



DRAFT

FRM(14)MO6

FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee held on Monday 30 June 2014 commencing at 18:00 in the Lindos Centre, Melton IP12 1PP.

Present:

Cllr Mrs B K Abbott [Vice Chairman] *from 19:00*
Cllr Mr G K Butterwick
Cllr Mr C W Taylor
Cllr Mr A Thompson [Chairman]
Cllr Mr J West

In Attendance:

Cllr Miss K S Martin *to 19:00*
Mr W J Grosvenor *Interim Clerk to Melton Parish Council*

14.67	TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR AND CONSENT TO ABSENCE
	The apology from Cllr Abbott was received and noted.
14.68	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
14.68.01	To receive Amendments to the Register
	There were none.
14.68.02	To receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda
	There were none.
14.68.03	To Receive Declarations of Non Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda
	There were none
14.68.04	To Consider Full / Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared
	It was noted that there had been no requests for dispensations.

It was not necessary to lift Standing Orders as there were no members of the public present.

14.69	OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TALK TO COUNCILLORS
	There were no members of the public present.
14.70	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING
	The Minutes of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee held on 12 May 2014 were Agreed (Minutes FRM(14)M05 previously circulated).



14.71	MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO END JUNE 2014
	<p>The Clerk tabled spreadsheets setting out actual expenditure to the end of June 2014 as compared with budgets. In relation to the MPC accounts concern was expressed over the lack of clarity in the manner in which they had been presented in the past and the need to ensure that in future they are presented in a manner which makes them as user friendly as possible, consistent with meeting the appropriate accounting guidelines. The presentation of the accounts needs to assist Committees to manage their budgets effectively and to challenge how they are being spent. In connection with the Neighbourhood Plan Cllr Butterwick expressed concern over the budget of only £680 as shown as allocated, and asked for the issue as to the availability of Grant aid for this project to be clarified.</p> <p>The Clerk was requested to review the accounting processes and to ensure thereafter that the statutory requirements are fully met by using only the Sage software already installed.</p>
14.72	RECONCILIATION OF BANK STATEMENTS
	<p>The Clerk tabled a manual reconciliation between the Bank accounts with Barclays and Sage as it stood at the end of May 2014. The Tracker Account statement is prepared as at the 9th of each month and the Current Account statement as at the 4th of each month. The clerk to liaise with Barclays to seek statements for each account to be provided at month end.</p>
14.73	EMPLOYMENT MATTERS
14.73.01	Park Warden
	<p>There were no matters to discuss.</p>
14.73.02	Assistant Clerk
	<p>The Clerk reported that the Assistant Clerk currently works 4 hours per week, and is due to leave at the end of July. Members felt that until the future staffing needs of the Council are established, it would be sensible to encourage her to stay on until the end of the financial year. Agreed that Cllr Martin would sound her out as to whether this was a possibility.</p>
14.73.03	Interim Clerk
	<p>Cllr Thompson reported that, although the Interim Clerk was originally appointed on a two day a week basis with an expectation that the role would last only until the end of July, the failure to recruit a permanent Clerk, together with the imminent departure of the Assistant Clerk, has meant a need to secure an interim solution for a much longer period than was originally intended. At the same time there is a clear need to review what the Council does and how it does it, the results of which will inform the future staffing arrangements that the Council will put in place. Accordingly he has secured the agreement of the Interim Clerk to continue in post until towards the end of the financial year, and to</p>



	increase his hours to 3 days a week (for most weeks subject to his other ongoing commitments). He will work with Cllr Thompson to undertake in effect a business process review of the Council's activities.
14.73.04	Recruitment – Feedback from Employment Working Group
	Cllr Thompson reported that, following the unsuccessful recruitment process, he sent a note to all the people who had asked for an information pack, but who had not applied, to ascertain why they had not pursued their application. A common factor was that of the need for flexibility in employment, and that issue would need to be considered in the review of business practices.
14.73.05	Payment of Salaries
	The Interim Clerk reported that Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC) have the facility to process salaries on behalf of parish councils for a monthly fee of £7.00 for the Clerk, and £4.00 for any additional employees. Using that facility would mean a saving of time and also improve accountability. Resolved to enter into an agreement with SALC accordingly. <i>Proposed by:</i> Cllr Thompson, <i>Seconded by:</i> Cllr Abbott. Concern was expressed about the need to handle any changes in respect of the salary arrangements for the Park Warden sensitively. It was agreed to treat any changes for him as a low priority.
14.74	TO REVIEW THE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES OF THE COUNCIL
14.74.01	MPC Financial & Administrative Processes –Review by Interim Clerk & Chairman
	This business review announced above will include a communications strategy, as well as accommodating more flexible working.
14.74.02	Clerking priorities
	These were discussed. The need to keep the Council's activities fully compliant with the law and accounting requirements was considered to be of over-arching importance. As we approach the autumn and the Ceremony of Remembrance, the Interim Clerk was reminded to liaise with Revd Hatchett in relation to the Council's wreath.
14.74.03	Playing Field - Flooding & Trees [taken out of order as first item to allow Cllr Martin to leave]. (Paper FRM(14)P74.)
	Cllr Martin reported from Recreation Committee of 19 June regarding the waterlogging of the field. Recreation Committee voted to apply for a grant from Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) to undertake drainage works in order to get the small field back into a useable condition. Cllr Thompson outlined what he saw as Finance Committee's role is in relation to the matter, and made it clear that there can be no commitment to do anything without funding. In terms of risk management, reference was made by Cllr Butterwick to the need for professional advice before



	<p>taking further action. However it was agreed to proceed with planned works to the ditch on MPC land, and to await the result of separate enforcement actions by Suffolk Highways Department and the SCDC Arboriculturalist against a private adjacent landowner whose actions might have contributed to the flooding problem. To expedite these actions the Interim Clerk was asked to send an e-mail to Tony Buckingham of Highways to ask him to liaise with SCDC planning control.</p>
14.74.04	Fete
	<p>A brief discussion took place about the arrangements for Saturday 5 July. Cllr Thompson reminded Members that the Interim Clerk needed to be kept in the loop around all matters of expenditure, and also for proper invoices to be submitted for all spend and receipts obtained for payment.</p>
14.74.05	Just 42 Bus
	<p>The Interim Clerk reported on the pilot project which ends in July 2014. A representative from the project has been invited to attend the next meeting of Recreation Committee on 4 September to review how effective it has been. Meanwhile the Interim Clerk has raised issues of insurance with the project and is awaiting a response.</p>
14.74.06	Standing Orders – Non pecuniary interests
	<p>Discussion of this Item was deferred.</p>
14.74.07	Councillor Training
	<p>A discussion took place on training for Members. Finance Committee felt very strongly about the importance for training for all Councillors as a way of improving effectiveness in their roles and hence the overall effectiveness of the Council itself. Key areas considered vital for training are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeping up to date with legislation and policy areas• Communication.
14.74.08	Tennis Courts – security and accountability
	<p>It was reported that problems had been experienced with users not returning keys, creating the need for duplicates to be cut, with attendant loss of security. The Interim Clerk suggested that it might be worth investigating the cost of digital key cards which only work for a limited time; alternatively to impose a deposit high enough to deter users from not returning keys.</p> <p>The court fees are collected and keys issued by the SPAR shop at John Grose which takes 10% commission on passing the cash received over to the Council. Only a bookings diary serves as a record of payment. There appears to be no written agreement between the trader and the Council. Noted this arrangement needs to be tightened up whilst recognising that the shop provides a valuable service to MPC in being willing to administer the tennis courts hire facility.</p>



14.75	REVISIONS TO SUFFOLK LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT (Paper FRM(14)P77)
	<p>The Interim Clerk introduced the 2014 revisions proposed by SALC to the Suffolk Local Code of Conduct. They propose an amendment to the Code (which has been adopted by Melton Parish Council) to remove what has been perceived as an unnecessary restriction around the granting of dispensations.</p> <p>The matter will be considered by Full Council on 10 July 2014.</p> <p>Recommended following discussion that the revised Code of Conduct be incorporated in Council Standing Orders.</p>
14.76	INDIVIDUAL ELECTORAL REGISTRATION
	<p>Cllr Butterwick stressed the importance of ensuring a seamless transfer to this mode of registration, not only for reasons of enfranchisement, but also because voter numbers affect the precept. Agreed (i) to let the Electoral Commission progress its publicity but need to be aware that the Parish Council might have to become active in publicising the issues around this later; and (ii) put on the agenda to revisit at the September meeting.</p>
14.77	TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA (Paper FRM(14)P77)
	Noted
14.78	TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS
14.78.01	Accommodation
	<p>Cllr Butterwick reported developments in relation to SCDC's Headquarters accommodation project. A preferred option has been identified and will be considered by Cabinet on 14 July, with a Full Council decision scheduled for 24 July.</p>
14.78.02	Communications
	Already discussed. (See Minute 14.74.07 above.)
14.78.03	Divestment
	No developments reported re Fison House.
14.78.04	Emergency Plan
	<p>Cllr Taylor reported little movement. There was however a positive meeting with SCDC re accessing District Council Emergency Plans. The next high tides are due in August 2014.</p>
14.79	TO CONSIDER QUALITY COUNCIL SCHEME REVIEW UPDATE
	Cllr Butterwick reported a release of a document for consultation.



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	Proposals made as to a 3 level concept with an overall title "Standards of Practice" scheme. There is proposed a Foundation Standard, a Quality Standard, and a Quality Gold Standard.
14.80	FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS
14.80.01	To Consider Items for Inclusion in the Melton Messenger
	None reported.
14.80.02	To receive Items for Future Meetings
	A discussion was initiated by the Chairman on Members' representation on Committees and on meeting cycles. Agreed that the Interim Clerk will put this Item on the Agenda for Full Council on 10 July, and that Cllr Thompson will draft a paper.
14.81	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
	Monday 6 October 2014 at 18:00 at the Lindos Centre.