

Minutes of Meeting on 24th July 2023
Elmstead Parish Council – Finance Committee
Community Centre, School Road, Elmstead Market, CO7 7ET

Present: Councillors Martine Ward (Chairman), Amanda Brennan, Michael Hare and Gill Williams
Mrs Baxter (clerk)
Absent: Councillor James Chable

23/020 Apologies of Absence

Apologies were sent from Cllr Chable.

23/021 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and Personal Interests

None.

23/022 To agree the Minutes of the meeting of 29th June 2023.

It was resolved to accept the minutes from 29th June 2023 as true and accurate.
Proposed: Cllr Ward, Seconded: Cllr Hare, all in favour.

23/023 2023/24 First Quarter Review

To review the expenditure for the first quarter of 2023/24 against the set budget. Also, to consider the reserves.

The summary was reviewed, in particular those items that were over 25%. The handyman wages have exceeded 25% partly due to additional hours required whilst the mower was out of action, in need of repair. It was discussed that a personnel committee meeting is due, where the contractual hours can be reviewed, along with interim appraisal meetings also to be held. The 22nd August was suggested. The clerk is to check the hall availability.

It was noted that zoom has been cancelled as there is no longer an ongoing requirement for virtual meetings. The roles of the internal versus external auditor were discussed, the internal audit fees were above budget by £5.

The clerk went through subscriptions, and it was felt that at the next renewal the EALC/NALC subscription needs looking at to see whether it is delivering value for money.

The mower service was above the budget figure, due to the breakdown, but there had been no service the previous year so minimal mower costs in that year.

It was asked why the council pays for the community centre waste collection. It's because our handyman puts all the rubbish he collects in there, and we split the cost of the collection half and half with the community centre.

The reasons for the overspend on hall hire were discussed, with committee meetings, an internal audit, meeting our County Councillor and the PC surgeries.

The street lighting costs are over 25% and the clerk raised that Npower have sent a letter to say that prices are increasing as of September. The clerk has been using a broker though to check other providers and will see if there is a cheaper alternative to be agreed in the August Parish Council meeting.

Other amounts over 25% are because they are one-off items and represent the cost for the full year rather than a quarter.

The reserves were reviewed. The clerk suggested that the mower reserve needs to be increased in order to afford a new mower when it's necessary. That will need to be looked at when setting the 2024/25 budget.

The legal expense reserve will be utilised for the upcoming solicitor's expenses for the land transfers from the Church Road and Charity Field developments. We are also saving towards any other costs that may be associated with taking on the new community centre.

Signature

Date

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- 23/024** **Date for next meeting**
The next meeting will be to review the second quarter 23/24 expenditure, so will be in October.
Thursday 19th October at 12.30 pm was suggested. The clerk is to check the hall availability.
- 23/025** **Matters raised by Councillors for the next agenda or for information only.**
None.
- 23/026** **Verification of Bank Reconciliations**
A member to verify the 1st Quarter 23/24 bank reconciliations.
Cllr Ward verified the 1st Quarter 23/24 bank reconciliations after the meeting.

The meeting closed at 2.07pm. Minuted by Mrs. A Baxter
Contact: elmsteadparish@gmail.com
01206 827139

Signature

Date