

# Westfield Parish Council

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Chairman: Cllr G Fuller Parish Clerk: Ms L Close FSLCC



Established 2011

## All Council Meetings are open to the Public and Press

15<sup>th</sup> December 2022

TO: All Members of Westfield Parish Council

Dear Councillor,

You are summoned to a Meeting of Westfield Parish Council, on **Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2023 at 7pm at the Oval Office Boardroom, Cobblers Way, Westfield.**

Ms L Close  
Parish Clerk

*Before the meeting there will be a public session of up to 15 minutes to enable residents of Westfield to ask questions, and make comments on items on the agenda. Members of the Public are asked to restrict their comments, and/or questions to five minutes.*

## AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for absence and to consider the reasons given**  
Council to receive apologies for absence and, if appropriate, to resolve to approve the reasons given.
- 2. Declarations of interest and dispensations**  
Members to declare any interests they may have in agenda items, in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct. The Parish Council may consider agreeing a dispensation, providing the request is put in writing and the dispensation is allowed on the grounds set out in s.33 of the Localism Act 2011.

3. **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting – 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022**  
To confirm and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting. (Pages 1-3)
4. **Committee and Working Group reports**  
To note the minutes of the Committees and Working Groups below:
  - **Environment and Development – 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 (Pages 4-6)**
  - **Finance and Personnel – 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 (Pages 7-11)**
5. **Approval of any items over £5,000 and consideration of any virement**
6. **Internal Audit Report – as recommended at F&P 14/12/22 (Pages 12-20)**
7. **Somer Valley Working Group (Page 21)**
8. **Representation and Support at B&NES – Contact with other Parish and Town Councils (Cllr Hopkins)**
9. **Possible Community Speedwatch Scheme Meeting with PC George Simpson (Pages 22-23)**
10. **Asset of Community Value – to consider nominating Mardons as an Asset of Community Value**
11. **Outside Bodies reports – for reporting only**
12. **Creating Community identity – for reporting only**
13. **Chairman’s report - for reporting only**
14. **Bath and North East Somerset Councillors’ reports – for reporting only**

## WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held at the Oval Office  
Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 commencing at 7.00pm

**Present:** Chair: Cllr G Fuller

Cllrs: D Cooper, R Hopkins, E Jackson, P Millard, B Wallbridge,  
P Wilkinson and P Williams

**Attending:** Lesley Close, Clerk; Tracey Stephens, Deputy Clerk; Mohamed  
Essoussi of Active Travel Prescribing, B&NES

**Absent:** Cllrs: J Honess, L Mansell and R Moss

**99. Apologies for absence and to consider the reasons given**

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Mansell.

**100. Declarations of interest and dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest.

**101. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting – 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

**Resolved:** the minutes of 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were agreed and signed as a  
correct record.

**102. Active Travel Prescribing**

The Chairman welcomed Mohamed Essoussi of B&NES who gave an  
overview of the policy of Active Travel Prescribing in B&NES.

**103. Committee and Working Group reports**

**(a) Environment and Development Committee – 14<sup>th</sup> November  
2022**

The minutes of the Environment and Development Committee meeting  
of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were noted.

**(b) Finance and Personnel Committee – 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022**

The minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup>  
November were noted.

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

Signed ..... Dated .....

Westfield Parish Council

**104. Approval of any items over £5000 and consideration of any virement**

**Resolved:** to approve the payment of £6510.00 to New Leaf Studio for the Management Plan for the Waterside Valley

**105. Draft Budget 2023/24**

It was pointed out that in the current economic climate it was very likely that prices would change on items in the budget, making it difficult to predict accurate costs.

**Resolved:** to provisionally agree the draft budget for 2023/24.

**106. Waterside Valley**

A report was given by the Clerk on work being done on the Management Plan. It was unlikely that funding would be available to work on all footpaths at the same time, so the prioritising of one path was requested to start getting tenders in place.

**Resolved:** (1) to prioritise the top footpath to be made accessible (phase 1);  
(2) to write a spec and go to tender for quotes to make all footpaths accessible in order to move to phase 2 and 3 as soon as possible.

**107. Coronation event May 2023**

**Resolved:** to go ahead with booking the event with outside providers for Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May. An update report to be given to E&D Committee the following week.

**108. Community Engagement Policy and Action Plan**

**Resolved:** to accept the Community Engagement Policy and Action Plan, as recommended by Environment and Development.

Thanks were offered to the Clerk for her work in putting the policies together.

**109. Outside Bodies reports**

***Royal British Legion***

**Resolved:** to send a letter of congratulations to the Royal British Legion for raising over £20,000 at Remembrance and to thank them for the work they do.

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

Signed ..... Dated .....

**Westfield Parish Council**

***Radstock Museum***

Cllr Jackson reported that Radstock Museum had closed for the winter refit and the display on the History of Methodism in Westfield had been successful.

**110. Creating Community Identity**

It was felt that the weekly email from the Chief Executive of B&NES was very Bath-centric and didn't reflect what was happening in the parishes and towns in B&NES.

**Resolved:** to write to the Chair of a selection of other parishes in B&NES to ascertain how they feel about their representation and support from B&NES. To put this on the January agenda.

**111. Chairman's report**

Cllr Fuller thanked everyone involved in the Christmas lights switch on event, saying that he had received a lot of positive comment about the evening.

He wished everyone a Happy Christmas.

**112. Bath and North East Somerset Councillors' reports**

Cllr Jackson had circulated her report by email. She felt that the biggest issues she was dealing with currently was homelessness and warm spaces.

The meeting closed at 8:35pm

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

Signed ..... Dated .....

Westfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Environment and Development Committee Meeting held in the boardroom at the Oval Office, Cobblers Way, Westfield on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022 commencing at 7pm.

**Present:** Cllrs Bryan Wallbridge (Chair), Diana Cooper, James Honess, Ron Hopkins, Eleanor Jackson, Paul Millard and Pat Williams

**Also attending:** Lesley Close, Parish Clerk, Tracey Stephens, Deputy Clerk.

**Absent:** Cllr Geoff Fuller

**77. Apologies for absence and to consider the reasons given**

Apologies were received from Cllr Fuller and accepted.

**78. Declarations of interest and dispensation**

There were no declarations of interest

**79. Minutes of the last meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2022 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**80. Planning applications for consideration**

There were no objections to the following applications:

22/04712/TCA	41 Welton Road	Conifer (T1 and T2) – remove. Group 1 (mixed species screen/hedge) – remove. Hazel/coppice
22/04864/COND	The Shambles, Wells Road	Discharge of conditions 2, 19 and 20 of application 17/04186/FUL (Demolition of existing buildings with retention of existing east and south facades, and development of 10 no. Residential units and 1no. Commercial Unit within a flexible use including Uses within Class A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), B1 (Business) and D1 (Non-residential institutions).).

It was noted that Mardons Club had now been sold. Concern was raised at a prospective variation of the Mardons Club lease.

**81. Planning Decisions**

The planning decisions were noted.

**Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.**

**Signed .....** **Dated .....**

Westfield Parish Council

**82. Recreation Ground – Norton Hill**

**Quotes for the gap in wetpour around the carousel**

**Resolved:** to note the acceptance under delegated authority of the quote from GB Sport and Leisure for £2,972.40 +VAT for a more permanent solution to the shrinking of the wetpour around the carousel

**Memorial Bench** – No response had been received to our request for more information.

**Office building** – It was noted that planning permission had now been received and plans were circulated for final approval.

**83. Recreation Ground - Westhill**

**Westhill Club update** – it was noted that the solicitors were now in contact with each other.

**84. Mobile CCTV following the meeting with PC George Simpson**

A report on the meeting with PC George Simpson had been circulated. It was accepted that a camera would have very little impact on anti-social behaviour at Jubilee Green. It was noted that the police are unable to use speed enforcement cameras at night, but would increase patrols. A Community Speedwatch was discussed.

**Resolved:** to put to Parish Council in January the option of a community speedwatch initiative.

**85. Proposed addition to the coal truck planters**

**Resolved:** (1) to order a plaque from Trophies of Radstock to commemorate the Wellsway Pit disaster to be attached to the Wellsway Pit planter; (2) to note the change in spec for the Wesley Avenue planter from brick to local stone.

**87. Waterside Valley**

A quote from Andy King of New Leaf Studios to carry out actions from the Management Plan was discussed. Since New Leaf Studio created the Management Plan they have expert knowledge of the site, which no other Landscape Architect would have to the same extent.

**Resolved: (1)** To accept the following items in the quote:  
Item 1 – Certificate of lawful use - £420.00+VAT  
Item 2 – Land drainage consent for works to springs and ramps to footbridges - £540.00 +VAT

**Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.**

**Signed .....** **Dated .....**

**Westfield Parish Council**

Item 3 – Environmental Permit - £720 + VAT (or if lesser input is required – time spent at £60 per hour + VAT

Item 4 – Application fees – as required

Item 6 – Repair / replacement works to footbridges - £660 +VAT

(2) to contact Miriam Woolnough regarding actioning Item 5 of the quote using WECA funding in relation to springs, tree planting, paths and access, interpretation boards, entrances and seating.

**88. Defibrillators**

Further to an offer of funding from Waterside Carnival Club, quotes had been received from Community Heartbeat for a new defibrillator to be positioned at Westhill Club.

**Resolved:** to ask the Carnival Club if we may purchase the G5S-02A defibrillator at £1055 +VAT; (2) to undertake a cost analysis of spending of batteries, pads etc over five years.

**89. Events**

**Feedback on the Christmas Lights Switch On Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November.**

The event was considered to have been a resounding success.

**Outside Home Decorations competition update**

Update was given on the plans for judging the competition.

**Coronation event**

The Committee was advised of work done so far to get the 'Coronation Celebration' underway. Quotes had been received for marquees, security and inflatables for the event. The Committee was asked if authority could be delegated to Cllr Cooper and Honess to book items as they occur to avoid losing bookings.

**Resolved:** (1) to designate a rough budget at Finance and Personnel  
(2) to delegate authority to Cllrs Cooper and Honess to authorise bookings to be made.

To resolve that, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

**90. Tree survey quotes**

Only one quote had been received at the time of the meeting.

**Resolved:** to add to the agenda for the next meeting  
The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

**Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting.**

**Signed .....** **Dated .....**



## WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Personnel Meeting  
held at The Oval Office on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 10am

Present: Cllr Phil Wilkinson (Chair), Cllrs Diana Cooper, Paul Millard, Robin Moss,  
and Pat Williams (Vice Chair).

Absent: Cllrs Geoff Fuller, Ron Hopkins and Lesley Mansell.

In Attendance: Lesley Close, Clerk

### 74. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Geoff Fuller and Lesley Mansell.

### 75. Declarations of interest and dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

### 76. Minutes

**Resolved:** that the Minutes of the Finance & Personnel meeting held on 23rd November 2022 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

### 77. Monthly Accounts

**Resolved:**

- a) that the combined bank reconciliation statements be agreed.
- b) that the November monthly income and expenditure statements for the Current Account be agreed.
- c) that the November monthly income and expenditure statements for the Corporate Treasury account be agreed;
- d) that the October monthly income and expenditure statements for the Business Savings account be noted;
- e) that the summary of debit card transactions since the last meeting (Appendix 1) be agreed.
- f) that there had been no petty cash spending that month.

### 78. Schedule of payments requiring authorisation

In accordance with item 5.2 of the Financial Regulations, the updated schedule of payments was considered at the meeting.

**Resolved:** (1) that the schedule of payments due be agreed (attached as Appendix 2), that the invoices and the BACS authorisation sheet be signed accordingly and that the BACS payments be made by two councillors via online banking.

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

Signed ..... Dated .....

**Westfield Parish Council**

**79. Schedule of payments due on a regular basis**

In accordance with item 5.6 of the Financial Regulations, an updated list of payments which arise on a regular basis as a result of a continuing contract, statutory duty or obligation was considered at the meeting.

**Resolved:** that the schedule of payments be agreed (attached as Appendix 3) and that the invoices and the BACS authorisation sheet be signed accordingly. That the BACS payments be made by two councillors via online banking.

**80. Budget 2023-24**

**Resolved:** to amend the budget as follows: Subscriptions increase from £1,328 to £1,369; Accounting Support to decrease from £4,146 to £935.

**81. Draft Precept Leaflet 2023-24**

**Resolved:** to recommend the draft precept leaflet to Parish Council.

**83. Internal Audit Report**

**Resolved:** to recommend the internal audit report for agreement at Parish Council.

**84. Notification of External Auditor Appointment**

It was noted that the new External Auditor from 2022/23 until 2026/27 is BDO LLP.

**85. Charity Commission and Office Space at Norton Hill Recreation Ground**

**Resolved:** (1) The Office Licence with the Norton Hill Recreation Ground Trust. for the new office was agreed.

(2) to approve the plans for building regs with the addition of a window/serving hatch in the kitchen and if possible, to provide an internal door to the existing accessible toilet, thus negating the need for two accessible toilets and so increasing the size of the kitchen.

**86. Photocopier**

**Resolved:** To accept the five-year upgrade of the photocopier with Ricoh at a cost of £127.00 per quarter (current cost is £127.20 per quarter) Mono per copy - £0.0244 and colour £0.0212. Cost of moving the photocopier to the new premises – free of charge.

The meeting closed at 10.40 am.

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

8 Signed ..... Dated .....

Westfield Parish Council

APPENDIX 1

WESTFIELD PARISH COUNCIL DEBIT CARD SUMMARY

Report for F&P - December

SHEET

2022-23-9

REF	DATE	SUPPLIER	DETAILS	TOTAL	postage 4022/1	Grants 4203/202	Christmas 4223/202	Stationary 4023/1	E&D Projects 4227/202	N/H maintenance	W/H Maintenance	Community Projects 4232/202	Hospitality 4131/101
DC148	29/11/2022	Mr Flag	2x union flags; 1x remembrance	£16.97					£16.97				
DC149	30/11/2022	Co op	Tea bags and biscuits for 7/12	£3.50									£3.50
			TOTAL (NET)	£20.47	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£16.97	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3.50
			VAT:	£3.40					£3.40				
			TOTAL (Gros)	£20.47	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£16.97	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3.50

added since the agenda was circulated

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

Signed ..... Dated .....



Westfield Parish Council

APPENDIX 3

Schedule of regular payments 2022-23 (All amounts are NET)

Supplier	Details	April	May	June	July	August	Sept	October	Nov	Dec
Avon Pension Fund (BACS monthly)	Superannuation	£837.60	£780.33	£794.75	£988.95	£825.98	£825.98	£825.98	£978.00	£1,264.86
DCK - BACS monthly	Accounting support	£0.00	£0.00	£268.75	£268.75	£268.75	£268.75	£268.75	£268.75	£268.75
GPS Telecoms (DD monthly)	Telephone and broadband	£75.35	£70.51	£68.45	£67.80	£67.27	£66.57	£67.48	£68.94	£70.87
Greensward (BACS monthly)	Grounds maintenance	£2,121.58	£2,121.58	£2,121.58	£2,121.58	£2,121.58	£2,121.58	£2,121.58	£2,121.58	£2,121.58
HMRC (BACS monthly)	PAYE and NI	£341.95	£507.64	£537.18	£808.05	£546.34	£545.94	£429.74	£494.93	£1,061.80
Oval Commercial (SO-£587.70) the rest BACS -	Office Rental	£839.75	£839.75	£839.75	£839.75	£839.75	£839.75	£839.75	£839.75	£839.75
Oval Commercial (BACS)	Use of Boardroom	£60.00	£60.00	£60.00	£0.00	£30.00	£0.00	£60.00	£165.00	£90.00
NET Salaries (and expenses) (BACS monthly)	Office staff	£2,652.80	£2,344.00	£2,370.46	£2,865.69	£2,485.21	£2,510.61	£2,601.81	£3,040.65	£4,323.07
Public Works Loans Board (DD - 6 monthly)	Westhill Play Area	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£3,686.72	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Ricoh (BACS quarterly)	Photocopier	£188.00	£0.00	£0.00	£170.20	£0.00	£0.00	£158.87	£0.00	£0.00
Southern Electric (DD - quarterly)	NH Pavilion	£0.00	£0.00	£118.55	£0.00	£0.00	£108.86	£0.00	£0.00	£95.57
Southern Electric (DD quarterly)	Christmas Tree	£252.54	£0.00	£28.29	£0.00	£0.00	£28.29	£0.00	£0.00	£30.59
SoVision IT (BACS monthly)	IT Support	£169.20	£169.20	£169.20	£169.20	£169.20	£169.20	£169.20	£169.20	£169.20
Total Gas & Power (DD - quarterly)	NH Pavilion	£99.54	£110.57	£0.00	£0.00	£43.77	£0.00	£0.00	£48.38	£0.00
Water2Business (DD six monthly)	Auto-watering systems	£91.41	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£30.42	£138.56	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Water2Business (BACS six monthly)	NH Pavilion	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£335.04	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Information Commissioners Officer (DD)	Data Protection Fee (annual)	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£40.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Zoom subscription (DD - monthly)	Meeting space	£11.99	£11.99	£11.99	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00

Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting.

11 Signed ..... Dated .....

## **Westfield Parish Council**

*Internal Audit Report 2022-23 (Interim)*

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*Stuart J Pollard*

*Director  
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

## **Background and Scope**

Statute requires all town and parish councils to arrange for an independent Internal Audit (IA) examination of their accounting records and systems of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2022-23 financial year, both in advance at our offices and during our interim visit to the Council, which took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2022: it will be updated following our final visit, the date of which has yet to be agreed, but will be timed to follow closedown and preparation of the year's detailed accounts by their externally contracted accountants.

## **Internal Audit Approach**

In commencing this year's review, we have in accordance with the requirements of the Governance and Accountability Manual - "The Practitioner's Guide", paid due regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential misrepresentation in the Accounts / AGAR, together with examining the overall governance framework. Our aim is to ensure that the Council operates robust control systems and that transactions are, as far as we are reasonably able to ascertain, processed in accordance with national and locally approved legislation and controls.

## **Overall Conclusion**

We are pleased to record that no significant issues have been identified from the work undertaken to date, although one or two issues raised in last year's interim report remain to be addressed: these are set out in the body of the following detailed report with resultant recommendations further summarised in the appended Action Plan. We ask that the report be presented to members with responses to the various recommendations indicating the Council's intended approach to addressing them in advance of our final review for the year.

# Detailed Report

## Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council's accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers: we also aim to ensure the integrity of the data and that appropriate arrangements are in place for its security. The Council maintains its financial records using the Rialtas Omega accounting software.

Two bank accounts are in operation for day-to-day transactions with the Co-op bank (Current and Treasury) recorded in separate cashbooks. A third cashbook account is in place with Nationwide holding a proportion of the Council's surplus funds with detail also recorded in a separate cashbook in the accounting software. A further cashbook is in use to record the limited transactions in the year through the petty cash account (see later section of this report). Consequently, we have: -

- Ensured the accurate carry forward of the prior year closing balances as reported in the certified 2021-22 AGAR to the current year's accounting records;
- Ensured that a comprehensive, meaningful and appropriate nominal coding and cost centre structure is in place to facilitate effective budgetary monitoring and control;
- Checked and agreed transactions in the current account cashbook to the supporting Co-op Bank statements for three months (April, July and October 2022);
- Checked and agreed the year to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 transactions on the Co-op and Nationwide deposit accounts to the supporting bank statements; and
- Verified the reconciliations of the Co-op Current account between the cash books and the relevant bank statements as of 30<sup>th</sup> April; 31<sup>st</sup> July and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, plus on the Co-op and Nationwide deposit accounts as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

We are pleased to note that, in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations (FRs Para 2.2 refers), a non-signing councillor is subjecting reconciliations to periodic (at least once quarterly) independent scrutiny and sign-off. As indicated in last year's report, we again suggest that, rather than print each account's month-end bank reconciliation, use is made of the "Combined bank reconciliation statement" that can be generated in the Management Accounts suite of Omega programmes under "Annual Return", which would save the nominated councillor having to sign-off three separate monthly reconciliation statements. We also suggest that the Trial Balance is printed and also signed off as it will provide confirmation of the cashbook balances as recorded in the Omega reconciliation statement, thereby evidencing the member's review and agreement of both bank statement and cashbook balances when reviewing the reconciliations.

### *Conclusions and recommendation*

*We are pleased to record that no significant concerns have been identified in this review area with periodic bank reconciliations generally bearing evidence of councillor scrutiny and agreement. As indicated above, the reviewing councillor should, in accordance with the adopted Financial Regulations (FRs), sign-off the reconciliation statements and original bank statements: we also urge that the relevant month-end Trial Balance be printed and also signed-off.*



*We shall undertake further work in this area at our final visit, including ensuring the accuracy of the year-end bank reconciliations and accurate disclosure of the combined cash and bank balances in the year-end AGAR.*

- R1. *The "Combined account bank reconciliation" (as found in the Management Accounts suite of Omega) should be printed off each month-end, rather than individual account reconciliations.*
- R2. *The councillor periodically checking the reconciliations should also be provided with a print of the relevant month-end Trial Balance (Page 1 only), which identifies the month-end cashbook balances and the supporting bank statements, all of which should be signed-off and dated when checking the reconciliations, thereby evidencing agreement of the relevant detail on the reconciliation statements.*

## **Review of Corporate Governance**

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has a robust regulatory framework in place, that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders (SOs) and that, as far as we may reasonably be expected to ascertain as we do not attend meetings, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation.

We are pleased to note that both SOs and FRs have been reviewed, are in line with the latest NALC model documents, and been re-adopted formally by the Council at the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2022, with both recording a consistent value of £25,000 for formal tender action and the need to publicise potential contracts in excess of that value on the Government's Contract Finder website.

We have reviewed the Council and standing committee meeting minutes reading those to date in 2022-23 as posted on the Council's website and provided electronically by the Clerk to ensure that no issues affecting the Council's financial stability either in the short, medium or long term exist.

We are again pleased to note that a raft of formally documented financial and other procedures is in place, which we consider an example of best practice affording a degree of cover in the event that any key officer may be unavoidably off work for any significant period of time.

We are also pleased to note that the external auditors have signed-off the 2021-22 certificate on that year's AGAR with no qualification or other comment.

### **Conclusions**

*We are pleased to record that no issues arise in this area currently warranting formal comment or recommendation. We shall continue to monitor the Council's approach to governance at future visits, also continuing our examination of Council and Committee minutes.*

## **Review of Expenditure & VAT**

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Suitable documentation supports the payments, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount; and
- An official order has been raised on each occasion that one would be anticipated.

We have discussed the control procedures in place over the approval and release of payments, all of which we consider sound and appropriate for the Council's present requirements with members visiting the Council's offices and physically releasing the payments online, following their set-up by the Finance Officer.

We have selected a test sample of 26 individual payments processed in the financial year to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022 for compliance with the above criteria. Our test sample includes all payments individually in excess of £1,000, plus a more random selection of every 20<sup>th</sup> payment as listed in the cashbook totalling £61,095 and equating to 63% by value of non-pay related payments in the year to that date.

We have checked and agreed detail of the final 2021-22 and first two quarterly HMRC VAT reclaims to the underlying detail in the Omega control account for the year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 ensuring appropriate recovery with no issues arising.

### *Conclusions*

*We are pleased to record that no significant concerns have been identified in this area of our review process to date. We will extend our test sample applying the same criteria at our final review visit also examining the final two quarterly VAT reclaims for the year and agreeing detail to the Omega control account.*

## **Assessment and Management of Risk**

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

We are pleased to note that the Council has a comprehensive Risk Management Strategy in place, supplemented by detail Financial Risk Assessments generated through the LCRS software, which was last reviewed, updated and adopted in February 2022 .

We have examined the current year's insurance schedule with "Local Councils MTA" and consider that the level of cover in place is appropriate for the Council's present requirements with Employer's and Public Liability both standing at £10 million, Fidelity Guarantee cover at £750,000 and Business Interruption "Loss of Revenue" cover in place at £4,500.

### *Conclusions*

*We are pleased to record that no matters arise in this area currently: we shall continue to monitor the Council's approach to risk management at future reviews and take this*

*opportunity to remind the Clerk and Council of the requirements of the Governance and Accountability Manual – The Practitioner’s Guide, in relation to the need for the review and adoption of the risk registers at least once in each financial year.*

## **Budgetary Control & Reserves**

In considering the Council’s approach to budget determination and precept setting, we aim to ensure that decisions are made based on sound information and that an appropriate level of precept is determined to meet the Council’s future planned expenditure.

This interim visit occurred in advance of members’ formal and final consideration / adoption of the budget and precept requirements for 2023-24: we will, consequently, review the outcome of those deliberations at our final visit.

We are also pleased to note that members are provided with detailed budget performance information based on the Omega accounting software during the course of the financial year and have reviewed the latest budget position, as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022, seeking and obtaining appropriate explanations for the few significant variances existing by reference to the Omega detailed transaction reports.

We also note that a number of individual earmarked reserves are in place totalling in excess of £425,000 currently.

### **Conclusions**

*No issues arise in this area currently: we shall undertake further work at our final review visit ensuring that the Council has given due consideration to its budgetary and precept requirements for 2023-24 formally minuting the approval of both. We shall also examine the final year-end budget outturn seeking explanations for any significant variances that may arise and consider the appropriateness of the level of retained reserves (both in the General and Earmarked funds).*

## **Review of Income**

In examining the Council’s sources of income, we aim to establish that robust procedures are in place to ensure that income due to the Council is identified and invoiced accordingly (where appropriate); that arrangements for the secure handling of any cash income are in place and that income due to the Council is recovered within a reasonable time span. The Council currently receives income by way of the annual precept, CIL moneys, a one-off allotment rent receipt, occasional grants and donations, bank interest and recovered VAT.

Consequently, only limited work will be required in this area again this year, which we will address at our final review.

### **Conclusions**

*No issues arise in this area currently: as indicated above, we will revisit this area at our final visit commenting accordingly at that time.*

## Petty Cash Account

We are required, as part of the annual IA Certification process, to provide assurance on the satisfactory (or otherwise) operation of any petty cash accounts at the Council. A relatively small account is in place within the admin office, being operated on an imprest basis with a cash float of £100, the balance being topped-up periodically during the year from the Current Co-op bank account.

Due to the low volume of transactions to date this year we have examined each ensuring that an appropriate trade invoice or till receipt supports each payment and that, where applicable, any VAT expended is identified for recovery through the quarterly reclaims submitted to HMRC. In that respect, we note that the VAT incurred (£8.37) on the latest payment processed.

We have also, at this first visit to the Council, checked and agreed the physical cash holding to the underlying Omega “cashbook” with no issues identified.

### Conclusions

*No matters warranting formal comment or recommendation arise in this area currently.*

## Review of Staff Salaries

In examining the Council’s payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HMRC legislation in relation to the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme in relation to employee contribution percentages. At this review visit, we have: -

- Obtained a copy of the staff establishment detailing staff in post, their spinal point on the national pay scale and basic working hours, noting the appointment of a new Admin Assistant with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2022;
- Noted Council’s agreement to implement the 2022-23 national pay agreement, which, together with arrears backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, will be implemented with the December 2022 payroll;
- Checked the 2 staff members’ salaries paid in October 2022 ensuring that the gross salaries paid were in line with the Clerk’s establishment record; and
- Similarly checked the October 2022 NI / tax and pension deduction calculations by reference to the relevant HMRC and Pension Fund Administrator’s tables.

### Conclusions

*We are pleased to record that no issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation. We will examine the December 2022 payslip detail at our final review ensuring the accurate application of the 2022-23 national pay award.*

## Investments and Loans

As indicated earlier in this report the Council holds surplus funds in a Nationwide Building Society account with interest earned on that account credited to the Current bank account each month.

We noted last year compliance with the 2018 change in Central Government legislation effective from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 requiring all councils with combined cash / bank balances in excess of £100,000 to develop an appropriate Investment Policy / Strategy (this previously only applied to councils with funds in excess of £500,000). We reviewed the resultant document at that time and considered that it met the requirements of that legislation.

The Council has one outstanding loan repayable half-yearly to PWLB: we have verified the first repayment instalment for the financial year by reference to the PWLB demand advice as part of our aforementioned review of expenditure.

### *Conclusions*

*No matters have been identified at this stage of our review requiring formal comment or recommendation. We shall undertake further work at our final review, checking the second half-yearly loan repayment and ensuring the accurate disclosure of the value of the outstanding loan liability as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 in the year's AGAR.*

Rec. No.	Recommendation	Response
<b>Review of Accounting Arrangements and Bank Reconciliations</b>		
R1	The "Combined account bank reconciliation" (as found in the Management Accounts suite of Omega) should be printed off each month-end, rather than individual account reconciliations.	<i>agreed</i>
R2	The councillor periodically checking the reconciliations should also be provided with a print of the relevant month-end Trial Balance (Page 1 only), which identifies the month-end cashbook balances and the supporting bank statements, all of which should be signed-off and dated when checking the reconciliations, thereby evidencing agreement of the relevant detail on the reconciliation statements.	<i>agreed</i>

## Parish Clerk

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**From:** Ronald Hopkins <sueron1@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** 10 December 2022 16:38  
**To:** Simon De Beer  
**Cc:** lyndarobertson70@gmail.com;  
richardrobertson@midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk; chrisdando3@gmail.com;  
Gordonmackay@midsomernortontowncouncil.co.uk; george.clutten@radstock-  
tc.gov.uk; jllewellyn@frometowncouncil.gov.uk; Cllr Nicholas Toogood; Eleanor  
Jackson (Cllr); Paul Millard; Parish Clerk  
**Subject:** Re: Somer Valley Working Group

Hi Simon,

Sorry I couldn't get to the meeting last week business travel made it completely impossible..

As V Chair of the Somer Valley Forum I would like to join in with the new Somer Valley Working Party that you are proposing, I think it potentially offers very exciting results...

Cllr Paul Millard attended the Frome visit so am sure he will be keen to continue to represent Westfield Parish Council

Kind regards  
Ron Hopkins  
Sent from my iPhone

On 9 Dec 2022, at 09:56, Simon De Beer <Simon\_DeBeer@bathnes.gov.uk> wrote:

Dear All

For those of you who were able to attend, I'm sure you will agree that we had a productive meeting yesterday following our visit to Frome.

Members of the group all seemed to agreed that there is opportunity for more joint working across the Somer Valley, combining resources where appropriate, for a mutually beneficial outcomes. B&NES was asked to assist in setting up a Somer Valley working party to explore this objective, initially covering Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Westfield and Paulton.

**Therefore, please will you nominate a rep from your Council for the working group.** I anticipate that the working group will meet in the new year, maybe aligning with the Local Plan engagement workshop on 8<sup>TH</sup> February, if that works.

I will contact Paulton Parish Council to bring them up to speed and ascertain their appetite for joint working

Regards

**Simon de Beer**

## Notes of a meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 10.30am with PC George Simpson

**Present:** PC George Simpson, Cllrs Diana Cooper, Ron Hopkins, Eleanor Jackson, Paul Millard, Pat Williams. Lesley Close, Parish Clerk

### 1. Speeding

The meeting was called essentially to discuss speeding on the A367. There has been an increase in traffic but a noticeable decrease in Police enforcement. The series of recent accidents were raised along with incidents of night time racing along the A367, especially from the Whitepost roundabout.

The role of Highways was outlined in detail, with speed indicator devices and other signage coming within their remit.

Suggestions for improvements included:

- (1) The Police looking at night time mobile enforcement patrols (most mobile patrols are daytime).
- (2) The Parish Council looking at setting up a Community Speedwatch, supported by the Police. A minimum of 3 people is needed to get this initiative started, though a lot more would be preferable. Whilst the evidence is not enforceable, it does build up an evidence base of when the speeding takes place. This informs where the Police will put its mobile enforcement units. The information can also strengthen a request to B&NES for more speed indicator devices on the A367. All locations for Community Speedwatch are risk assessed by the Police. **This suggestion to go to Parish Council.**

### 2. CCTV

There was a discussion on Parish Council CCTV units on public land such as Highways. PC George Simpson raised the fact its use is limited in that identification of individuals is probably not possible and there are Data Protection complications relating to who retains the images. The Police has its own mobile CCTV units and if there is a specific need, the Parish Council can ask for it to be set up for a particular purpose. Issues of Data Protection would then come within the remit of the Police.

### 3. Drug dealing

A discussion on how local people can safely report drug dealing was raised. PC George Simpson to write an article for the Westfield Warbler.

The meeting closed at 11.50am.



## Parish Clerk

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**From:** George Simpson <George.Simpson@avonandsomerset.police.uk>  
**Sent:** 08 December 2022 16:24  
**To:** Parish Clerk  
**Subject:** RE: Thank you

Hi Lesley,

Attached is a link to the A&S website with details about Community Speedwatch. Which may well be worth sharing with the councillors.

[Community SpeedWatch | Avon and Somerset Police](#)

I have also checked with the speed enforcement officer we have here at Radstock Police Station and unfortunately, they can not operate at night or in low light (street lights are on) as their equipment takes an image of the vehicle and it needs light to do this as it doesn't have its own light source. I will raise the issue with the team here and ask them to patrol best they can.

Thank you

George

**From:** Parish Clerk <parishclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 07 December 2022 13:45  
**To:** George Simpson <George.Simpson@avonandsomerset.police.uk>  
**Cc:** Deputy Clerk <deputyclerk@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Admin Assistant <adminassistant@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>; Geoff Fuller <geoff.fuller@westfieldparishcouncil.co.uk>  
**Subject:** Thank you

Afternoon George

Many thanks for attending the meeting this morning, which was very helpful.

I shall take the possibility of setting up a Community Speedwatch Scheme to Parish Council on 4<sup>th</sup> January and hope to take this initiative further once the Parish Council has made a formal decision.

You mentioned the possibility of writing an article for the next Westfield Warbler about how people can safely report suspected drug dealing. Our deadline is 31st January and I have made a diary note to get in touch with you about this next month.

In the meantime, I think you mentioned that you would look at whether night time speed enforcement patrols were possible on the A367 from the White Post roundabout down through Westfield. As you know, the straight road makes this particularly attractive for racing at night.

Thank you again for your time and help.

Best wishes,

Lesley

