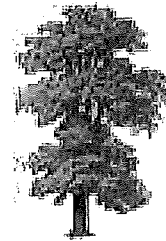


Westfield Parish Council

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Established 2011

Chairman: Cllr P Wilkinson Parish Clerk: Ms L J Close FSLCC

All Council Meetings are open to the Public and Press

3rd December 2024

TO: a) Members of the Finance & Personnel Committee:
Cllrs Diana Cooper, Michelle Curtis, Geoff Fuller (ex officio), Ron Hopkins, Laura Lambell, Paul Millard, Robin Moss (Chair), Pat Williams (Vice Chair), Phil Wilkinson (ex officio)

b) All Other Members of the Council (for information)

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to a **Meeting of Finance Personnel Committee**, on **Wednesday 11th December 2024** at **9.30am** at The Oval Office, Cobblers Way, Westfield.



Ms L J Close
Parish Clerk

Public Questions

This section, at the Chairman's discretion may last up to 15 minutes and is not part of the formal meeting of the Council.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence and to consider the reasons given**
Committee to receive apologies for absence and, if appropriate, to resolve to approve the reasons given in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 s85(1)
- 2. Declarations of interest and dispensations**
Members to declare any interests they may have in agenda items, in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct. The Committee may consider agreeing a dispensation, providing the request is put in writing and the dispensation is allowed on the grounds set out in s.33 of the Localism Act 2011.

3. Minutes

To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Finance & Personnel meeting held on 23rd October 2024 (**Pages 1- 6**)

4. Monthly Accounts

To agree the accounts

- Current Account - **Oct / Nov accounts to follow**
- Corporate Treasury Account - **Oct / Nov accounts to follow**
- Business Savings Account - **Oct / Nov accounts to follow**
(the interest rate at 1st Nov 24 is 4.1%)
- Petty cash imprest sheet – Nov - Dec (**Pages 7-8**)
- Debit card expenditure sheet – Nov - Dec (**Pages 9-10**)

5. Schedule of payments requiring authorisation

As per item 5.2 of the Financial Regulations, a list of payments requiring authorisation is attached. Signing of invoices and BACS authorisation sheets to be completed upon approval of payments. November and December (**Pages 11-12**)

6. Schedule of payments due on a regular basis

As per item 5.6 of the Financial Regulations, a list of payments which arise on a regular basis as a result of a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation such as salaries, PAYE and NI, superannuation and regular maintenance, is attached. (**Page 13**)

7. Standing Orders and Direct Debits To review and comment on the list of standing orders and direct debits, to note the changes to suppliers' details and to consider and approve the continued use of online banking and BACS payments. (**Page 14**)

8. Petty Cash Tin – To check the balance

9. Internal Audit Report (Interim) (Pages 15-21)

10. St Nicholas Church – Grant Feedback (**Pages 22-23**)

11. Youth Connect Contract 2025/26 (Pages 24-26)

12. Pension Scheme Comparison - Update on contact with DJS as requested at the last meeting (meeting scheduled 11/11/24)

To resolve that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

13. Office Move – verbal Update and IT removals quote (**Pages 25-26**)

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Finance & Personnel Meeting
held at The Oval Office on Wednesday 23rd October 2024 at 10.30am

Present: Cllr Pat Williams (Vice Chair, in the Chair), Cllrs Ron Hopkins, Paul Millard and Phil Wilkinson.

Absent: Cllrs Robin Moss and Diana Cooper

In Attendance: Lesley Close, Parish Clerk

54. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllrs Cooper and Moss.

55. Declarations of interest and dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

56. Minutes

Resolved: that the Minutes of the Finance & Personnel meeting held on 18th September 2024 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

57. Monthly Accounts

Resolved:

- a) that the bank reconciliation and monthly income and expenditure statements for the Current Account Sept be agreed.
- b) that the bank reconciliation and monthly income and expenditure statements for the Corporate Treasury account Sept be agreed.
- c) that the bank reconciliation and monthly income and expenditure statements for the Business Savings account Sept be agreed.
- d) that the summary of debit card transactions since the last meeting (Appendix 1: – Oct) be agreed.
- e) that there were no petty cash items for October.

58. Schedule of payments requiring authorisation

In accordance with item 5.2 of the Financial Regulations, the updated schedule of payments was considered at the meeting.

Resolved: that the schedule of payments due in October be agreed, (attached as Appendix 2), that the invoices and the BACS authorisation sheet be signed accordingly and that the BACS payments be made by two councillors via online banking.

59. Schedule of payments due on a regular basis

In accordance with item 5.6 of the Financial Regulations, an updated list of payments which arise on a regular basis as a result of a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation was considered at the meeting.

Resolved: (1) that the schedule of payments be agreed (attached as Appendix 3) and that the invoices and the BACS authorisation sheet be signed accordingly. That the BACS payments be made by two councillors via online banking.

(2) that the Clerk contacts DJS requesting advice on the Avon Pension Scheme in comparison with other available schemes.

60. Verification of Bank Reconciliations

Noted that Cllr Millard signed the bank reconciliations on 7/10/24.

61. Budget Analysis at Six Months

Resolved: That the report of the Clerk be noted.

62. Grants 2024/25

Resolved: To recommend to Parish Council the list of grant awardees, as recommended by the Grants Sub Committee.

63. Westfield Action Plan 2024/25

Resolved: To accept the Action Plan.

64. Budget 2025/26

Resolved: To add to the draft budget a sum towards the development of land at the top of Elm Tree Avenue. Cllr Hopkins to start discussions with CURO etc.

65. CIL/S.106 Report

Resolved: To accept the CIL/ S.106 Report.

66. To confirm the purchase of wreaths for Remembrance Day

Resolved: To confirm the purchase of four wreaths in the total amount of £110.00.

67. To consider adding the Deputy Clerk as an authorised user on the Parish Council and Trust Bank Accounts

Resolved: To add the Deputy Clerk as an authorised user on the bank accounts.

It was agreed to exclude the press and public on the grounds that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.

68. Quotes

Resolved: To agree the following quotes in items 1-5 below:

- (1) AIB Electrical £310 for required work to the circuit board at Norton Hill Garage following fixed electric testing.
- (2) B&NES £792.83 for the work marked desirable on the Tree Inspection Reports at May Tree Road and Holly Walk, this being the grinding out of the Cherry Tree Stump, the cutting back of the birch tree from the street light at May Tree Road and raising the canopy of the maple at Holly Walk.
- (3) GPS Telecom to install the broadband in the new office £99 plus £30 pcm for the phones (this compares to the current £10.50 pcm for the phones).
- (4) Db+Paul £600 for a report to breakdown costs for the items in the Condition Report to be held as a retention.
- (5) Taylor Plant for the footpaths at Waterside Valley to be funded by Somer Valley Rediscovered in the amount of £98,875 including £7,000 contingency. This will create a path from the Swallow Café entrance to the Chestnut Close entrance. The remaining paths in the amount of £171,015 - £98,875 = £72,140 will go into the Westfield Action Plan for completion when possible.
- (6) That the £1million public liability insurance by Sanalini for the installation of the noticeboard at Nightingale Way is sufficient.
- (7) Not to accept the quote of £1,172 for the renewal of Cyber Insurance Certification. Cllr Hopkins to re-look at this after the office move.
- (8) Given the disruption caused by legionella, to give the existing two adult teams at Norton Hill free use of the pitch and pavilion for the rest of this season.
- (9) To take quotes relating to Westhill Club to Parish Council for a wider discussion.

69. Office Move

A revised lease without security of tenure was received from Oval Homes and discussed in detail together with a contracting out notice and the new occupancy agreement for the existing offices.

- Resolved:**
- (1) To sign the declaration that s 24-28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 are not to apply to the business tenancy.
 - (2) To sign the new occupancy agreement.

The meeting closed at 11.45am.

4 APPENDIX 1 – DEBIT CARD

REF	DATE	SUPPLIER	DETAILS	TOTAL	postage 4022/1	printing & stationary 4023/1	Health & Safety 4018/1	Furniture & equipment 4036/1	Parish Environment 4224/202	Christmas 4223/202	N/H maintenance 4062/308	W/H Maintenance 4062/307	Ad hoc	Hospitality 4131/101
DC228	15/10/2024	Halfords	Red cable ties	£5.16					£4.30					
DC229	16/10/2024	Longfellows	Sandwiches - Grants Sub	£22.50										£22.50
			TOTAL (NET)	£26.80	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4.30	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£22.50
			VAT:	£0.86					£0.86					
			TOTAL (Gros)	£27.66										
			added since the agenda was circulated											

APPENDIX 3

Supplier	Details	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	October
Avon Pension Fund (BACS monthly)	Superannuation	£1,152.18	£1,185.75	£1,177.19	£1,238.61	£1,192.54	£1,192.54	£1,192.54
DCK - BACS monthly	Accounting support	£0.00	£862.25	£0.00	£262.50	£183.75	£210.00	£189.00
GPS Telecoms (DD monthly)	Telephone and broadband	£24.03	£65.81	£65.81	£63.45	£65.81	£65.81	£65.81
Greensward (BACS monthly)	Grounds maintenance + Waterside dog bins	£2,176.58	£2,170.00	£2,165.42	£2,165.42	£2,165.42	£2,177.92	£2,177.92
HMRC (BACS monthly)	PAYE and NI	£613.00	£651.05	£579.07	£705.44	£638.11	£638.11	£637.91
Oval Commercial (SO-£587.70 + £420=) the rest BACS - monthly	Office Rental	£839.75	£839.75	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70
Oval Commercial (BACS)	Use of Boardroom	£60.00	£50.00	£60.00	£60.00	£60.00	£20.00	£60.00
Net Salaries (and expenses) (BACS monthly)	Office staff	£3,580.69	£3,670.08	£3,708.37	£3,820.64	£3,713.49	£3,708.99	£3,709.19
Public Works Loans Board (DD - 6 monthly)	Westhill Play Area	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3,686.72	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Ricoh (BACS quarterly)	Photocopier	£152.40	£0.00	£127.00	£0.00	£0.00	£127.00	£0.00
Eon Next wef 1/11/23 monthly	NH Pavilion - Electricity	£86.28	£81.97	£84.47	£76.14	£81.21	£67.98	£73.53
Southern Electric d/d annually	Xmas Lights on lampposts	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Southern Electric (DD quarterly)	Christmas Tree	£57.96	£0.00	£0.00	£53.80	£0.00	£0.00	£51.73
SoVision IT (BACS monthly)	IT Support	£208.35	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23
Eon Next wef 1/11/23	NH Pavilion - Gas	£103.78	£93.17	£45.00	£92.01	£0.00	£61.77	£75.86
Water2Business (DD six mnthly)	AUTO-watering systems 2365915101 - Wesley Ave; 02- Coal Truck Jubilee Green - 03 - Jubilee Green - 04 - Coal	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£43.73	£218.92	£0.00
Water2Business (DD six mnthly)	NH Pavilion 70215504	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£214.09	£0.00
Youth Connect South West (Bacs quarterly). Norm code 4237/202	Youth Work contract 1/4/23-31/3/25	£2,985.21	£0.00	£0.00	£2,985.21	£0.00	£0.00	£2,985.21
Information Commissioners Officer (DD)	Data Protection Fee (annual)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£40.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL PETTY CASH

MONTH SHEET

November
2024-25-8

IMPREST VALUE	DATE	DETAILS	TOTAL	postage 4022/1	printing & stationary 4023/1	Travel and subsistence 4008/1	Health&Safety 4018/1	N/H maintenance 4062/308	W/H Maintenance 4062/307	Community Events 4232/202	Hospitality 4131/101
		Balance b/f	£91.95								
	21/10/2024	Condolence card - RA	£3.00								£2.50
		TOTAL (NET)	£2.50	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2.50
		VAT:	£0.50								£0.50
		Ongoing balance	£88.95								

top-up required

*previously reported
added since agenda was circulated*

Imprest Holder signature _____ Date _____

Counter signature _____ Date _____

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Date: _____ Date: _____

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL PETTY CASH

MONTH SHEET December
2024-25-9

IMPREST VALUE	DATE	DETAILS	TOTAL	postage 4022/1	printing & stationary 4023/1	Travel and subsistence 4008/1	Health&Safety 4018/1	N/H maintenance 4062/308	W/H Maintenance 4062/307	Community Events 4232/202	Hospitality 4131/101
	27/11/2024	Balance b/f	£88.95								
		Biscuits for audit	£1.25								£1.04
		TOTAL (NET)	£1.04	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
		VAT:	£0.21								£0.21
		Ongoing balance	£87.70								
		top-up required									

previously reported
access since agenda was circulated

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WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL DEBIT CARD SUMMARY

Report for F&P -
November
SHEET

2024-25-8

REF	DATE	SUPPLIER	DETAILS	TOTAL	postage 4022/1	Christmas 4223/202	Stationary 4023/1	Furniture & Equipment 4036/1	Health and safety 4018/1	W/H Maintenance 4062/307	Defibrillator 4231/202	Hospitality 4131/101
DC230	21/10/2024	Amazon	3 x Christmas trees 1.5m	£71.97		£59.97						
DC231	31/10/2024	Essential Supplies Ltd	Cable cover matting for Christmas Lights	£55.22		£46.02						
DC232	31/10/2024	Thompsons Hardware	Key set for pavilion	£16.00				£13.34				
DC233	31/10/2024	Timpson	Remaining keys for pavilion which could not be cut at Thompsons	£46.00				£38.34				
DC234	5/11/2024	Lidl	Lights Switch On refreshment and FC presents	£122.67		£107.12						
DC235	5/11/2024	Mr Flag	Christmas flag	£7.99		£7.99						
DC236	13/11/2024	Essential Supplies Ltd	Cable cover matting for Christmas Lights	£147.96		£123.30						
			TOTAL (NET)	£396.08	£0.00	£344.40	£0.00	£51.68	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
			VAT:	£71.72		£61.40		£10.32				
			TOTAL (Gros)	£467.81		£405.80						

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

added since the agenda was circulated

Schedule of regular payments 2024-25

(All amounts are NET)

Supplier	Details	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	October	Nov	Dec
Avon Pension Fund (BACS monthly)	Superannuation	£1,152.18	£1,185.75	£1,177.19	£1,238.61	£1,192.54	£1,192.54	£1,192.54	£1,192.54	£1,605.02
DCK - BACS monthly	Accounting support	£0.00	£862.25	£0.00	£262.50	£183.75	£210.00	£189.00	£0.00	£0.00
GPS Telecoms (DD monthly)	Telephone and broadband	£24.03	£65.81	£65.81	£63.45	£65.81	£65.81	£65.81	£78.97	£65.81
Greensward (BACS monthly)	Grounds maintenance + Waterside dog bins	£2,176.58	£2,170.00	£2,165.42	£2,165.42	£2,165.42	£2,177.92	£2,177.92	£2,177.92	£2,117.92
HMRC (BACS monthly)	PAYE and NI	£613.00	£651.05	£579.07	£705.44	£638.11	£638.11	£637.91	£638.11	£1,155.95
Oval Commercial (SO-£587.70 + £420=) the rest BACS - monthly	Office Rental	£839.75	£839.75	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70	£1,007.70
Oval Commercial (BACS)	Use of Boardroom	£60.00	£50.00	£60.00	£60.00	£60.00	£20.00	£60.00	£90.00	£60.00
Net Salaries (and expenses) (BACS monthly)	Office staff	£3,580.69	£3,670.08	£3,708.37	£3,820.64	£3,713.49	£3,708.99	£3,709.19	£3,708.99	£4,805.93
Public Works Loans Board (DD - 6 monthly)	Westhill Play Area	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3,686.72	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Ricoh (BACS quarterly)	Photocopier	£152.40	£0.00	£127.00	£0.00	£0.00	£127.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Eon Next wef 1/1/23 monthly	NH Pavilion - Electricity	£86.28	£81.97	£84.47	£76.14	£81.21	£67.98	£73.53	£86.47	£47.31
Southern Electric d/d annually	Xmas Lights on lampposts	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Southern Electric (DD quarterly)	Christmas Tree	£57.96	£0.00	£0.00	£53.80	£0.00	£0.00	£51.73	£330.33	
SoVision IT (BACS monthly)	IT Support	£208.35	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£226.23	£18.48
Eon Next wef 1/1/23	NH Pavilion - Gas	£103.78	£93.17	£45.00	£92.01	£0.00	£61.77	£75.86	£88.60	
Water2Business (DD six mnthly)	AUTO-watering systems 2365915101 - Wesley Ave; 02- Coal Truck Jubilee Green-03- Jubilee Green-04- Coal	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£43.73	£218.92	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Water2Business (DD six mnthly)	NH Pavilion 70215504	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£214.09	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Youth Connect South West (Bacs quarterly). Nom code 4237/202	Youth Work contract 1/4/23-31/3/25	£2,985.21	£0.00	£0.00	£2,985.21	£0.00	£0.00	£2,985.21	£0.00	£0.00
Information Commissioners Officer (DD)	Data Protection Fee (annual)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£40.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Monthly Total		£12,040.21	£9,896.06	£9,246.26	£16,483.87	£9,377.99	£9,937.06	£12,452.63	£9,625.86	£10,884.12

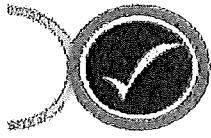
Annual List of Direct Debits and Standing Orders 2024-25

F&P Committee 20 November 2024

Supplier	Details	Frequency	Notes
Water2Business	5 standpipes for auto-watering of flower displays	6-monthly	The water bills for the allotments are billed to WAGS and paid directly by them.
Water2Business	Water at N/H Pavilion	6-monthly	
GPS Telecoms	Telephones and broadband	monthly	Service charge £30.50pcm for phones £35.30pcm for broadband plus calls; £1.99 pcm fraud protection fee (+VAT)
Oval Commercial (SO)	2 x office Rental	monthly	Suite 5: £489.75pcm +VAT Suite 4: £350pcm +VAT
Public Works Loans Board	Repayments on loan for Westhill Play Area	6-monthly	Loan term: 15 years starting September 2010 - ends Sept 2025.
SSE	Electricity to Pavilion and Christmas tree	quarterly	Meter readings taken by the PC and submitted quarterly ahead of each bill. Contract ends 30/9/23 for the Christmas Tree - a new 3 year contract set up with SSE. Pavilion contract ends 31/10/23 to be replaced with a new 3 year contract with EonNext
The Information Commissioner	Annual renewal fee	annually	£40 per year for renewal of registration.
Eon Next	Electricity to Pavilion and Christmas tree	monthly	Commencing 1/11/23
Eon Next	Gas to Norton Hill Pavilion	monthly	Commencing 1/11/23

Summary of changes to suppliers' details 2024/25

Supplier	Details	Notes



AUDITING SOLUTIONS LTD

Westfield Parish Council

Internal Audit Report 2024-25 (Interim)

Stuart J Pollard

*Director
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

Background and Scope

Statute requires all town and parish councils to arrange for an independent Internal Audit (IA) examination of their accounting records and systems of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2024-25 financial year, both at our offices in advance of and during our interim visit to the Council, which took place on 27th November 2024: it will be updated following our final visit, the date of which has yet to be determined but will be timed to follow closure of the year's accounts by DCK Accounting.

Internal Audit Approach

In commencing this year's review, we have, in accordance with the requirements of the Governance and Accountability Manual - "The Practitioner's Guide", paid due regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential misrepresentation in the Accounts / AGAR, together with examining the overall governance framework. Our aim is to ensure that the Council operates robust control systems and that transactions are, as far as we are reasonably able to ascertain, processed in accordance with national and locally approved legislation and controls.

Overall Conclusion

We are pleased to record that no issues have been identified from the work undertaken to date this year that warrant formal comment or recommendation. We will update this report and sign-off the IA Certificate in the year's AGAR accordingly following our final review.

Detailed Report

Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council's accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers: we also aim to ensure the integrity of the data and that appropriate arrangements are in place for its security. The Council maintains its financial records using the Rialtas Omega accounting software.

Two bank accounts are in operation for day-to-day transactions with the Co-op bank (Current and Treasury accounts) recorded in separate cashbooks. A third cashbook account is in place with Nationwide holding £85,000 of the Council's surplus funds. A further cashbook is in use to record the limited transactions in the year through the petty cash account. We noted last year that the contract accountants are now only attending and updating the records every two months with the result that only financial information to 30th September 2024 had been entered into the accounting software at the time of this interim review. Consequently, we have: -

- Ensured the accurate carry forward of the prior year closing balances as reported in the certified 2023-24 AGAR to the current year's accounting records;
- Ensured that a comprehensive, meaningful and appropriate nominal coding and cost centre structure is in place to facilitate effective budgetary monitoring and control;
- Checked and agreed transactions in the current account cashbook to the supporting Co-op Bank statements for two months (April and September 2024);
- Checked and agreed the year to 30th September 2024 transactions on the Co-op Treasury and Nationwide deposit accounts to the supporting bank statements; and
- Verified the reconciliations of the Co-op Current account between the cash books and the relevant bank statements at 30th April and September 2024, plus those on the Co-op Treasury and Nationwide deposit accounts as at 30th September 2024.

We are pleased to note that a non-account signing councillor is subjecting reconciliations to quarterly independent scrutiny and sign-off, together with the period end bank statements and Omega Trial Balance.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no issues concerns have been identified in this review area for the year to date. We shall undertake further work in this area at our final visit, including ensuring the accuracy of the year-end bank reconciliations and accurate disclosure of the combined cash and bank balances in the year-end AGAR.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust regulatory framework in place, that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders (SOs) and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain as we do not attend meetings, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation.

We are pleased to note that both the SOs and Financial Regulations (FRs) were reviewed and re-adopted in May, 2024, with the FRs further revised and adopted in July 2024 to bring them into line with the latest recently promulgated NALC model document.

We have reviewed the Council and standing committee meeting minutes reading those to date in 2024-25 as posted on the Council's website to ensure that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability either in the short, medium or long-term exist and are pleased to confirm that to be the position.

We have noted previously that a raft of formally documented financial and other procedures is in place, which we consider an example of best practice affording a degree of cover in the event that any key officer may be unavoidably off work for any significant period.

We also note that the external auditors have signed-off the 2023-24 AGAR with no outstanding issues and are also pleased to note the appropriate publication of the 2023-24 Notice of Public Rights for the requisite 30 working days.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no issues arise in this area currently warranting our formal comment or recommendation. We shall continue to monitor the Council's approach to governance at future visits, also continuing our examination of Council and Committee minutes.

Review of Expenditure & VAT

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Suitable documentation supports the payments, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount; and
- An official order has been raised on each occasion that one would be anticipated.

We have previously discussed the control procedures in place over the approval and release of payments, which continue in operation: we consider them to be sound and appropriate for the Council's ongoing requirements with members visiting the Council's offices and physically releasing the payments online, following their online set-up.

We have selected a test sample of 27 individual payments processed in the financial year to 30th September 2024 by reference to the Omega accounts information to that date for compliance with the above criteria. Our test sample includes all payments individually in excess of £1,500, plus a more random selection of every 20th payment totalling £102,455 and equating to 78% by value of non-pay related payments in the year to the above date.

We have also checked and ensured the accurate submission and recovery of the final 2023-24 and first two 2024-25 quarterly VAT reclaims to the underlying detail in the Omega control account for the current year with no issues arising.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no concerns have been identified in this area of our review process to date this year with all payments in our test sample appropriately signed-off by two councillors. We will extend our test sample applying the same criteria at our final review visit also examining the remaining quarterly VAT reclaims agreeing detail to the Omega control account.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

We noted in our 2023-24 final report that a comprehensive Risk Management Strategy is in place, supplemented by detailed Financial Risk Assessments generated through the LCRS software, which was last reviewed, updated and adopted in February 2024. We note that a similar review will be undertaken prior to the financial year-end and will review the outcome and ensure formal adoption at our final review visit.

We have examined the current year's insurance schedule with Zurich and consider that the level of cover in place is appropriate for the Council's present requirements with Employer's and Public Liability standing at £10 million and £12 million respectively and, Fidelity Guarantee cover at £1 million and Business Interruption "Loss of Revenue" cover in place at £4,500.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no matters arise in this area currently: we shall continue to monitor the Council's approach to risk management at future visits ensuring the formal review and re-adoption of the supporting documentation prior to the financial year-end.

Budgetary Control & Reserves

In considering the Council's approach to budget determination and precept setting, we aim to ensure that decisions are made based on sound information and that an appropriate level of precept is determined to meet the Council's future planned expenditure.

This interim visit occurred in advance of members' formal and final consideration / adoption of the budget and precept requirements for 2025-26 and will consequently review the outcome of those deliberations at our final visit.

We are also pleased to note that members are provided with detailed budget performance information based on the Omega accounting software during the course of the financial year and have reviewed the latest budget position, as at 30th September 2024, seeking and obtaining appropriate explanations for the few significant variances existing by reference to the Omega detailed transaction reports.

Conclusions

No issues arise in this area currently: we shall undertake further work at our final review visit ensuring, as above, that the Council has formally approved its budgetary and precept requirements for 2025-26. We shall examine the final year-end budget outturn seeking explanations for any significant variances that may arise also considering the appropriateness of

the level of retained reserves (both in the General and Earmarked funds) to meet the ongoing revenue spending plans and any future development aspirations.

Review of Income

In examining the Council's sources of income, we aim to establish that robust procedures are in place to ensure that income due to the Council is identified and invoiced accordingly (where appropriate); that arrangements for the secure handling of any cash income are in place and that income due to the Council is recovered within a reasonable time span. The Council currently receives income by way of the annual precept, CIL moneys, a one-off allotment rent receipt, occasional grants and donations, bank interest and recovered VAT.

Consequently, only limited work will again be required in this area this year, which we will address at our final review.

Conclusions

No issues arise in this area currently: as indicated above, we will revisit this area at our final visit commenting accordingly at that time.

Petty Cash Account

We are required, as part of the annual IA Certification process, to provide assurance on the satisfactory (or otherwise) operation of any petty cash accounts at the Council. A relatively small account is in place within the admin office, being operated on an imprest basis with a cash float of £100, the balance being topped-up periodically during the year from the Current Co-op bank account.

We have examined a sample of payments made in the May and October 2024 ensuring that an appropriate trade invoice or till receipt supported each payment made and that, where applicable, any VAT expended is identified for recovery through the quarterly reclaims submitted to HMRC.

We have also, at this interim visit, checked the physical cash holding to the supporting spreadsheet records being maintained noting a small 20 pence cash surplus, which we have drawn to the Clerk's attention for remedial action.

Conclusions

No matters arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation: we shall ensure the appropriate correction of the cash surplus as part of our final review programme.

Review of Staff Salaries

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HMRC legislation in relation to the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme in relation to employee contribution percentages. We have consequently: -

- Obtained detail of the staff in post currently, their spinal point on the national NJC pay scale and basic working hours;

- Noted Council's the intention to implement the 2024-25 national pay agreement, which, together with arrears backdated to 1st April 2024, will be applied with the December 2024 payroll;
- Checked the 3 staff members' salaries paid in September 2024 ensuring that the gross salaries paid were in line with the Clerk's establishment record;
- Checked and agreed the Clerk's calculations of the revised 2024-25 monthly gross salaries for each employee, together with the arrears due backdated to 1st April 2024;
- Checked the September 2024 NI / tax and pension deductions recorded on each employees' payslips for the month by reference to the relevant HMRC and Pension Fund Administrator's tables.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall, at our final visit, review the December 2024 payslips ensuring the accurate implementation of the Clerk's revised salaries due to each employee.

Investments and Loans

As indicated earlier in this report the Council holds surplus funds in a Nationwide Building Society account with interest earned on that account transferred to the Co-op Current bank account each month.

The Council has one outstanding loan repayable half-yearly to the UK Dent Agency / PWLB: we have verified the first repayment instalment for the financial year by reference to the PWLB demand advice as part of our aforementioned review of expenditure.

Conclusions

No matters have been identified at this stage of our review requiring formal comment or recommendation. We shall undertake further work at our final review, checking the second half-yearly loan repayment and ensuring the accurate disclosure of the value of the outstanding loan liability as at 31st March 2025 in the year's AGAR.

Westfield Parish Council

Grant Feedback Form 2024-2025



Name of the Organisation

St Nicholas' Church

Name of person completing the form

Ian Egginton-Metters

Position held in the Organisation

Treasurer

Daytime phone number

07939 230053

Email address

ian@eggintonmetters.co.uk

Grant awarded in 2024-25

How much was your organisation awarded by Westfield Parish Council in 2024-25?

£2,652

Has the grant been spent in full? If so, how was the grant spent? If not please detail any plans for the grant or any amount remaining (or if you are not able to make plans at the moment).

I can confirm that all the grant will have been spent as agreed by the end of your financial year funding a self-employed experienced gardener. Spend mainly through that freelance contracting to manage the grounds by strimming and cutting. Some bags for the various waste bins emptied by our volunteers. The areas immediately surrounding the Church continue to be mown except for areas managed for biodiversity in line with the Wilder Churches initiative (a partnership with the Diocese of Bath & Wells and Somerset Wildlife Trust).

What benefits have you seen since spending the grant funding?

Without the grant we simply could not afford to maintain the grounds and access to graves, albeit that we use some limited resources in addition to your grant, and volunteers. Many people walk through the grounds daily and on most days people can be seen tending their loved one's graves, often quite old graves. The sloping land makes access difficult at the best of times but negotiating between graves would be impossible if the vegetation wasn't strimmed low. It is a place of tranquility for many local people and remains the only graveyard in the area and so cherished and respected. Enhancing biodiversity has created new habitats to benefit wildlife; there are already many and varied habitats; we are enhancing them through the planned maintenance programme. We shall also be working with Somer Valley Rediscovered and TCV volunteers to plant a new hedge along the trackway leading to Westfield land, further enhancing biodiversity and re-establishing the hedge that used to exist.

Please return to:
council@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk

or by post to:
Parish Clerk, Westfield Parish Council, The Oval Office,
St Peters Business Park, Westfield BA3 3BX

Thank you

Parish Clerk

From: Jayne Lewis <Jayne.Lewis@ycsw.org.uk>
Sent: 28 November 2024 11:48
To: Parish Clerk; Council
Cc: Rob Rumming-Pain; Deputy Clerk; Admin Assistant; Nick Chinnery
Subject: RE: Quarterly report
Attachments: SLA westfield. 1.4.23 - 31.3.25.pdf

Hi Lesley,

Many thanks for your email.

I have asked our finance manager for the costs and will pass onto you as soon as I have them..

With regards to your other queries,

The contact length for Westfield is usually 2 years. Is this still what the Parish council would want ?

The details of the contract would remain the same. I have attached the current contract for your reference as it states staffing and sessions. Youth work delivery would stay at 44 open sessions a year with other weeks being used for staff training, planning and leave.

The staffing ratio would remain the same, 2 assistant youth support workers and 1 senior youth support worker as stated in the current contract.

The attendance numbers are always at the top of the reports that I send to you. Please let me know if they need to be presented differently.

For the last financial year 23/24, we had 70 young people registered at Westfield youth work session. This year, for the first half of the year, we have 53 young people registered. Session attendance fluctuates from an average attendance of between 10 and 25. This is affected by sessional change. We get more young people during the spring and summer months but not always.

Please let me know if you need anything else from .

Kind regards,

Jayne



Jayne Lewis

Programme Manager – Youth Work

Mobile : 07887 213513

Office : 01225 396980

www.youthconnectsouthwest.org.uk _

Our Vision: Inspiring youth services that young people want to be part of.

Southside Youth Hub, Kelston View, Whiteway, Bath, BA2 1NR Registered Charity: 1186059

To view how we use your personal data please visit <https://www.youthconnectsouthwest.org.uk/policies>

Parish Clerk

From: Jayne Lewis <Jayne.Lewis@ycsw.org.uk>
Sent: 02 December 2024 15:03
To: Council
Subject: FW: Monday urgent
Attachments: Westfield Contract Letter 24_25 20240208.pdf

Hi Lesley,
Attached is the increase letter for last year.
There will be a %5 increase on the contact due to start on 1st April 25.
The annual cost will be £12,537.90.
Kind regards,
Jayne



Jayne Lewis
Programme Manager – Youth Work
Mobile : 07887 213513
Office : 01225 396980

www.youthconnectsouthwest.org.uk

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Southside Youth Hub, Kelston View, Whiteway, Bath, BA2 1NR Registered Charity: 1186059

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Youth Connect SW Contract Charges per annum

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Cost per annum	£9,244.00	£9,244.00	£10,642.16	£10,642.16	£11,372.25	£11,940.86	£12,537.90	£12,537.90
Contract Year	1 of 2	2 of 2	1 of 2	2 of 2	1 of 2	2 of 2	1 of 2	2 of 2
Percentage increase on previous year		0%	15.50%	0%	7%	5%	5%	0%