022/23. Awaiting an invoice from Cheshire East Council (CEC).
- iii. To transfer £6,668 from the General Fund into the Operating Reserve to cover one year's precept and the projected income from the Village Hall.
- iv. To create a new Grants and Donations Reserve, as agreed at the Finance Committee budget meeting, and transfer the underspend from the financial year 2022/23 of £2,674.81, to service approved grant awards totalling £1,928.
- v. To transfer £3,000 from the General Fund into the Grants and Donations Reserve, as agreed at the Finance Committee budget meeting, plus the £1,332 which has been released from the Support Village Hall Reserves into the General Fund, to service successful grant applications in 2023/24.
- vi. To transfer £388 from the Capital General Reserve into the Environmental Hedge Reserve to cover the overspend and close that reserve as the work is complete.
- vii. To transfer £753 from General Unallocated Reserves into the Village Hall Planting Project Reserve to cover the overspend and close that reserve as the work is complete.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to accept the Reserves position, pending the receipt of the final Santander statement and confirmation of the final balance. The Clerk's recommendations were approved in full.*

9. Arrangements for Internal and External Audit for the year 2022/23: The following arrangements were noted and confirmed:

- i. The Annual Governance and Return (AGAR) document must be with the External Auditor by 3rd July 2023. The Internal Audit must be completed first, followed by the two sections of the AGAR which must be approved at a full meeting of the Council before 1st July.
- ii. The AGAR forms will be approved by full council and then signed by the Chairman and the Clerk at the Annual Parish Council meeting on 23rd May.

10. Asset Register: The Asset Register was reviewed and approved. The Clerk advised that some of the items listed were for very small amounts of money. It was agreed this would be reviewed at the next Finance meeting along with approval of a de minimis limit for listing items on the register.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the Asset Register.*

11. Risk Assessment: The risk assessment, notes and recommendations were reviewed and approved by the committee.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the council's risk assessment.*

- 12. Standing Orders and Financial Regulations:** Both documents were reviewed by the committee; no changes were recommended.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations with no changes.*

- 13. Proposed change to the Clerk's Grade:** The Staff Committee proposed an increase to the Clerk's salary grade from SCP 24 at £16.16 per hour to SCP 25 at £16.64 per hour. The terms of the Clerk's contract of employment provides that the Clerk was appointed to a single salary point which the Council would review, along with hours of work, after 6 months service and thereafter annually on the anniversary of appointment. The committee considered the report in the document pack and the implications for the budget.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve that the Clerk is moved from SCP 24 to SCP 25 effective from 1st April 2023.*

- 14. Village Hall Recharge:** The committee agreed that all reasonable actions were being taken to establish contact with CEC to request that they provide an invoice for the Village Hall recharge. The council continues to set aside reserves to cover this each year. It was agreed that, in order to demonstrate willingness to pay, the Clerk would email the CEC Finance Director on a quarterly basis (in line with Finance Committee meetings) to request invoices for the recharges.

- 15. Minor Items and Items for the Next Agenda:**

Minor Items:

- The Clerk was asked to review the interest rates on the council's bank accounts to ensure that the most favourable interest rates were obtained.

Items for the next agenda:

- In depth review of the Asset Register and approval of a de minimis limit for listing items on the register.

- 16. Next meeting:** Tuesday 4th July 2023

PART TWO

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE ASKED TO RETIRE.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as extended by the Local Government Act of 1972, the press and public are excluded from the meeting for the discussion of the undermentioned items on the grounds that the publication of the matters would be prejudicial to public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Resolved: *The Parish Council resolves to move to Part Two to discuss staff matters.*

- 17. Staff Matters**

- 18. The meeting closed at 9.45pm**