

Melksham Town Council

Minutes of the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee meeting held on Monday 17th February 2025

PRESENT: Councillor A Griffin (Chair)

Councillor P Aves
Councillor J Hubbard
Councillor S Rabey
Councillor J Westbrook

IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS:	Hayley Bell	Deputy Clerk
	Kalpesh Patel	RFO
	Mel Rolph	Finance Officer

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: No members of the public or press were present.

84/24 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Stokes.

85/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

86/24 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

87/24 Minutes of the Finance, Administration and Performance Committee meeting held on 13th January 2025

The minutes of 13th January 2025, having previously been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the chair Councillor Griffin.

88/24 Financial statements

Councillor Hubbard acknowledged having the variance report was a step forward but felt it should be amalgamated with the Income & Expenditure report, not a separate item.

Concern was expressed about some aspects of the report, eg, 4960 Live Entertainment. Spend year to date of £3078 but only £1563 explained. Also nothing budgeted so why is there even a spend on it? Not aware of council ever authorising spend on Totally

Mad Bingo or a pantomime. Members were very concerned that these events were in contravention of the policy that the Town Council would not put on events that needed council expenditure.

The Chair asked for a more detailed assessment of the event costs. Locum RFO was able to confirm income was higher than cost. Members acknowledged this but no full breakdown and still against policy. Members need to know how the shows came to be put on. Deputy Clerk confirmed she would investigate.

(Note. Subsequent search by officers was unable to locate the resolution/policy referred to. Further details required)

Expenditure lines were discussed.

Sundry Office Expenses. £1046 on tea & coffee? RFO explained this figure covers anything purchased for office that is not separately budgeted for, eg water coolers, statutory guidance books etc. Comment was made that statutory guidance books should have its own budget line and why is a water cooler provided.

Licenses. There was discussion of ModernGov. Members believed that the Council had resolved to end the ModernGov contract when approving the budget last year.

There was discussion on why all expenses for an event not showing together. It was noted that the plan for the upcoming financial year should solve the problem going forward. However, there was concern that councillors are currently unable to discharge their legal duty in respect of finances because of lack of information.

The chair suggested the possibility of a retrospective analysis of a selection of account codes. Locum RFO suggested a reset from new financial year.

Locum RFO assured members that many things had been rectified by him and the finance officer and he could assure them that the underlying figures were correct. There was a feeling from some members on this basis to draw a line and move on, while acknowledging concerns and that further action was required.

It was proposed by Councillor Aves, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

RESOLVED to accept the report for period month 9.

89/24 Unity Bank - CB1 - December Month 9 2024

It was confirmed that electronic banking was active on Unity account.

Payment to Prosec Security was queried. Confirmed as security for events.

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Aves and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept the statement.

90/24 Lloyds Bank Account - CB2 - Month 9 -December 2024

Cllr Hubbard asked for confirmation if Lloyds Bank has been shut down. Members stated that a resolution had been made to close the account at the meeting to approve the budget.

(Note: Committee Clerk subsequently reviewed minutes for budget agreement 2024/25 and 2025/26 and no such resolution was recorded)

Finance Officer explained they are in the process of closing the account down. RFO explained dealing with the bank is not an easy process. There was some discussion and suggestions for a way forward. Cllr Hubbard was concerned how the number of transactions for an account that was being closed.

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept the statement.

91/24 Petty Cash Month 9 -December 2024

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor Rabey and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept the statement.

92/24 Variance Report December 2024

It was proposed by Councillor Griffin, seconded by Councillor Aves and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED to accept the report.

93/24 Lloyds Bank - CB2

Item was noted and discussed under item 90/24.

94/24 Financial Risk Assessment

Members expressed disappointment that the Financial Risk Assessment did not show tracked changes.

Use of Council debit or credit card. - Members were very unhappy that the Financial Risk Assessment had not been amended to reflect their decision regarding payment cards. It was noted that there was currently no named debit card and there was a proposal for pre-paid cards.

Whether it is a debit card or a pre-paid card it must be kept in the possession of the named person, not in the safe.

RFO sought clarification on what members wanted. Card(s) to be kept in the possession of the named user at all times. Named user to be responsible for safety of the card.

Members repeated expressed concern that their requests and decisions were not being implemented.

The Chair was asked if he held discussions with officers before the meetings to discuss the agenda. The Chair confirmed that for this meeting, he had not.

Budget setting/monitoring – each of the three items should have its own risk assessment level.

Members were unhappy that the documents requested at the last meeting were not available.

Members requested the Clerk be present in person at the next meeting.

Members refused to accept the Financial Risk Assessment and asked that it be corrected.

95/24 Council Credit Card

Councillor Hubbard asked if there was a cost for the cards. Finance Officer confirmed there was a cost of £3.00 per card, per month. Does Unity Bank not issue a debit card with maximum spending limits?

It was proposed by Councillor Hubbard, seconded by Councillor Griffin and

RESOLVED TO approve the issue of pre-pay cards.

Councillor Hubbard commented that he felt £500 was too low a limit. Councillor Griffin suggested a £1000 limit. RFO suggested starting with the lower limit and increasing if necessary.

Councillor Hubbard felt the RFO was discounting councillors' opinions and telling them that they were "wrong on everything". Councillor Hubbard left the meeting at 20:43.

Councillor Rabey accused the RFO of talking over councillors and being rude to them.
RFO said he was giving advice, as he was expected to do.

Councillor Rabey left the meeting to take a telephone call at 20:45.

It was suggested by members that the meeting should be closed.

RFO announced his decision to resign and left the meeting at 20:46.

Councillor Griffin closed the meeting at 20:46.

Meeting Closed at: 8.46 pm

Signed:

Dated: