



DEEPING ST JAMES PARISH COUNCIL

The Institute, 38 Church Street, Deeping St James, Peterborough PE6 8HD

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Parish Clerk: Julie Fortnum

The minutes of the Finance, Policy and Personnel Committee meeting held in the meeting room at the Institute 38 Church Street Deeping St James PE6 8HD at **8.00pm on Tuesday 17 October 2023.**

Present: Councillors Howell, Hosking, Shinkins-Hoppe, Smith and Stevens.

24.27 To receive apologies of absence.

Apologies had been received and accepted from Councillors Gilbert and Halls

24.28 To receive any declarations of interest.

None declared.

24.29 To adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 15 August 2023.

Agreed and signed.

24.30 To receive the Clerk's report.

The Clerk has confirmed with Lincolnshire Association of Local Councils that DSJPC would like to continue using the Internal Audit Service that they provide to audit the financial year 2022/23. Confirmation has been received that an appointment will be made for an interim audit to take place in due course.

The Complaints Procedure, Equality and Diversity Policy, Training and Development Policy, Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy, Publication Scheme, Data Protection Policy and Data Protection For HR related data Policy, Risk Management and Health and Safety Policy have been updated in accordance with minutes 24.22 and 24.23 and added to the webpage.

The Clerk continues communicating with Barclays Bank Plc and Unity Trust to amend the banking mandates.

The Clerk has contacted South Kesteven District Council Grounds Maintenance Services to establish if they intend to continue offer external services from 2024 and if so asking them to provide a quotation for the Highway Verges, the Riverbank and Woody Heights Recreation Area. Two further contractors have also been approached for comparison quotations.

The Clerk is in communication with Solicitors regarding the lease for the land owned within the playing field and the transfer of ownership of Jubilee Park.

The 5 staff appraisals have been completed and the outcome of these considered by the Personnel sub-committee on 4 October 2023.

Councillor Shinkins-Hoppe asked for an update regarding the purchase of a Parish Council mobile phone. The Parish Clerk advised that she had investigated whether her phone had dual sim capability but unfortunately it had not. Discussion ensued about the best option going forward – purchasing new or reconditioned, or entering into a contract and also what model and budget. As this item was not on the agenda for decision the Clerk was asked to continue to investigate the options and put forward her findings for the purchase of one mobile phone at a reasonable cost to a future meeting.

24.31 To receive a report of the current financial position.

A report had been circulated to the members of the committee prior to the meeting advising that the bank balance as at 11 October 2023 was £298281.63 which included general reserves of £51,584.51 and earmark reserves of £100,145.30

Councillor Bowell raised concern about the lack of interest being received on the savings. The Clerk advised that the Barclays Business Premium account had received £805.26 in interest between 6 March 2023 and 4 September 2023.

It was acknowledged that options had been considered previously and that there had always been a reluctance to tie money into a long-term savings scheme which usually had higher returns however it was agreed that this would be considered again at a later meeting.

It was noted that further income received between now and the end of the financial year 31 March 2024 would be low as it would only be from the second instalment of the SKDC community cleaning grant (£1,158.30), allotment fees (which at this point had predominantly been collected) and burial and memorial fees (which was an unknown figure).

24.32 To receive a report on the income and expenditure against budget for the period 9 August 2023 to 11 October 2023.

The committee agreed that the reports did not highlight any areas of concern.

24.33 To receive and consider the provisional budget recommendations for 2024/25 from the Allotments, Cemetery, Planning and Transport, Recreation and Open Spaces Committees.

The draft budgets forwarded by the committee were noted.

24.34 To consider all non-committee budget headings for 2024/25 in preparation for precept setting.

Councillor Bowell proposed that a new budget heading should be created to build reserves to purchase a replacement vehicle in say 3 to 4 years. A figure of £5000 per year was suggested.

The Clerk advised that quotations for the grass cutting contracts were being obtained. He also suggested applying 10% to all administration budget code headings to reflect the rate of inflation – a figure that could be reduced if needed.

It was noted that staffing costs could not be considered until after the council meeting on 24 October 2023 when resolutions on the recommendations from the Personnel sub-committee would be known.

Councillor Shinkins-Hoppe also reminded the members of the request from the Deepings Leisure Centre Community Group CIC for a contribution towards the cost of re-opening the Deepings Leisure Centre should their expression of interest to do so be accepted by Lincolnshire County Council. It was noted that this could not be considered until confirmation that the bid had been successful was known and a business plan along with a constitution and accounts had been provided.

The budget for 2024/25 would be considered further at the next committee meeting by which time it was hoped that all the information required would have been known.

24.35 To agree the date of the next meeting – 8pm Tuesday 12 December 2023