**Minutes of the Saddleworth Parish Council Finance Committee held on Thursday 21st March 2024 at 7pm at the Civic Hall, Uppermill.**

**Present**: Councillors: S. Al-Hamdani (Chairman)

G. Sheldon L. Dawson

K. Dawson K. Barton

P. Walsh R. Blackmore

 RFO: J Price; Clerk: K Allott

**618. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr K Phillips

 **Absent:** Cllr H Bishop

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

**620. Minutes from the last meeting on Thursday 15th February 2024**

These minutes were proposed by Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded by Cllr Blackmore, accepted as correct and signed off at the meeting by the Chairman.

**621. Bank Account progress**

The RFO advised the progress so far on changing banks; he said the year end was taking priority but he was aiming to have it all changed over by end April/May, signatories would need to be arranged shortly. Cllr Sheldon asked how our stakeholders would be informed about the change in bank details. The RFO explained that he would send out an email and also that the new details will be on all invoices after the switch.

**622. Chairman’s Report into civic expenditure**

As requested at the last meeting, Cllr K Dawson shared a report he had prepared on his expenses since he became Chairman and it was discussed. Cllr Dawson advised that with two months to go he had already used up almost all the allowance. Cllr Al-Hamdani thanked Cllr Dawson for preparing this report. It would now be added to the agenda of the Autumn meeting to inform the budget decision making progress for the next financial year.

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

To be carried forward into 2024-5

**624. Year end 2023-24 Update**

The RFO advised he is on target so far and ahead of last year. He advised that as at end February the budget was broadly in line with predictions, although due to additional expenditure throughout March, mainly on repairs, we will be potentially going over budget. The Clerk confirmed this was due mainly to the work identified to be carried out to ensure we complied with the Fire Risk Assessment recommendations. The Clerk advised this excess could be taken from reserves as it hadn’t been used to pay he additional costs on energy. Discussion around whether we do that, or just report the excess spend with the reasons why.

Cllr Al-Hamdani requested that for the next meeting the Clerk & RFO would prepare a report on the final actual spend with an explanation of any variances to budget.

**625. Review and approval of Statement of Internal Controls**

This document had been reviewed by the Clerk and RFO, it had been shared in advance of the meeting, and it was discussed. Cllr Al-Hamdani explained to councillors that it was a formal statement detailing the responsibilities in place.

The RFO explained the amendments that had been made and the reasons why. Cllr Blackmore questioned whether payments outside scope of budget was covered. It was agreed this was covered in our Standing Orders.

After some more discussion, councillors agreed to the revised Statement of Internal Controls. Proposed Cllr Al-Hamdani, seconded Cllr Barton, all in favour. It will now be shared at the AGM to consider and agree.

**626. Update from Assets Management Committee regarding Car park wall**

Cllr Sheldon read out an email received that morning from the Loss Adjuster, addressed to the Clerk, stating that our claim for the leaning car park wall would be covered by our insurers. There was some discussion around this.

The Clerk advised that the insurers should be able to give us a decision on our second claim for the drain running under the car park entrance shortly.

 It was agreed that the Clerk would now request the Structural Engineer to prepare the wall rebuild design report which we will them be able to share with construction companies when we begin the tendering process.

 It was also agreed that if the response from the insurers regarding the blocked drain is favourable, and the quotes accepted, the clerk will request Lanes Group to carry out the work.

Proposed Cllr Sheldon, seconded Cllr Blackmore, all in favour.

This item will be shared at the next Full Council meeting under Chairman’s Urgent Business.

**627. Items for the next agenda**

Report on Councillor Expenses when deputising for Chairman

Year End 2023-2024 Update- to include actual spend, variances to budget with explanations

Bank Account Progress

Updated Financial Regulations for approval

**Date of next meeting: Thursday 16th May 2024 @ 19.00hrs**