

Minutes of the Fremington Parish Council Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23rd January 2024 at 9.30am in The Beechfield Centre, Beechfield Road, Fremington

Present: Cllrs, F Biederman (Chairman), J Bridgeman, S Haywood, S Kingdom and H Walker

Mrs V Woodhouse, Executive Officer

2401/12 **Apologies**

None.

2401/13 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Biederman declared a Personal Interest as a Trustee of Clarity.

2401/14 **Public Participation**

None.

2401/15 **Minutes**

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary and one abstention, that the minutes of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on the 30th November 2023 be approved.

2401/16 **Staff Salaries**

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the staff salaries, expenses, PAYE/NI and pension payments for the months of December 2023 and January 2024.

2401/17 **Accounts Due for Payment and Receipts for the period from the 25th November 2023 to 19th January 2024**

It was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to approve the payments totalling £117,919.81 and receipts totalling £5,408.13 copies of which are attached as Appendix One.

2401/18 **North Devon Record Office**

Correspondence had been received and circulated ahead of the meeting from Barnstaple Town Council with reference to the budget crisis the North Devon Record Office is facing meaning that if the funding situation is not resolved within the next six months the North Devon Record Office will close. Barnstaple Town Council (BTC) had written to all parishes with a precept more than £70,000 to ask them to give consideration to an annual contribution in the region of 1% of their precept.

Fremington Parish Council has agreed an annual contribution of £600 towards the North Devon Record Office, subject to the facility remaining in Barnstaple, 1% of its precept for 2024/2025 would be £3,049.

Members had asked for the reasoning behind only asking parishes with a precept of £70,000, BTC had provided the reasoning in that below £70,000 precepts fall away significantly, and they are trying to get the

maximum impact to create a sustainable budget, many of the smaller parishes already make regular donations and a letter will be sent to the remaining 80 parishes in due course.

Members had also asked for the usage of the Record Office and how many of those using it are local, BTC had requested this information.

BTC had also been asked the question whether or not the Record Office had considered charging for its service(s) and if records are accessible online. BTC had confirmed that, as it is a statutory service they cannot charge and quite a few catalogues are available online.

Members discussed the proposal; it was noted that it is a district wide service and felt that mechanisms to fund fairly across the region should be considered including North Devon Council funding the service. Members questioned the usage by members of the parish and whether it was right to increase the funding of the service from the Parish Precept. Members felt that the Record Office is a valuable resource, however, other ways in which to fund need to be investigated to ensure it is self-sustainable. Members also questioned whether it is a statutory service and if a charge could be made for the service(s) and did not feel there was enough information to justify the amount of funding requested.

After much discussion it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to continue to provide an annual grant of £600 subject to the facility remaining in Barnstaple, whilst the Parish Council is happy to support the facility to a point it does feel that the service needs to become financially sustainable and investigate self-fundraising.

2401/19 **North Devon Ring and Ride**

Correspondence had been received and circulated ahead of the meeting, it was noted that Mid Devon Mobility had started to operate the North Devon Ring and Ride service in summer 2023 and was requesting assistance in advertising the service and consideration of financial support towards the service. Members felt that the North Devon Ring and Ride service is invaluable to many residents and considered the request and grant budgets, and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, to provide a financial contribution of £500 for the financial year 2023/2024 and a further £500 contribution for 2024/2025 from the grants budget, the Parish Council would also display the poster on its social media and noticeboards.

2401/20 It was **resolved** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it involves the likely disclosure of confidential information.

PART B

2401/21

Staffing Matters

An update was given on possible apprenticeship courses for a Maintenance and Amenities Operative Apprentice. Members recognised the challenges of an apprenticeship as there were not any courses available in the area and it was **resolved**, with no votes to the contrary, for a report to be submitted for consideration at the next meeting of costs and options.

The meeting closed at 10.45am

Signed..... Dated.....

