**A Meeting of the Finance, Asset, Community and Environment Committee**

**took place at 7.45pm on Monday 12th February 2024**

**in the Town Council Offices, the Old Library, Knockhundred Row, Midhurst**

**MINUTES**

**Present**: Cllr D Coote, Cllr Fraser, Cllr G McAra, Cllr D Merritt, Cllr P Piper, and Cllr J Travers (Chairman) and

Cllr Watts.

**In attendance:** S Hurr, Town Clerk and one member of the public.

**F/121/23 Chairman’s Announcements:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting

**F/122/23 Apologies for Absence:** An apology had been received from Cllr Facer. Cllr Lambert was absent without apology.

**F/123/23 Declarations of Interest:** None.

*Meeting halted for Public Participation Session*

**F/124/23 Public Participation Session:** No questions asked.

*The meeting was reconvened.*

**F/125/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 8th January 2024:** The minutes were proposed as an accurate record and agreed by all present.

**F/126/23 Matters Arising and Review of Actions from those Minutes:** Clerk to organise a meeting regarding the playground at Carron Lane.

**Action carried forward:** The Clerk to forward an email to all Councillors to seek volunteers for a Playground Working Group.

**F/127/23 Financial Reports for January 2024:** The financial reports were circulated prior to the meeting.

The following payments in excess of £500 were also noted:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Organisation** | **Details** | **Amount** |
| Design Directive | Lilac Cottage refurbishment consultancy | £1,200.00  + £720.00 |
| Archibald Shaw | Structural Engineer Report for Lilac Cottage Wall | £960.00 |
| West Sussex County Council | December 2023 Salaries | £15,066.51 |
| Midhurst Green Volunteers | St Ann’s Hill Maintenance | £1,500.00 |
| Legal & General | Ill-Health Retirement Policy | £1,573.77 |
| Total Energies | Old Library Electricity | £1547.04 |
| Public Works Loan Board | Loan (second tranche) | £17,000.52 |
| Merlin Lighting | Christmas Lights | £6,480.00 |

**F/128/23 Bank Reconciliations**: The bank statements for January 2024 were signed.

**F/129/23 Events** **Update:** The Clerk reported that the Community Book Sale/Swap funds were now standing at £141.35.

The monthly market had been advertised on the cover of the recent edition of Midhurst Local, and two new feather flags advertising banners as requested by Councillors for the market, had been ordered.

The first Richard Cobden evening in the Old Library had been well-attended and the next evening will take place on Thursday 15th February at 7.00pm. The exhibition stands had also been on display at the February market.

The February half-term activity will take place on Thursday 15th February from 10.00am until 2.00pm and will make use of the ‘Fold Our Town’ materials, alongside a children’s book swap and hot chocolate station.

The next edition of Midhurst Matters will be submitted for design work on 7th March and Mrs Brown-Fuller had requested Councillors to forward any items to her that they wished to be in the publication.

**F/130/23 Reports from Council Chairman:**

* Midhurst Vision Update: Cllr Watts proposed that the Council funded a Project Manager for the Grange Pocket Park installation, which was seconded by Cllr Fraser and agreed by all present and a **Resolution** passed.
* Bank Signatories: Cllr Watts proposed that Cllr Fraser, Cllr Merritt and he become signatories on the Council’s bank account, which was seconded by Cllr Coote and agreed by all present and a **Resolution** passed.
* Town Council Property Valuations: The Council’s three properties (The Old Library, Lilac Cottage and Cemetery Lodge had been inspected and re-evaluated for insurance purposes and the associated reported had been circulated prior to the meeting. Cllr Watts reported that these evaluations would be submitted to the Council’s insurance providers which may result in an increase to insurance premiums. The use of these evaluations, were proposed by Cllr McAra, seconded by Cllr Piper and agreed by all present and a **Resolution** passed. The Asset Register will also be update to include these revised valuations.
* Mulberry & Co (internal Auditors) – three-year engagement: Cllr Watts reported that in order to keep costs for internal audit as low as possible that the Council enter into a three-year agreement with Mulberry & Co which was proposed by Cllr Fraser, seconded by Cllr Merritt and agreed by all present and a **Resolution** passed.

**F/131/23 Matters of Report:** Cllr Merritt commended the work of Riverbank Medical Centre.

Cllr Watts reported that new energy contract had been agreed for three years for the Old Library with SSE.

Cllr Watts reaffirmed that importance of Councillors volunteering for the Council table at the monthly market, and responding to emails from staff on this matter.

Cllr McAra raised concerns regarding the leaking roof in the Old Library and the urgent necessity to resolve this matter.

**F/132/23 Date of Next Meeting –** 7.30pm, 11th March 2024

The meeting ended at 8.12pm.

**Signed: …………………………...........…...........…. Date..................................**

**Chairman**