

Finance Working Group Meeting

Wednesday 18th June - 6pm

Much Marcle Memorial Hall.

Present: Cllrs M Barber-Starkey; A Hope; J Baldwin; E Jefferson

In attendance: Rachel Freestone Clerk/RFO

1. Consider the Asset Register and any amendments required for 2025/26.
Action: Clerk to check that the printer has been written off as instructed at the last meeting, the rest is accurate.
2. Insurance provision for 2025-26. Two quotes have been received from a broker offering a Zurich policy and from Zurich insurance themselves. £307 and £300 quoted. Clerk has requested a quote from the current provider ahead of the July meeting, felt that as Zurich are quoting a substantial discount that the current provider is unlikely to meet them. Insurance is due in August. Action: Clerk to check what cover has been included in the schedule, add to the agenda for July for resolution.
3. Review of the Financial Controls and Risk Assessment. The policy was amended last year, the working group feels that they are adequate and no further amendments required at this time.
4. Review of the Risk Register. The working group feel that there is uncertainty on who will lead HALC if the current leader should retire. Action: Propose that this is added to the risk register with no further amendments required at this time.
5. Risk Management:
 - a. Review of the Policy for 2025-26. Action: The working group propose that no changes are made at this time.
 - b. Annual Review of Effectiveness following our Internal Auditor's annual report:
 - Review the previous year and examine the Parish Council's track record on effectiveness on risk management and internal control to assess if any changes need to be made.
Financial year 24-25, Cllr Baldwin completed the Internal Financial Controls as a non-signatory. Although Cllr Baldwin is now a member of the Finance Working Group he remains a non-signatory. Action: propose that Cllr Baldwin completes the Finance Internal Controls for 2025/26. Agreed: the Finance Working Group meetings are to have a standing item for internal control and risk management and report to full council.
 - Consider the internal and external risk profile of the coming year, noting any new areas of risk, and consider whether current internal control arrangements are likely to be effective.
The only addition at this time is the proposed uncertainty of an HALC succession plan and how the parish council would get support if needed.
 - Evaluate the potential consequences to the Parish Council if an event that has been identified as a risk takes place and consider measures to avoid, reduce or control same.

The parish council have a good communication network. The Clerk holds an insurance record for Much Marcle Memorial Hall. Action: to obtain the insurance record for the Rushall Club.

- Recommendations to be taken to the Parish Council ordinary meeting on the 1st July.

In making any recommendations, the Parish Council will consider the following aspects:

- Timely identification and assessment of risks. Action: the Clerk to put asset checks as on the agenda.
 - Prioritisation of risks and allocation of resources to address areas of high exposure. The parish council have no areas of high risk.
 - Quality and timeliness of information on significant risks. Communication is considered adequate to meet the risk profiles.
 - Time it takes for control breakdowns to be recognised or new risks to be identified. The Working Group propose a fourth signatory as noted that may be occasion when more than one of the signatories could be on holiday. Action: Cllr Jefferson offered, the Clerk to contact Unity to start the process.
 - Ability of the Parish Council to learn from its problems. This was deemed to be low risk as there are high levels of communication and reaction.
 - Commitment and speed with which corrective actions are implemented. Low risk as the council are proactive.
6. The Working Group considered the Reserves Policy. The Clerk explained that need to add £150 to the defib budget to cover expenses and add £100 to the reserve. Action: the Working Group could see no problem with this. Add to the Agenda for 1st July for resolution to transfer £150 from the general reserve.

Clerk additional actions: the school to confirm that they will be completing the annual tree survey at Bartons as per the letter sent to the academy and reference the fence. Have they accepted the terms of the letter?

This could be an additional risk to monitor how the school manages the tree inspections and any subsequent work. We would be inspecting at the beginning of the summer and completing work over the summer school holiday. Assess following response from the school. Action: add as an Agenda item.

Rachel Freestone – Parish Clerk 18th June 2025