



# Stanway

## Parish Council

Parish Clerk: Donna Tristram  
Victory Hall, Villa Road,  
Stanway, Essex CO3 0RH  
P: 01206 542221/07759 837111  
E: clerk@stanwaypc.org.uk

30/23

### Minutes of the Corporate Governance Committee Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 7pm in the Committee Room, Victory Hall

**Present:** Cllrs Cotter, Baines, Hagon, Seabrook & Spademan, the Clerk & RFO

1. Cllr Cotter (Chair) welcomed all present.
2. **Declarations of Interest** – Cllr Hagon declared his 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024 re-election as City Councillor for Stanway Ward.
3. **Public Participation** – None present.
4. **APPROVED** minutes of the Corporate Governance meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The Chair signed the minutes as a true and accurate record.
5. **Clerk's Report** – Noted Updates
6. **RFO Report**
  - (i) **Payment List** – The Committee expressed reservations regarding payment of invoices which had been received other than in accordance with the Financial Regulations, however, the legal and reputational risks if the Council did not settle undisputed debts was recognised and payments were accordingly **APPROVED**. The Chair signed the payment list.

The bank accounts did not reconcile as of 30<sup>th</sup> April due to a standing order payment to A&J Lighting for £ 152.76. The Committee agreed that this credit would remain on account pending future invoicing for streetlight repairs.

- (ii) **Approval of Virements** – None.
- (iii) **Update on the Council's cash investments** – The Committee were issued with the statutory guidance and informal commentary on the guidance regarding local government investments (Section 15 (1) (a) of the Local Government Act 2003), within the RFO Report. The Committee reviewed the savings accounts recommended by the RFO and requested further information concerning settling the public works loan before deciding on investments.

The RFO will obtain a settlement figure for paying off a proportion or 100% of the loan and provide a comparison against return on savings and a timeframe projection on rebuilding reserves to current levels. A report will be submitted for a **DECISION** at **Full Council**. In the interim, the Committee agreed and accepted that the Unity Bank current account credit balance exceeds the value set by the existing Investment Policy.

The Clerk will write to Barclays Bank regarding compensation in relation to the late closure of accounts and also raise the matter with the Banking Ombudsman.

**REVIEWED** system of internal control regarding procurement, audit and insurance. These areas, which have been removed from the Financial Regulations re-draft (yet to be approved), will be incorporated into the Council's Standing Orders for **APPROVAL** at **Full Council**.

- (iv) **REVIEWED** and this Committee **APPROVED** in accordance with the Insurance Act 2015, that it knew of no "material circumstance" for disclosure, which "would influence the judgement of a prudent insurer in determining whether to take the risk and, if so, on what terms" of Stanway Parish Council. In accordance with the "duty of fair representation," the disclosure declaration will be presented for **CONSIDERATION** and **AGREEMENT** at **Full Council**. The RFO will obtain renewal terms based on this Committee's disclosure in meantime.

With the RFO report, the RFO presented detailed historical financial performance comparisons based on the published annual accounts for the last 20 years. This information included revenue & capital income against expenditure, households receiving council tax discounts and annual precept against revenue expenditure and cash reserves. The RFO was thanked for pulling together and creating such a comprehensive and informative report.

7. **Local Highways Panel (LHP) – No new schemes proposed**

8. **Corporate Governance Review:-**

- (i) **REVIEWED** and **AGREED** proposed committee terms of reference for Planning, Community Assets and Staffing Committee for **APPROVAL** at **Full Council**
- (ii) **REVIEWED** Recording and Reporting on Meetings Policy for **APPROVAL** at Full Council
- (iii) **DEFERED REVIEW** of Standing Orders for **APPROVAL** at **Full Council**

- 9. **RECEIVED** an update from the Jansma Park Working Group. Ellisons Solicitors have appointed a new solicitor to our case who is chasing up the executor's solicitor for an update on the transfer of Comb Field.

10. **Information Update**

The Clerk requested an update from members regarding the March Full Council discussion concerning the services provided by Stanway doctor surgeries. Concerns included unwell residents having to queue outside early in the morning to obtain appointments. The Clerk will contact the Local Integrated Care Board (ICB) to highlight resident concerns, write to the local MP's office and request feedback from residents.

The Clerk highlighted recent social media concerns and a request for the Parish Council to organise monitoring equipment, regarding odours from the Enovert Bellhouse Landfill Site. The Clerk contacted the Environment Agency (EA) and provided their response, directing residents to log each incident so the EA can consider action.

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**11. Agenda Items for Committees / next Council Meeting**

- Full Council to review cash investment returns against settling Public Work Loan and decide on necessary actions
- Full Council to consider and agree upon disclosure declaration from existing insurers regarding renewal
- Full Council to review and approve re-drafted Financial Regulations and Standing Orders
- Full Council to approve all committee terms of reference
- Full Council to approve Recording and Reporting on Meetings Policy

**12. Confirmed the date & time of the next meeting**– Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7pm, Committee Room, Victory Hall, Stanway Community Centre, Villa Road

**The Chair closed the meeting at 8.14pm**