

## Employment Finance and Strategy Group

17<sup>th</sup> July 2025

### Minutes

**Present:** Cllrs Martin, Hotson & Perry, plus RFO. Cllr Sharp attended vial TEAMS during Item 8.

**1. Apologies:** Cllrs Arger and Riordan

**2. Dispensations** – There were none.

**3. Minutes of last meeting** – Cllr Martin proposed, Cllr Perry seconded and agreed 3 for, 0 against and 01 abstained

**4. Contracts**

The RFO led the debate, and it was agreed unanimously by EFS Group to recommend to Council the contracts below:

Activity	Company	Annual Value 2024-25	Cost per annum 2025-26	Contract End Date	Notes
Remembrance Day Road Closure Licence	MBC	£75.00	£100.00	Paid Annually in July	Finance & Strategy Group. For SPC Approval
Data Protection Licence	ICO Data Protection Registration	£35.00	£35.00	31/07/2025	Auto-renew - no choice!
Licence to erect Christmas motifs on lampposts	KCC - Kent Highways	£134.00	Est. £150.00	Paid Annually in Autumn	Finance & Strategy Group. For SPC Approval
Sage Accounts Software	Sage	£351.60	Est. £385.00	30/08/2025	Review every 5 years or on major upgrade

**5. Roles and Responsibilities**

It was proposed by Cllr Perry, seconded by Cllr Hotson and agreed unanimously to approve the summary of the Roles and Responsibilities of the Chairman, the Vice Chairman, and Councillors and to recommend adoption to Full Council.

**6. Review Annual Investment Strategy**

The RFO noted that the dates in the Investment Strategy had not been updated and neither had the cash balance as at the 31st March 2025. Following the

above two amendments the Investment Strategy was agreed by EF&SG members.

#### **7. Review Finance, Asset and Activities Risk Assessment**

The RFO pointed out that the three-year contract with the Insurance Company, Hiscock, would end on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2025 and that she was actively seeking quotes from two alternative companies.

Councillors agreed to recommend the Asset and Activities Risk Assessment for approval by Full Council.

#### **8. S137 Grant application 2025**

It was noted that Hi Kent, a local deaf charity, had applied and received a grant from the Parish Council in 2024. Following some discussion, where it was agreed that the charity provided a very valuable local service, it was proposed by Cllr Hotson, seconded by Cllr Perry and agreed unanimously to recommend to Full Council a grant of £440 to Hi Kent.

Cllr Martin cited the email received from Cllr Alessi regarding a request to the Parish Council to pay for SEHT insurance for the coming year as they had little or no funds, and the volunteers were having to pay for training etc. out of their own pockets. It was also noted that in other areas the Emergency Help team is under the auspices of the Parish Council, but this isn't the case in Staplehurst. Cllr Sharp, as treasurer for SEHT, advised that the insurance premium for the current year was £454.94 and is due for renewal in October.

Councillors discussed the request and agreed in principle to recommend to Full Council that the Parish Council pay for the full cost of the SEHT insurance cover subject to having sight of the policy renewal when it is received.

#### **9. Delegated Authority**

The clerk had requested a minor amendment to the Delegated Powers to increase the financial sum from £100 to £500 for the Clerk/RFO to approve urgent works, to bring this in line with the adopted Financial Regulations Policy. It was proposed by Cllr Perry, seconded by Cllr Hotson and agreed unanimously to update the Delegated Powers in line with the adopted Financial Regulations.

The RFO reported that, having read the Financial Regulations, 5.18 states "In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the Clerk may authorise expenditure of up to £2,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure." This was noted.

The RFO left the meeting for the HR subgroup meeting to take place.