

KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee meeting, held on 11 November 2024 at the Town Council office

Councillors present:

Cllr A Comber
Cllr R Gibson
Cllr G Lynch
Cllr J Ogden (Chair)
Cllr A Skinner

Officers present:

J Abbott – Town Clerk
A Dougall - Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

1. **Welcome and Apologies for Absence** – Cllr Ogden welcomed all those present, apologies received from Cllr Beecroft-Smith (personal), accepted following the vote.
2. **Declaration of Interests** – Cllr Comber, agenda item 10 – Scout Leader and Director of RFC, non-pecuniary. Cllr Ogden, agenda item 10 – Scout Leader, non-pecuniary.
3. **Minutes of the last Meeting** held on the 14 October 2024, the Committee received, considered and agreed following the vote.
4. **Clerks/Officer Report/Update** - J Abbott has received thanks from the Friendship Club for the grant.
5. **Members of the Public** – none present.
6. **Flagstone Deposit Account** - A Dougall presented the latest statement as at 6 November 2024. Flagstone have introduced a new fee model replacing the annual management fee with the deduction of a small share of the interest on each savings account. The rates shown have the deduction already applied. Consideration was given to the following: -
 - As requested at the F&G 14 October 2024, for the additional transfer of funds from the Barclays Active Saver account (1.5% gross interest rate) to a new Flagstone instant access account with a higher interest rate (list of accounts attached as at 6 November 2024). Proposed by Cllr Lynch, seconded by Cllr Comber, following the vote, it was agreed to recommend to Full Council, the transfer of £200,000 from the Barclays Active Saver to the Flagstone Holding Account. Currently, the best instant access option is Hampshire Trust Bank offering 4.39% (gross) interest. The maximum deposit for HSBC £85k has been reached.
 - The fixed 6-month account with Sainsbury's Bank reaches maturity on 20 November 2024. Proposed by Cllr Ogden, seconded Cllr Lynch, to re-invest the £113,250 plus interest earned to a new fixed 6-month account. A Dougall to confirm the best interest rate at maturity date, currently a new Sainsbury's account (gross 4.54%) or Aldermore (4.35%). All agreed, following the vote.

7. **KTC Grant Approval Policy and Procedure** – Cllr Skinner presented a review of the KTC Grant Policy and application process, explaining the need for more clarity/defined measures for grant approval. All agreed, following the vote, for Cllr Skinner to review the existing policy to incorporate criteria for both small independent groups and larger commercial charities, cross referencing the NALC legal topic notes on grants.
8. **Grant Requests** – the committee reviewed the following grant applications: -
- Footsteps – Walking with You – Cllr Gibson proposed, seconded by Cllr Skinner, to request further information on the services provided directly to Kesgrave residents before a decision is made. J Abbott agreed to action. All agreed, following the vote.
 - Just 42 – Cllr Gibson proposed, seconded by Cllr Comber, for J Abbott to meet with Just 42 with a view to agreeing a SLA for one year. It was agreed this was a budget funding request not a S137 grant, and should be included within the budget from 1 April 2025 as a SLA to provide mentoring to children at Kesgrave High School as part of a well-being service.
 - Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) Ipswich – Cllr Gibson proposed, seconded by Cllr Lynch, to award a grant of £250 to contribute to the trained adviser resources needed for Kesgrave residents. The Council acknowledged that CAB (East Suffolk) and CAB (Ipswich) run independently and Kesgrave residents use both facilities.
- 9 **Earmarked Reserves** – A Dougall presented an updated report for 2024/25 showing proposals to transfer funds from the General Reserve to the EMR's. These new balances will allow provision for future spends that may not occur in 2025/26. Following discussion, it was agreed to increase EMR341 MJH maintenance to £40,000 for future works. All agreed, following the vote, to approve the transfers before 31 March 2024.
- 10 **Version 1 Draft Budget 2025/26** – The following amendments were agreed to update the draft budget:-

Administration

- 4002 (Employers NI) – already updated with the new 2025/26 rates, also see MJH and C&R. This has increased costs from 2024/25 by approximately £7,000 for all staffing budgets. Local Councils do not qualify for the Employment allowance.
- 4032 (Website/social media) – increase to £1,000 to cover costs of converting to .gov domain. By October 2025, Window 10 will no longer be supported. The IT budget has been increased for the replacement of ageing PC's with new laptops that will support Windows 11.
- 4170 (Electricity) – increase to £1,000 to allow for future price rises.
- 4204 (Library) – consideration for inflation adjustment, awaiting any service change requests from the Library.

MJH

- 1400 (MJH room hire) – to discuss price increases at the January meeting.
- 4170 (Electricity) – to consider meter installation for SEG (solar panels).

Youth Provision

- New (Well-being Support) – to agree a new SLA, provisional budget included £4,000.

Recreation & Amenities

- 1299 (Income) – increase to include £1,000 for MAST annual income.
- 4241 (Community Transport) – awaiting decision to fund the charity rather than treat as a S137 grant, provisionally included £2,000.
- 4315 (Street Lighting) – 2 additional columns in Dobbs Lane assumed in 2024/25, extra £8,000 for 2 further columns.

Considerations for 2026/27 – Land maintenance costs (staffing, equipment etc), further projects outlined in the updated Business Plan, costs for proposed pump track.

- 11. **Other/Urgent Communications** – none
- 12. **Date of Next Meeting** – Monday 13 January 2025 at 7.15pm in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices.
- 13. **Agenda Items for Next Meeting** – rate review for the MJH.
- 14. **Resolution to exclude the Public under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960** – none present.

Agenda items 15 and 16 were then discussed in the CONFIDENTAIL part of this meeting.

This part of the meeting finished at 9.05pm

Chairman..... Date.....