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Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council held at Community Hall - Newton Leys Pavilion on Tuesday, 27th February, 2024 commencing at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllrs K Ely, R Graham, R Haine, E Kelly-Wilson, E O'Rourke, U Osumili and Fernandes

Absent: Cllrs A Segebrecht and Joshi

Apologies: Cllrs S Browne

In attendance: Alison Brown (Finance Manager acting as Clerk to the Committee) and Delia Shephard (Town Clerk)

Min Ref

- FC23/24-91 **To note apologies for absence**
It was RESOLVED to note the apologies listed above.
- FC23/24-92 **To note councillors' declarations of interest in matters on the agenda**
There were no declarations of interest.
- FC23/24-93 **To approve the draft minutes of the previous meeting of the committee**
It was RESOLVED that the draft minutes of the previous meeting on 9 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.
- FC23/24-94 **Public Speaking Time**
There were no representations from members of the public.
- FC23/24-95 **To review and comment on any planning applications due for review by Milton Keynes City Council**
- FC23/24-95i **24/00195/FUL - 27 Denbigh Road MK1 1DT**
It was RESOLVED to make no comments on the planning application.
- FC23/24-96 **24/00253/HOU - 38 Rydal Way MK2 3DL**
It was RESOLVED to make no comments on the planning application.
- FC23/24-97 **To review and note a financial management information report showing income and expenditure against budget for the year to 31 January 2024**
It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.
- FC23/24-98 **To review and note cash and investment reconciliations to 31 January 2024**
It was RESOLVED that the cash and investment reconciliations be noted.
- FC23/24-99 **To review and note the council's balance sheet as at 31 January 2024**
It was RESOLVED that the balance sheet as at 31 January 2024 be noted.
It was RESOLVED that the list of individual transactions over £500 for the period be noted.
- FC23/24-100 **To ratify a list of payments made or due to be made to 29 February 2024**
It was RESOLVED that the list of payments made or due to be made, which had been



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published with the agenda, be ratified.

FC23/24-101 To ratify a schedule of accounts to be paid by direct debit during the Financial Year 2024-25

It was RESOLVED that a schedule of regular direct debits to be paid during the Financial Year 2024-25 which had been published with the agenda be approved with the inclusion of an additional 2 direct debits as listed below:

1. BT – the provision of broadband services to 21 Barton Road
2. SES Water – the provision of water to the Newton Leys Allotments.

FC23/24-102 To receive a report on progress with Electric Vehicle Charging Points at Newton Leys Pavilion and consider any next steps

The RFO informed members of the committee, that subsequent to the publishing of the agenda, Believe are now not using the pre-application process with MKCC; Believe are now applying for full planning application process, with an anticipated submission on 28 February 2024. The Clerk has provisionally drafted a letter to the planning department of MKCC in support of the planning application.

It was RESOLVED that the update report be noted.

It was RESOLVED to approve the draft letter (prepared) by the Clerk.

FC23/24-103 Sycamore Hall Update

The Clerk gave a verbal report detailing the actions to date since the last Full Council meeting, when it was agreed to proceed with the public consultation. It was noted that a special edition of the Neighbour was in the process of print with delivery to all Bletchley and Fenny Stratford residents. The on-line consultation was already live on the website with a closing date of 24 March 2024. The Clerk reiterated that the council is actively encouraging residents to participate in the consultation and tours of the site can be arranged for members of the public.

It was RESOLVED to note the update.

FC23/24-104 To review and note the review of the effectiveness of internal audit 2023/24

Members noted the document reviewing the effectiveness of internal audit and internal controls for the financial year 2023-24. The Clerk and RFO stated that the document should be prepared by the members on the basis that the internal auditor works on their behalf to ensure that the internal controls are put in place to safeguard taxpayers money, compliance to financial regulations and statutory guidance, and that financial risk is minimised.

The RFO brought to the attention of the committee that bank statements should be signed off by a member of the council on a monthly basis ensuring that they reconcile to the cash books.

It was RESOLVED that a member of the Finance and Governance Committee would sign off bank statements and cash books on a monthly basis; this would be done on a rota.

It was RESOLVED to note the review of the effectiveness of internal audit and recommend to Full Council on 2 April 2024.

FC23/24-105 To note increase of Basic Allowance for Parish/Town Councils agreed on 24



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January 2024 and to confirm that Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council will pay councillor allowances to elected councillors at the new rate of £1213 per year, from 1 April 2024

It was RESOLVED to note the report of the local IR panel approved by Milton Keynes City Council on 24 January 2024 which had increased the amounts for basic allowances for Town and Parish Councillors in the area by 4.48%. and the recommendation that Parish / Town Councils who pay allowances should track the MKCC basic allowance, as follows:

- Basic: Up to 10% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Quality Parish / Town Councils = £1,213 **or** Up to 7.5% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Non Quality Parish / Town Councils= £909.75
- Chairs: Up to 20% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Quality Parish / Town Councils= £2,442.60 **or** Up to 15% of the MKC Basic Allowance for Non Quality Parish / Town Councils= £1,831.95

The Finance manager confirmed that the an annual allowance of £1,213 would be reflected in future payments from May 2024 for those elected councillors claiming this allowance.

FC23/24-106

To review the annual financial risk assessment

The Clerk stated that the annual financial risk assessment had been prepared in the same form for a number of years; it has been updated into a more logical format and uploaded to the website. The Clerk highlighted to members the far right column, which detailed any further action required to mitigate the risk to the council. It was pointed out to members the additional risks of the Landscaping Contract and the Sycamore buildings project.

It was RESOLVED to approve the review and authorise officers to implement the actions highlighted in red.

FC23/24-107

To review the Asset Register

Members reviewed the reports providing the detailed asset register. It was RESOLVED to note the reports.

FC23/24-108

To approve the write-off of the debts in the attached document

It was RESOLVED to approve the write-off of the two items of debt totaling £107.84.

The meeting closed at 8.18 pm

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