

# Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish Council Finance and Audit Committee

31st October 2024

Commended: 2.00 pm

Terminated: 2.55 pm

Present: Councillor Watkin (Chair)  
Councillors Berrisford (part), Bettley-Smith, Daly and Karling (part)

Councillor Drakakis-Smith attended the meeting as a Member of the Public

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence received for this Meeting.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Clerk reported that should Councillor Karling attend the meeting, then he would be declaring an interest in the Budget and Finance 2024-2025 – Payment of Invoices and Reimbursements, as he was the recipient of a reimbursement. He would therefore not be discussing or voting on this section of the Budget and Finance 2024-2025 report.

Councillor Bettley-Smith, on a Point of Order (agreed by the Chair), referred to correspondence that he had received from Councillor Drakakis-Smith, who had raised concerns, relating to her personal incorrect assumptions of the discussion of the Policies, that were being considered. The correspondence also raised the Councillor's concerns on the change of date for this Committee and the procedures followed. The Clerk confirmed that the details of the new date had been posted onto the home page of the website, significantly in advance of statutory requirements. Finally, Councillor Drakakis-Smith had referred to the reason for the change of meeting, and the Chair accepted that this matter was personal and sensitive.

## 3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the proceedings of the Finance and Audit Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the Committee. Please refer to Minute 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, below.

(For the purpose of the Minutes, Councillor Bettley-Smith abstained from voting as he was not present at the meeting under consideration).

## 4. BUDGET AND FINANCE 2024-2025

The Clerk began to introduce her Budget and Finance report but at this juncture, Councillor Karling arrived at the meeting (2.05 pm).

The Chair therefore wished to revisit the approval of the Minutes, and Councillor Karling confirmed that he too, approved the Minutes of the proceedings of the Finance and Audit Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024, as a correct record.

### (i) APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Clerk reported that to date, no applications for financial assistance had been received. Councillor Bettley-Smith added that he had encouraged the church to submit their application for their annual grant towards the maintenance of the burial ground, so payment could be made.

### (ii) UNITY TRUST BANK

#### RESOLVED

(a) That the sum of £2,000 be transferred from the Co-op Bank to the Unity Trust Bank;

(b) That retrospective approval be given to the Clerk for the setting up of a direct debit to pay the annual statutory fee to the Information Commissioner, in the sum of £35.00 (reduced from £40.00 for payment by direct debit);

(c) That the Clerk's successful application for the VAT refund from April to September, in the sum of £558.77, be noted.

**(iii) TRANSACTIONS – UNITY TRUST BANK**

**RESOLVED**

That the following transactions in the Unity Trust Bank account, since the last meeting of the Parish Council, be approved:-

DATE	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
30/09/2024	Invoice 500 - August Maintenance		£135.00
30/09/2024	PAYE September 2024		£113.00
30/09/2024	September Salary		£427.35
30/09/2024	September Pension		£158.27
30/09/2024	Quarterly Service Charge – Unity Trust Bank		£18.00
04/10/2024	Transfer from Co-op	£2,000.00	
16/10/2024	HMRC VAT Refund	£558.77	

**(iv) TRANSACTIONS – CO-OP BANK**

**RESOLVED**

That the following transaction in the Co-op Bank account, since the last meeting of the Parish Council, be approved:-

DATE	DETAILS	RECEIPTS	PAYMENTS
04/10/2024	Transfer to Unity Trust Bank		£2,000.00

**(v) PAYMENT OF INVOICES AND REIMBURSEMENTS**

**RESOLVED** That the following payments be approved:-

Luke Rimmer	September Maintenance - Invoice 511	£180.00
Luke Rimmer	Remembrance Planting	£350.00
M Clough	October 2024 Salary	£427.35
HMRC	October 2024 PAYE	£113.00
Staffordshire Pension	October 2024 Pension	£158.27
Betley Village Hall	Room Hire Invoice 4184	£136.50
Shires Accountants	Payroll Services Invoice SHI2394	£246.60
Newcastle Plumbing	Cable Ties for Poppies	£17.93
Royal British Legion	Wreath	£27.50

**(vi) BUDGET EXPENDITURE TO 24<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2024 – UNITY TRUST BANK**

**RESOLVED**

That the following Unity Trust Bank Budget Head expenditure to 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024, be approved:-

Budget Head	Total	Budget Allocated	£ Difference
Salary	£4,296.03	£7,200.00	£2,903.97
Pension	£1,261.12	£1,660.00	£398.88
Admin - Insurance	£898.92	£900.00	£1.08
Admin - Audit Fees	£250.00	£625.00	£375.00

Admin - Venue Hire	£261.50	£450.00	£188.50
Admin - Subscriptions	£313.45	£330.00	£16.55
Admin - Website	£0.00	£135.00	£135.00
Admin - Other	£753.52	£500.00	-£253.52
Highways	£600.00	£1,500.00	£900.00
Footpaths	£2,448.00	£2,448.00	£0.00
Grants	£0.00	£1,200.00	£1,200.00
Miscellaneous	£153.91	£270.00	£116.09
Sandy Croft	£0.00	£1,100.00	£1,100.00
Memorial Garden	£1,820.00	£4,000.00	£2,180.00
Neighbourhood Plan	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Chair's Expenses	£0.00	£250.00	£250.00
	£13,056.45	£22,568.00	£9,511.55
<b>Footpath Budget increased from £1000 to £1,095 due to donation £95.00 on 12/04/24</b>			
<b>Footpath Budget increased from £1095 to £1,585 due to donation £490.00 on 05/06/24</b>			
<b>Footpath Budget increased from £1585 to £1,745 due to donation £160.00 on 09/08/2024</b>			
<b>Insurance Budget increased from £850 to £900 on 26/09/2024</b>			
<b>Audit Fees Budget increased from £40 to £625 on 26/09/2024</b>			
<b>Footpaths Budget increased from £1745 to £2448 on 26/09/2024</b>			

**(vii) EXPLANATION OF VARIANCES**

The Clerk confirmed that there were no variances to report to this meeting.

**(viii) BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 24<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2024  
RESOLVED**

That the Bank Reconciliation for Royal Bank of Scotland and Unity Trust Bank as at 24<sup>th</sup> October 2024, detailed below, be approved:-

<b>Bank Reconciliation 24th October 2024</b>	
<b>BETLEY BALTERLEY AND WRINEHILL PARISH COUNCIL</b>	
<b>Financial year ending 31 March 2025</b>	
<b>Prepared by: Muna Clough, Parish Clerk &amp; RFO</b>	
<b>Balance per bank statements as at</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Current Account UNITY (20500409) - 24th October 2024</b>	<b>£5,291.58</b>
<b>Reserve Account CO-OP (49148300) - 4th October 2024</b>	<b>£29,965.25</b>
<b>Less: any unrepresented cheques/payments</b>	
<b>Current Account UNITY (20500409)</b>	<b>£1,279.65</b>
<b>Reserve Account CO-OP (49148300)</b>	
<b>Add: any unbanked cash - Unity</b>	
<b>Net bank balances as at 24th October 2024</b>	<b>£33,977.18</b>
<b>The net balances reconcile to the Cash Book (receipts and payments account) for the year, as follows</b>	

<b>CASH BOOK</b>	
<b>Opening Balance</b>	
<b>Unity Trust Bank @ 1st April 2024</b>	<b>£420.69</b>
<b>Co-op Bank @ 1st April 2024</b>	<b>£23,099.25</b>
<b>Add: Receipts in the year</b>	
<b>Unity Trust Bank</b>	<b>£2,647.69</b>
<b>Co-op Bank</b>	<b>£20,866.00</b>
<b>Less: Payments in the year</b>	
<b>Unity Trust Bank</b>	<b>£13,056.45</b>
<b>Co-op Bank</b>	
<b>Closing balance per cash book [receipts and payments book] must equal net bank balances above</b>	<b>£33,977.18</b>

**(ix) UNITY TRUST BANK STATEMENT – 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024  
RESOLVED**

That the Unity Trust Bank Statement dated 30th September 2024, as included in the report submitted, be approved.

**(x) CO-OP BANK STATEMENT – 16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024  
RESOLVED**

That the Co-op Bank Statements dated 16th September 2024 and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2024, as included in the report submitted, be approved.

**5. ACTION PLAN 2024-2025**

Members considered a Mid-Term Review of the Action Plan based on the findings of the Internal Auditor, to ascertain whether the Parish Council was meeting the Recommendations, to date. The Clerk reported that ideally this Review would have included any recommendations from the External Auditor, but the Parish Council had been unable to publish the audited documents by the statutory deadline of the 30 September 2024, because it was awaiting the External Auditor's Report, which had been delayed due to staff absence.

**RECOMMENDED**

**That the Action Plan as appended to these Minutes, be approved.**

At this juncture, Councillor Berrisford arrived at the meeting (2.20 pm)

**6. GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS**

The Clerk reported that it was her intention to review all Governance Documents at each Annual Meeting of the Parish Council.

**(i) Financial Regulations 2024-2025  
RECOMMENDED**

**That the Parish Council approves the Financial Regulations 2024-2025, subject to an amendment to paragraph 5.3 as below:-**

On behalf of the Parish Council, **the RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of February.** In the case of Betley, Balterley and Wrinehill Parish

Council, the RFO shall use their best endeavours to issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of January.

**(ii) Code of Conduct 2024-2025**

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Parish Council approves the Code of Conduct, as circulated.

**(iii) Social Media Policy 2024-2025**

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Parish Council approves the Social Media Policy 2024-2025, subject to an amendment to paragraph 3 as below and an additional sentence indicating that the Parish Council does not use TikTok:-

**3.c. X(formerly Twitter)**

**(iv) GDPR Policy 2024-2025**

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Parish Council approves the GDPR Policy 2024-2025, subject to the following amendment to paragraph 2 on the final page:-

The Parish Council will be pleased to consider making special arrangements on request for persons who do not have English as their first language or those with hearing or sight difficulties.

**(v) Retention of Documents Policy 2024-2025**

That the Parish Council approves the Retention of Documents Policy 2024-2025, as circulated.

**(vi) Publication Scheme 2024-2025**

That the Parish Council approves the Publication Scheme 2024-2025, as circulated.

(For the purpose of the Minutes, all Recommendations were unanimous).

**7. RISK ASSESSMENT 2024-2025**

**RECOMMENDED**

- (i) That the Parish Council approves the Risk Assessment 2024-2025, which will be considered at its meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024.**
- (ii) That the Clerk updates the circulated copy with any typographical and formatting amendments, and ensures that any empty boxes are completed.**
- (iii) That the second row, fifth column, be amended to read:-  
Public Liability Insurance.  
Regular maintenance of street lights by the statutory undertaker.**

**8. ASSET REGISTER 2024-2025**

Members considered the 2024-2025 Asset Register, and discussions ensued regarding the current condition of some of the assets, the subject of which would be revisited at a later date.

**RECOMMENDED**

That the Parish Council approves the 2024-2025 Asset Register, signed by Councillor Daly who conducted a physical examination of all the assets on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2024.

**9. SAKURA CHERRY TREE PROJECT**

**RESOLVED**

That consideration of this Item be deferred to the next meeting of the Parish Council on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

### **RESOLVED**

**That the next meeting of this Committee be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2025 at 2.00 pm.**

## **11. URGENT ITEMS**

The Chair reported that there were no items for consideration as a matter of urgency at this meeting.

## **12. EXEMPT ITEM**

Members resolved that in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the following item of business was exempt from the press and public, as primary discussions would be held which would identify individuals and businesses.

At this juncture, Councillor Drakakis-Smith, in her capacity as a Member of the Public, was asked to withdraw from the meeting, which she did. [There were no other members of the public or press in attendance.]

## **13. FORWARD PLANNING 2025-2026**

Members considered the following documents:-

- (i) Draft Budget-Precept Report 2025-2026
- (ii) Correspondence received regarding internal matters

### **RECOMMENDED**

- (i) That the Budget and Precept 2025-2026, be considered, updated as requested, and submitted for approval by the Parish Council to be held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2024;**

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) That the correspondence, be received.**