



Goostrey Parish Council

FINANCE COMMITTEE

**Minutes for the meeting on Tuesday 30th January 2024, at 7.30pm
in the Village Hall Lounge**

Present: Cllrs. Morris (KM) (Chairman), Freeman (AF) (Vice Chairman), Rathbone (TR) Mooney (SM), O'Donoghue (IOD)

In Attendance: E Bambrook, Clerk to the Council

1. **Declaration of Interests:** No interests were declared.
2. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr. Hall
3. **Minutes of the meeting of 7th November 2023:**

Resolved: *The minutes of the meeting on 7th November 2023 were accepted as a true record of the meeting.*

4. **Financial Position vs. Budget for Quarter 3:** The committee reviewed the report and were content that there were no issues of concern.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the Financial Position vs. Budget for Quarter 3.*

5. **Statement of Accounts for Quarter 3:** The statement of accounts was received and scrutinised by the committee. There were no issues of concern.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the Statement of Accounts for Quarter 3.*

6. **Reserves:** The Council's Capital and Earmarked (Revenue) reserves were considered by the committee. The Clerk highlighted the need for the council to continue to be mindful of holding excessive reserves and that a review of the council's strategic plan would help with this.

The Clerk was asked to investigate whether the Earmarked Reserve for the contribution to the grant funding for the Booth Bed Lane Playground improvements could be transferred to a Capital Reserve using funds in the Capital General Reserve and Village Projects, with the corresponding sum transferred from capital into revenue reserves.

Resolved: *The committee resolved to approve the council's reserves position for Quarter 3.*

7. **Village Hall Recharge:** Reconciliation of 2021/22 and 2022/23 has still not been possible due to issues identified by the Clerk which include, but are not limited to, inaccurate coding and percentage splits. The school is working with CEC Finance to try to find a resolution and the school have advised that there continue to be similar issues with the current 2023/24 recharge.

The committee expressed concern that the ongoing issues account for a large amount of time spent by the Clerk, the school and CEC Finance in trying to arrive at correct figures for the recharge. The delay makes budgeting difficult and causes the council to hold additional reserves whilst work continues.

There was a suggestion that consideration could be given to proposing that all parties agree a flat fee for the recharge, increasing each year in line with inflation. This would assist with budgeting and would reduce the many hours spent trying to reconcile invoices to the recharge and correcting errors. The committee agreed that this proposal should be put before council for consideration and approval

in principle. If approved, the proposal should go to the Village Hall Management Committee and from there to the Finance Director at CEC. If agreed then there would need to be further discussions with all the relevant parties to agree an acceptable starting figure for the recharge. It was noted that this was not intended to form part of a renegotiation of the Joint Use Agreement.

Resolved: *The Finance Committee recommends that the council approves the proposal of a flat fee recharge in principle and agrees that further enquiries should be made in order to progress this via the Village Hall Management Committee and Cheshire East Council.*

8. **Financial Regulations:** The committee reviewed the council's Financial Regulations and identified that section 2.2 should be amended to clarify the language and reflect changes to the process, which were agreed to ensure that all bank reconciliations are adequately verified by the committee.

Resolved: *The Finance Committee recommends that the Parish Council approves the Financial Regulations document including the amendments to section 2.2 as follows:*

On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, the RFO will present bank reconciliations and bank statements (or similar document) for all accounts, to the Finance Committee for verification, at the Finance Committee meeting. This will be in addition to the regular bank reconciliation verification conducted by the Chairman of the Finance Committee. This activity, including any exceptions, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

9. **Standing Orders:** The committee reviewed Standing Orders as they relate to Financial and Accounting items 16 – 18 and no amendments were identified or requested.

Resolved: *The Finance Committee recommends that the Parish Council approves Standing Orders as they apply to Financial and Accounting items 16 – 18 with no amendments.*

10. **Minor Items and Items for the Next Agenda:**

An update on progress with Village Hall recharge discussions was requested as an item for the next agenda.

11. **Next meeting:** Tuesday 9th April 2024

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 Finance Committee resolves to move to Part Two to discuss confidential staff Matters*

12. **Staff Matters**

The meeting closed at 9pm