**Minutes of the Saddleworth Parish Council Finance Committee held on Thursday 8th May 2025 at 7pm at the Civic Hall, Uppermill.**

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

Cllr H Bishop, Cllr R Blackmore, Cllr K Phillips, Cllr G Sheldon, Cllr L Thompson, Cllr P Walsh.

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

**707. Apologies for Absence:** Cllr K Barton, Cllr L Dawson.

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

**709. Minutes from the meeting held on Thursday 13th March 2025**

The minutes were accepted as correct and signed at the meeting by the Chairman. Proposed Cllr Phillips, seconded Cllr Blackmore.

**710. Final Budget & Reserves Report 2024-25**

These reports had been previously shared and they were discussed. The RFO explained we had ended the financial year with a reserves figure of 3.4 months.

After discussion it was agreed to transfer £2000 from the cemetery income into the reserves, which reduces the final reserves figure to 3.3 months.

The RFO explained we could claim back vat of £11,323.77 on the total costs of the carpark wall rebuild.

**711. Budget 2025-26**

* Feedback from Committees

The Finance Committee had asked other Committees to re- examine their budget proposals for any savings that could be made.

It was agreed to carry forward the unspent £750 on budget code 490, Communications, into the current year to facilitate the costs of the new events website.

The Clerk reported that the Environment Committee were unable to reduce their budget code 125 for the Community toilet scheme, they had agreed it was a vital service for the community and that prices had not been increased for some time.

The Clerk reported that the Asset Management Committee had been able to reduce budget code 311 from chair and table refurbishment £5k to £3k. They also advised they were looking at a smaller and cheaper video entry system and were inviting quotes, once agreed this may be able to be reduced from £10k to £5/6k.

Civic Hall bookings income was discussed. A more realistic figure was in the budget this year, and any increase on that would be a bonus.

Cllr Al-Hamdani thanked the Assets Management Committee for the work in reducing these figures

**712. VAT Report & Update**

The RFO shared the VAT report he had received earlier that day and gave a resume. VAT can be claimed back on the cemetery, allotments and the car park. He also advised the online application to reclaim historical vat for April 21 had been rejected but he was preparing a paper claim instead; it is £400.

The RFO explained there was still concern over the potential need for VAT registration, but was unable to provide a figure until we know where we stand after reviewing income history. Part of this related to Rochdale United Charity, and its vat implications were discussed and it was agreed to add this to the next RUC meeting agenda.

He asked Councillors to read the VAT report at leisure.

**714. Finance Committee Work Programme**

A first draft prepared by Cllr Al-Hamdani was shared and discussed. Councillors agreed this was an excellent idea, although it is a first draft and needs some work on it. The Clerk will email a copy to the Committee and it will be further discussed at the next meeting. It will be added as an agenda item on all meetings going forward for reference.

**715. Bank Account Progress**

This was deferred to the September meeting

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

The Clerk advise an additional Councillor claim for mileage £18.90 29th April for a Civic event. The RFO advised there was £200 unspent on this.

It was agreed a report would be prepared for the next meeting on how much of the allowance was spent by the Chairman, and by those deputising.

**717. Items for the next Agenda**

* Internal Audit and Final Accounts / AGAR 2024/5
* VAT update
* Annual Programme of works
* Rochdale United Charity VAT implications
* Financial Risk Management Assessment
* Report on Chairman’s Allowance 2024/5

**Dates of next meeting: Thursday 19th June 2025**