**Minutes of the Saddleworth Parish Council Extraordinary Finance Committee held on Thursday 13th February 2025 at 7pm at the Civic Hall, Uppermill.**

**Present**: Cllr S Al-Hamdani (Chairman)

Cllr G Sheldon (Vice Chairman), Cllr H Bishop, Cllr K Barton, Cllr R Blackmore, Cllr K. Phillips, Cllr L Thompson, Cllr B Beeley (observing)

RFO: Mr J Price, Clerk: Mrs K Allott.

**684. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr L Dawson, Cllr P Walsh

**685. Declarations of Interest:** None declared

**686. Minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 7th January 2025**

The minutes were accepted as correct and signed at the meeting by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded Cllr Sheldon.

**687. 10 month update on current 2024-25 budget**

The RFO shared the budget update and it was discussed. The significant overspend on Repairs code 307 was discussed. Cllr Al-Hamdani advised that one of the recommendations from the Task & Finish Group, to be agreed at Full Council, was to update the Finance Committee immediately of any overspend. The Assets and Finance Committees would also hold two joint meetings annually.

It was agreed that at the next Finance meeting the 2025/2026 budget would be examined line by line*.*

**688. Current reserves position**

The RFO shared this report and it was discussed. Cllr Al-Hamdani advised that, given the current predictions, the Council would need to spend £10k less next year to ensure we meet the requirements of holding a minimum 3 months’ reserves.

Cllr Sheldon advised that this year there had been considerable expenditure on health and safety concerns which had now been addressed and didn’t anticipate an issue next year.

Cllr Phillips asked whether the Civic Ball was budgeted for. The Clerk advised it is self funding and we are aiming to at least break even.

*(Post meeting note Councillors have requested this updated report be shared a minimum of 3 days in advance of the next meeting*.)

**689. VAT report**

The RFO reported that he had met with the VAT adviser (Debra Smith, from Parkinson Partnership) on Tuesday 12/2/25. He advised that we could definitely claim back any VAT on non-business activity, namely specific council business costs such as ‘Chairman’s Regalia, the allotments and all specific cemetery costs except plot reservations. The VAT on all other ‘shared’ costs (eg gas and electricity) then needs allocating between all council activities, including non-business and hall running costs. Hall hire is classed as an Exempt supply so associated VAT cannot be reclaimed unless the total falls below the annual de-minimis of £7,500. The adviser is supporting this complex area with a suggested calculation methodology and template. All unclaimed VAT amounts need to be established with a priority to make a claim for the 1st quarter of 2021-22 by 31st March 2025, with subsequent claims for later periods. There is also a review of certain activities undertaken by the council that may be classed as taxable supplies, including the Civic Ball and the administering of the Rochdale United Charities. The registration threshold for taxable supplies is £6,000 per annum for Councils compared to the commercial level of £90,000.

**690. Report on car park wall**

The Clerk advised that the wall was now complete. The additional expenditure for the Armco Safety barrier and galvanised steel fence, as agreed at Assets was an additional £5814. The RFO confirmed this figure was already included in the reserves report already shared.

Cllr Al-Hamdani asked whether VAT could be claimed back on this. The RFO advised he was already looking into that with the VAT advisor and would report back at the next meeting.

**691. Chairman’s allowance – request additional draw down**

The [Clerk](file:///\\clerk) explained that Cllr Beeley had utilised just over £1000 of the £1850 Chairman’s Allowance, and was requesting an additional £500 be drawn down. Councillors agreed to this request. Proposed Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded Cllr Phillips, carried.

**692. Report on Councillor Expenses when deputising for Chairman**

The Clerk advised no further expenditure to report this month.

Cllr Al-Hamdani advised that the Task and Finish Group had identified that the Standing orders which were updated in 2022 making the Finance Officer the RFO, rather than the Clerk, were not displayed on the website. The Clerk advise there was no copy of this amendment on file, but when informed of this she had found the copy of the minutes where it had been agreed. She confirmed the updated copy was now on the website. She also confirmed that the proposed new amendments to the Standing orders should be taken to full Council at the Annual meeting in May.

**693. Bank Account progress**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

**694. Financial regulations**

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

**695. Items for the next Agenda**

* Budget update
* Clarification of Reserves requirements

-Current reserves position

* VAT update
* Councillor expenses when deputising for the Chairman
* Bank Account progress
* Update of Financial regulations

**Dates of next meeting: Thursday 13th March 2025 @ 19.00hrs**