



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE OFFICE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE OF MAWNAN PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 22ND APRIL 2024 AT 7.00PM IN THE RENDLESHAM ROOM, MAWNAN MEMORIAL HALL.

PRESENT: Cllrs Potter (Chair), Reid & Sadler

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs L Clements, clerk

484.24F **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – none noted

485.24F **MEMBERS TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS IN THE ITEMS ON THE AGENDA, REQUEST DISPENSATIONS OR NOTE ANY GIFTS OVER £50** - none noted

486.24F **PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS ON THE AGENDA** - none noted

487.24F **TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE HELD ON THE 22ND JANUARY 2024 AND THE CHAIRMAN TO SIGN THEM**

The wording or inclusion of several statements were discussed (specifically Items 480 & 482) and eventually a compromise on wording was agreed.

It was proposed by Cllr Reid, seconded by Cllr Potter and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January be approved and signed by the Chair

on a vote being taken the matter was approved unanimously

488.24F **TO BE ADVISED OF ANY INFORMATION PERTAINING TO PREVIOUS MINUTES, AMENDMENTS AND ACTIONS AGREED THEREIN.**

Cllr Reid questioned the changes made to the Financial Regulations as per "limits for contracts/ tenders" and who exactly was setting these. The clerk again explained that these were statutory EU/UK Government limits and related to the advertising of contracts – so for what amount of works being offered and where/how they needed to be advertised. He also questioned the section in item 480 about reviewing awarded contracts and the clerk explained that whilst we have fairly robust processes in place to draft and award contracts once these have passed tender and been given to a contractor there seems to be almost no onward checking by councillors other than occasional and unrecorded passing visits. There needs to be something more in place so that contracts are regularly checked against the contract specifications both during immediate works (such as the toilet refurb) or over the life of the contract (such as the graveyard cutting).

489.24F **TO REVIEW THE CURRENT DIRECT DEBITS AND TO AGREE THEIR CONTINUATION FOR 2024/25.**

It was proposed by Cllr Reid, seconded by Cllr Potter and

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January be approved and signed by the Chair

on a vote being taken the matter was approved unanimously

Cllr Reid said that he had been online / telephone to Lloyds to sort out his view of the parish & trust bank accounts – there still being an issue with his viewing the Trust details. Copies of the Trust bank statements was needed for him to be able to pass verification (although he did not mention Cllr Bate's access rights) which the clerk would provide to him this week. He was also unsure if Cllr Potter had been given access or not or at what stage this was.

490.24F REVIEW OF END OF YEAR BUDGET POSITION 2024/25 (4th quarter/End of Year) AND DISCUSSION OF ANY AMENDMENTS FORESEEN. (including signing off on End of Year & 4th quarter's bank statements)

The Solar Grant Fund income of £8721 was still due for 23/24 and had been chased on several occasions. According to the agreement it should be in by the end of February at the latest, or interest charges could be levied.

The end of year budget was reviewed, with total spend for the year coming out as £102K; well above the £67K budgeted but this was due to significant spending from Earmarked Reserves (JPF Sinking fund, toilet refurb, new offices).

The clerk said that she had now received back the £5012 noted as unclaimed VAT following a VAT126 submission at the beginning of April. She had also prepared a new VAT126 claim for April – for about £3300 mostly relating to the new office build – but this could not be submitted until the end of the month so would be left ready for the new clerk. It would be essential that these claims be made frequently until the office had been completed so we would not find ourselves seriously out of pocket by paying the VAT on invoices and not having this money come back into our accounts quickly.

Cllr Reid felt that with the council leading the MUGA Project (the clerk interjected and made it clear that this had not been agreed to – only that the PC be named on a grant application made by the MUGA Project Group as being Trustee of the Carwinion Playing Field) and the very late knowledge that the grant would be in the form of 'spend first & reclaim', not upfront funding, it would put us in a difficult position unless an immediate withdrawal notice of money from the Solar Grant Fund was put in.

The clerk said that although an amount had been ringfenced/ pencilled in for the MUGA project it was contingent on a proper grant application being made, as anyone seeking grants had to do. Cllr Reid did not feel this had to happen as we would be applying to ourselves but the clerk restated that the Solar Grant Fund was only being administered by the PC, it was not PC money to do with as we liked and that a process with the fund managers had been agreed in the original S106.

It was hoped that contact could be made with the CLUP team if/ when a grant was approved to see if there was any possibility of some up front funding to aid cashflow could be made.

Cllr Reid was to be given the contact details for Steven Parkinson, the CALC VAT advisor to get specific information on the position of the MUGA project (& eventually the JPF refurb) in regards to the issues with the joint funding, grant income and ability to claim back the VAT (under the VAT126 procedures) should the parish council be asked to take the financing of this project on from the Carwinion Trust.

491.24F TO DISCUSS ANY AND ALL NOTIFIED AUDIT REQUIREMENTS; TO INCLUDE SETTING THE DATE TO START THE PUBLIC REVIEW OF ACCOUNTS 2023/24 & THE RECEIPT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT.

The clerk explained that this was part of the statutory process for audit and she usually scheduled the dates for the Monday after the June PC meeting where the Governance &

Accounting statements (the list of questions that she read out for agreement) were done. She had left instructions for these to be on the June agenda and ass such prepared the Notice of Public Rights accordingly, covering the fixed beginning of July period required.

Once again Cllr Reid questioned the need for 2 audits. The clerk explained that Internal Audit was to ensure that our policies and processes were being done as they should and that External Audit was to confirm that proper management of Public Money. She also told councillors that this would be the last year for our Internal Auditor, Steve Hudson, as he was fully retiring and a new internal auditor would need to be found for next year – and quickly as Steve did a lot of smaller Cornish parishes and there would be a rush now to get someone aware of Local Council audit regimes. Ruth at Falmouth did do some limited IA work and it might be good to contact here asap.

It was proposed by Cllr Sadler, seconded by Cllr Potter and
RESOLVED that the report from Hudson Accounting, our Internal Auditor be accepted and any items noted be actioned

on a vote being taken the matter was approved unanimously

492.24F TO REVIEW THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2024/25 IN LIGHT OF THE YEAR END POSITION

There clerk had produced a revised budget for 24/25 based on the end of year figures as was normal. This saw the baseline spend decrease to £81,705 but this was without any Earmarked Reserves spend (£17K still pending on the MMH offices at minimum). This gave her concerns as it appeared that even based on projected minimum monthly spends money would be tight come August – with the PC almost depleted of funds.

It was decided not to update the annual budget but that very close monitoring of spending was to be done, with payments scrutinised thoroughly before being made.

493.24F TO DISCUSS THE EARMARKED RESERVES POSITION FOR 2024/25

The clerk explained that the reserves position for 24/25 was of concern but that the agreement to liquidate those reserves not deemed essential to cover cash flow was still in place. She did however remind councillors that elections were due in May 2025 and even if we did not have a physical vote expenses were still likely to be in the £2000 range for general administration so this pot should not be liquidated if at all possible.

Meeting finished at 8.10pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. All', written in a cursive style.