

NUTHURST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Wednesday 14th
February 2024, at Copsale Village Hall, commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Cllr S Catterall (Chair), Cllr N Bryant, Cllr C Kenny, Cllr V Court.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Louise Shaw (Locum Clerk), 1 member of the public.

23-23/24 ATTENDANCE AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr D Cotton and Cllr W Bayley sent in their apologies prior to the meeting and were accepted during the meeting.

24-23/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest, as defined under the Localism Act 2011 and the Parish Councils Code of Conduct, were made.

25-23/24 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the last meeting in November 2023 had been approved, accepted and signed for at the last Full Council meeting on the 17th January 2024

26-23/24 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr SC mentioned that CIL report would be presented later in the meeting and suggested that the council put forward ideas for spending the money. No further announcements.

27-23/24 PUBLIC SESSION

There was one member of the public present but did not wish to participate in the meeting. Cllr N Bryant requested that the Clerk print out copies of the agenda to place on the chairs for future meetings.

28-23/24 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL AUDIT

Cllr S Catterall discussed the interim audit and any outstanding actions arising from it. One of the actions was to get further signatures/signatories on the banking system. One was for the Procurement Policy to be updated and adopted which it was noted the action was complete. The last action was for council to be refunded the £200 paid to one of the previous Clerks. It was also noted that this action was now complete. Cllr Kenny enquired as to whether the council could remunerate the member of staff. The Clerk informed the members that they could not and that the member of staff insisted that they do not attempt to remunerate her.

29-23/24

BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORY

It was **agreed** that the following people were added to the bank account, Cllr D Cotton, Cllr S Catterall and the Locum Clerk Louise Shaw. The Clerk informed the members that following a meeting between the clerk and the chair on the 9th February, the clerk completed mandate forms for the three named people. During the meeting Cllr C Kenny confirmed that he had received the email for the new mandate and had completed the action. The council are now waiting for Cllr N Bryant to complete his action. He confirmed that he had not received any emails but will recheck the email account. Cllr V Court suggested Cllr N Bryant go into the bank to check the email address used by the bank.

Cllr S Catterall proposed that the Clerk be added as an Account Leader for the council's bank account. It was **agreed** by the members to complete this action.

30-23/24

FINANCE MEETINGS

Cllr S Catterall suggested reducing the amount of Finance Meetings set for the remainder of the year to coincide with the timing of key milestones such as budgets and AGM. It was **agreed** that the Finance Committee will meet on the following dates 8th May, 11th September and 13th November and cancel the other meetings.

31-23/24

CIL REPORT

Cllr S Catterall discussed the CIL money and confirmed that the payments from April and October 2020 equating to £24,094.11 had now been spent following the completion of the playground. The remainder of the CIL money of £101,032.57 will need to be spent before 2027. The Clerk and Cllr S Catterall suggested that the Footpath and Open Spaces could investigate projects for CIL expenditure and report back to full council. The Clerk suggested the council look into setting up a repair café and suggested making contact with Shipley.

32-23/24

FINANCE

- i) The Clerk informed the members that the bank reconciliation had not been done for this meeting, following the meeting she had had with the Chair on the 9th February, it was found that there were missing payments and a reconciliation would not be a true record. The clerk also informed the members that the Chair of the Council had agreed to the clerk attending Rialtas training which is set for the 21st February. The members were in **agreement** for the clerk to attend training.
- ii) The Clerk presented the invoices and cheques for signing and approving. Cllr C Kenny enquired about an Invoice for Netcom IT for £1200.00. Cllr S Catterall confirmed that the Clerk had authority to make a purchase under the Financial Regulations point 4.5. The clerk also sought guidance and advice from the Chair of Council and Chair of Finance and concluded that it was classed as an emergency in line with the regulation in order to conduct council business effectively. Cllr N Byrant challenged the purchase stating that the clerk had not followed the correct procedure by contacting full council. Cllr C Kenny stated that it was the first time he had heard of the clerk having IT issues and asked why the council hadn't been told about it previously. The Clerk stated that she had followed the correct procedure as set out in the financial regulations adopted by Nuthurst Parish Council in July 2023. And that she had made contact with the Chair of the council as well as the Chair of the Finance Committee before proceeding to enquire about a new laptop. Cllr N Byrant challenged Cllr S Catterall and inferred that Cllr S Catterall may have altered the Financial Regulations to evade any financial irregularities. The clerk and Cllr S Catterall refuted this remark. Cllr S Catterall produced a printed copy of the Financial Regulations that were adopted in July 2023

and told Cllrs Kenny and Bryant where they could be found. Cllr N Bryant informed the clerk that the website wasn't working. The Clerk said she would look into it and update where needed. After further discussions between the Councillors, Cllr N Byrant refused to sign the cheque for the amount of the Laptop and asked for the cheque to be rewritten to cover just the IT invoices. Cllr S Catterall asked Cllr N Bryant to give a suitable reason as to why he was refusing to sign the cheque. Cllr N Bryant insisted that the way the purchase was handled broke regulations and stated that he had been pulled up on other financial issues. He also stated that he felt aggrieved after the December meeting and that he held Cllr S Catterall accountable for the actions and result following that meeting. The Clerk reiterated that she and the two Chairs had followed the correct procedure and protocol and asked what purpose it served in refusing to pay the invoice. She further stated that the council had not paid other invoices to the same company and that the council we now starting to get a reputation for nonpayment. Cllr S Catterall offered an extra week for Cllr N Bryant to issue a formal complaint or evidence that the purchase went against procedure. Cllr N Bryant answered Cllr S Catterall with, "Who do you think you are, speaking to me like that. You can go and do one." The Clerk concluded that the discussion was not helpful and served no purpose, other to obstruct the works of council. Cllr S Catterall asked whether Cllr N Bryant was deliberately obstructing the council in the running of its business and stated that Cllr N Bryant was abusing his position and power on the Council's bank. Cllr N Byrant did not deny this remark and insisted he would not sign the cheque. Cllr N Byrant stated that he would be taking further legal advice on this and report back to council.

The other cheques/invoices were signed off and will be put forward to full council for approval.

The meeting closed at 20.49pm

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Chairman of the Finance Committee

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Date