



**Committee Members:** Cllrs A Wallis (Chairman), S Baxter, J Cypher, A Helmore, A Humphries, M Worrall

**Quorum:** 3 members

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
FINANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**HELD MONDAY 20<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2020 AT 7.30 PM**

**At Alvechurch Parish Council Office, George Road, Alvechurch, B48 7PB**

**Present** Cllrs T Wallis (Chairman), S Baxter, J Cypher, A Helmore, A Humphries, M Worrall

**In attendance** Gill Lungley, Support Officer

**FR20/001 Apologies for Absence**  
None.

**FR20/002 Declarations of Interest**  
The Support Officer's interest (related to one of the contractors) was noted in relation to item 6 – to consider quotations received for website update.

**FR20/003 Minutes of Previous Meeting**  
The minutes of the meeting held 25/11/2019 were agreed and signed.

**FR20/004 Clerk's Report**  
**.1 Update on quarters 2 and 3 financial checks:** arrangements would be made for Cllr Baxter to attend to carry out these checks and noted best practice is to rotate the duty to do this amongst all councillors.  
A question was asked about 'grants in kind', such that rather than make a financial grant to local charitable bodies, the council could for instance make office time available for printing and such like. This would be considered at the next meeting of the parish council.

**FR 20/005 Finance and Administration in respect of the 2019/20 financial year, to include:**

- a. **To receive and note** the Qtr 3 position with bank reconciliation  
The Qtr 3 position was circulated, but no bank reconciliation yet available.
- b. **To consider** quarter 3 actual receipts and payments v budget for this financial year  
Circulated and reviewed.
- c. **To confirm** the regular standing order and direct debit payments for the year  
**The following were confirmed:**  
Standing Order payments are made to all staff members, business rates and office rent.  
Direct debit payments are made to: Midshire Communications (photocopier/printer)  
TalkTalk (telephone and broadband)  
ICO (Freedom of Information)  
Inty Cascade (Microsoft office 365)  
True Potential Wealth Management (pensions)

**Members also agreed** to add Waterplus and SSE to direct debit payments list.

- d. **To confirm** banking arrangements as agreed at APC meeting 13/01/2020 and identify at least two additional signatories

The parish council meeting held 13/01/2020 agreed the bank administrator will be 'the officer in post at the time'. Changing over from Lloyds to Unity Trust Bank (UTB) will take a bit of time and in order to get a head start to help out the new clerk, the Support Officer will initiate setting up a UTB account.

The council currently only has two signatories. All payments require a minimum of 2 signatories, therefore if either of the signatories is unavailable then no payments can be made at all. It is recommended to have a pool of at least 4 signatories, any two of whom can authorise payments.

Members **AGREED** to add Cllrs J Cypher and A Helmore to the bank mandate for the new UTB account.

The UTB system recognises the clerk is not a signatory in the established banking sense but is a trusted administrator with authorisation to deal with the council's accounts on its behalf.

UTB has 4 levels of access:

1. View only
2. View and submit, ie administrator level – can prepare payments for authorisation but cannot authorise them.
3. View and authorise, ie councillor level – can authorise payments but cannot prepare them for authorisation.
4. View, submit and authorise: no administrator or councillor has this level of access.

UTB transactions are online; a cheque book is provided if needed. Payments into the bank are made via appointed bank and/or post office or sent by post if cheque.

- e. **To agree** the Council's internal audit arrangements for the 2019/20 financial year  
**It was agreed** to appoint Diane Malley as internal auditor for the 2019/20 financial year.

- f. **To consider** request for presentation on investments by CCLA  
Cllr Baxter declared an Other Disclosable Interest due to her involvement with the National Association of Local Council (NALC) and its use of CCLA's premises for meetings.  
**It was agreed** to ask for a presentation to the next meeting of the parish council.

**FR20/006 To consider the quotes received from website providers for a new website:**

This item was deferred to take place after consideration of items 7 and 8.

**FR20/007 To determine** the minimum level held as general reserve and the steps to be taken if the reserve is used

It was noted the council has both a General Reserve and a Contingency, whereas both serve the same purpose. It was suggested the council has a risk-based Reserves Policy on the basis that some things cannot be insured against such as a parish poll or a by-election. Over the coming year the council should decide the lowest level of reserve it is comfortable with but for now the figure of £70,000 was suggested.

**It was AGREED** to hold a general reserve of £70,000 conditional on a risk assessment for the next meeting.

**FR20/008 To consider and recommend** to Council the precept for the 2020/21 financial year.

Members reviewed the current position relative to the budget for the year and agreed to put any unspent funds from the street lighting replacement fund into an earmarked reserve (EMR).

Having identified a downward trend in reserves, the draft budget approved by the Council in December 2019 had recommended a precept of £135,700 which was a 15% increase on the previous year which would allow for a general reserve of £70,000. Members reviewed the figures again and agreed to remove the £1000 funding for the Party in the Park (which has hitherto not been used but if needed would be available via General Reserve).

It was believed it would be necessary to apply for a loan to fund the necessary replacement of the remaining concrete lighting columns to steel columns, which would require public consultation. Members identified the Annual Parish Meeting would be a good place to start this.

**It was AGREED** to recommend to the next meeting of the Parish Council to set a precept of £129,210. This is a 9.5% increase on the previous year and would see an impact on the average, Band D, council taxpayer of £55.66 for the 2020/21 year.

Cllr S Baxter left the meeting.

**FR20/009 To consider the quotes received from website providers for a new website:**

This item had been deferred from item 6.

Having declared an interest since a relative had provided one of the quotes to be considered, the Support Officer was asked to leave the meeting to allow for unhindered discussion. On returning, the members advised no decision had been made and would recommend to the council to delay until new Clerk is in place.

**FR20/010 Information, outstanding items and items for the next meeting**

For next meeting: risk management, assessment of internal controls and review of asset register.

**FR20/011 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

The date and time of next meeting will be 23/03/2020 at 7.30pm at Alvechurch Parish Council office, George Road Alvechurch

The meeting ended at 9.25pm

Signed .....  
Chairman

Date .....