



**FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**Minutes** of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee held on Monday 6 October 2014 commencing at 18:00 in the Lindos Centre, Melton IP12 1PP.

**Present:**

- 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
- Mr W J Grosvenor *Interim Clerk to Melton Parish Council*
- Mr Ian Harvie *Melton Bowls Club up to and including the consideration of the relevant grant application*

<b>14.82</b>	<b>TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR AND CONSENT TO ABSENCE</b>
	The apology from Cllr Abbott was received and noted.
<b>14.83</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>
<b>14.83.01</b>	<b>To receive Amendments to the Register</b>
	There were none.
<b>14.83.02</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda</b>
	There were none.
<b>14.83.03</b>	<b>To Receive Declarations of Non Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda</b>
	There were none
<b>14.83.04</b>	<b>To Consider Full / Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared</b>
	It was noted that there had been no requests for dispensations.



	<i>It was RESOLVED to lift Standing Orders</i>
14.84	<b>OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TALK TO COUNCILLORS</b>
14.84.01	Mr Ian Harvie spoke in support of the grant application by the Melton Bowls Club. The request was for £600 towards the cost of a replacement cartridge costing £1,100 for the bowling green mower. Mr Harvie explained that the cost of this was beyond the club's operating budget. Members of the Committee questioned Mr Harvie on how the Club impacted on the wider village community, and on various aspects of the Club's financial position. The Chairman explained that a decision on the application would be made later in the meeting in the form of a recommendation to Full Council.
	<i>It was RESOLVED to reinstate Standing Orders</i>
14.85	<b>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> It was <b>RESOLVED</b> to agree the Minutes of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee held on 30 June 2014 (Minutes FRM(14)M06 previously circulated).
14.93	<b>GRANT APPLICATIONS</b> <i>It was agreed to bring these forward on the Agenda.</i>
14.93.01	<b>Melton Bowls Club</b> (Paper FRM(14)93.01) The application for a contribution of £600 towards the cost of a new cartridge for the mowing machine costing £1,100 was not supported. The recommendation to Full Council was to decline the request, but to invite a reapplication in the next round, demonstrating the evidence of support for the Club's activities in the wider Melton community, and how the Club is itself attempting to raise the necessary funds.
14.93.02	<b>Suffolk Accident Rescue Service</b> (Paper FRM(14)93.02) This application did not quantify the amount sought. Also Committee recommended that more information should be sought on funding for the service and also as to the impact on Melton. A sum of £500 should be reserved meanwhile pending receipt of this information.



14.93.03	<b>Leiston, Saxmundham and District CAB</b> (Paper FRM(14)93.03) The recommendation was not to support this application for £1,000 as this body had already received a grant on the same criteria from the Melton Trust within the year. Also the Parish Council awarded a grant last year.
14.93.04	<b>Burness Parish Room Trustees</b> (Paper FRM(14)93.04) This application for £500 towards the £6,000 cost of upgrading the car park was recommended for agreement.

	<i><b>It was agreed to revert to the printed order of the Agenda.</b></i>
14.86	<b>MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND FINANCIAL REPORTS TO END SEPTEMBER 2014</b> (Paper FRM(14)86) The reports on <b>Income</b> and <b>Bank Reconciliations</b> were <b>Noted</b> , in particular that the large number of reconciling items was a result of the timing of the receipt of the Bank statements. <b>Orders for Payment</b> were <b>Approved</b> . The report on <b>Budget v Actual</b> were <b>Noted</b> . It was <b>Agreed</b> not to change year end projections yet. <b>Reserves:</b> The Chairman summarised the position in that the opening reserves were £58k, and projections were looking to carry forward £45k worth of reserves into 2015/16 assuming no overspends. The winding up reserve was £12k which would need to be reviewed in the light of expected staffing / accommodation changes.
14.87	<b>BUDGETARY MATTERS</b>
14.87.01	<b>Review of budgets for 2014/15</b> The Chairman indicated that Committees need to analyse their budget lines in more detail. This needs to go as an Item for both Planning and Transport and Recreation Committees.



<b>14.87.02</b>	<b>Budget timetable for 2015/16</b> The budget needs to be approved to support the request for the precept. Full Council in January will need to finalise, if necessary at a rescheduled or special meeting to accommodate. However initially Committees will need to have discussions in order to firm up their bids in time for the Finance, Employment & Risk Management Committee meeting in December. It was <b>AGREED</b> that the Interim Clerk will check on whether WTYFC will want to continue to hire the football pitches on the Recreation Ground, and also as to the position on the lease.
<b>14.88</b>	<b>AUDIT MATTERS</b>
<b>14.88.01</b>	<b>Audit report 2013/14</b> (Paper FRM(14)88.01) The Interim Clerk referred to the External Auditor's Report for 2013/14. It concluded that the Council's Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices and no matters were required to be brought to the Council's attention.
<b>14.88.02</b>	<b>Review of Internal Audit provision</b> The Council is required by legislation to have an Internal Audit arrangement. For 2013/14 this was Heelis & Lodge. SALC is offering an Internal Audit service to member Parish Councils which covers a 15 point list of audit elements, and also a written report back and completion of
	section 4 of the annual return. The cost of this service for Melton would be £215. Following discussion it was <b>AGREED</b> to appoint SALC to be the Council's Internal Auditor for 2014/15.
<b>14.89</b>	<b>RESOURCES MATTERS</b>
<b>14.89.01</b>	<b>Business review</b> The chairman introduced the work of the business review and summarised the current position. In relation to finance, the strategy was (1) to simplify the pre-existing arrangements and present the information Councillors need to make strategic decisions in a clear and more user-friendly format and (2) to introduce new software in line with that used by most Councils of Melton's size and complexity. Stage (1) had been achieved and (2) was work in progress to be completed in time to be run in parallel in the last quarter of the current financial year.



14.89.02	<p><b>Website and ICT issues</b> (Paper FRM(14)89.02)</p> <p>Cllr Butterwick introduced his paper setting out the requirement for new software via Adobe Acrobat Standard or equivalent to give increased functionality to enable individual files downloaded from the SCDC – Waveney planning website to be combined into a single document. This can dramatically reduce file sizes and make planning documents more accessible on the website. It was <b>AGREED</b> that the Interim Clerk should procure the software and arrange for it to be installed.</p> <p>It was <b>NOTED</b> that the software maintaining the Council’s website needed to be replaced. The Interim Clerk is investigating possible systems and cost, and will report back to the next Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee.</p>
14.89.03	<p><b>Replacement of Sage with dedicated software</b></p> <p>The Interim Clerk reported that Melton has used Sage software for both its general accounting requirements and for salaries processing in combination with locally produced spreadsheets. Since July 2014 the salary processing function has been outsourced to SALC for both timesaving and increased efficiency. According to SALC the only other local Council in Suffolk to use Sage is Newmarket, and that is for the employment function only.</p> <p>The Interim Clerk introduced a new software package called <i>Alpha</i>, which is designed specifically for the work of small Councils, includes functions for both reclaiming VAT and making the annual return, and can support budgeting by committee structure. Ongoing costs compare favourably with Sage, which costs £192.00 pa. Alpha costs £629.00 for purchase plus a year’s support, with ongoing costs for a single user licence of £109.00 pa thereafter.</p> <p>It was <b>AGREED</b> that subject to (1) any onerous financial commitment to Sage, which the Interim Clerk would need to check and (2) a satisfactory demonstration, the Council would purchase and install <i>Alpha</i>, with a view to trialling it in parallel with the current spreadsheets during Q4 of 2014/15, and then, subject to a satisfactory trial, using it uniquely for accounting purposes with effect from 1 April 2015.</p>
14.89.04	<p><b>Accommodation Issues</b></p> <p>The Interim Clerk to pursue an extension of the lease on Room 275 at SCDC’s Melton Hill Offices with a suitable break clause to both protect the Parish Council’s interests and enable flexibility in terms of its future ways of working and employment.</p>
14.90	<p><b>EMPLOYMENT MATTERS</b></p>



14.90.01	<b>Park Warden</b> There were no matters to discuss.
14.90.02	<b>Interim Clerk</b> There were no matters to discuss.
14.90.03	<b>Staffing &amp; recruitment plan</b> The Chairman introduced this Item. There are two aspects: (1) accommodation – if this can be secured (either the existing room or equivalent or better accommodation) for the foreseeable future then the issue of remote working can be deferred. (2) Assuming accommodation to be solvable then a recruitment plan needs to be in place to recruit a permanent Clerk for a suitable period of handover before the end of the financial year. The hours of the permanent Clerk to be subject to further discussion.
14.90.04	<b>Payment of salaries</b> The Interim Clerk reported that the salary processing function had successfully been outsourced to SALC for the cost of £7.00 per month.
14.91	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES</b>
14.91.01	<b>Priorities for the Council and Clerking Priorities</b> These had been formulated and discussed at both Planning and Transport Committee and Recreation Committee and were <b>AGREED</b> as representing a pragmatic way forward in the interim.
14.91.02	<b>Resolving conflict between Meetings Calendar and Strategic Direction</b> A discussion took place about (1) how to avoid bunching of meetings and thereby achieve improved and smoother lead in times and (2) the impact improvements might have on the efficiency and strategic direction of the Council via the ability of Members to attend different Committees; and (3) whether an alternative venue might be considered. In relation to (3) alternative venues that might be considered are the Burness Rooms (not on a Thursday), Melton Primary School Community Room, and the SCDC Melton Hill offices. Cllr Martin offered to investigate the cost of hiring accommodation at the school.



14.91.03	<p><b>Playing field, Woods, Trees and Drainage – Risk Issues</b> (Paper FRM(14)91.03)</p> <p>Cllr Butterwick introduced his comprehensive paper in relation to all the risk issues attendant on the serious problem of lack of drainage of parts of the Playing Field.</p> <p>It was <b>AGREED</b> that the Interim Clerk should write to Mr Ruffles, asking him to confirm his intention to sort out the drainage issues, including those relating to the field (as he offered to do at the September meeting of Planning &amp; Transport Committee) and to seek a timetable for doing so. This correspondence to be copied to Tony Buckingham of SCC.</p>
14.91.04	<p><b>Fete / Hire of Playing Field – Risk Issues</b></p> <p>This discussion focused on recent hirings and any risk issues on which the Council might have been exposed. Both the Pitstop and WTYFC arrangements were considered to have risk issues covered from the Parish Council's perspective, with any inherent risk transferred as far as possible to the hirer.</p>
14.91.05	<p><b>Just 42 Youth Bus – Risk Issues</b></p> <p>The Interim Clerk gave an update on this project. The bus was intending to visit the Car Park every Thursday and he was pushing for a meeting between the Project Leader and Director and Members of Recreation Committee.</p>
14.91.06	<p><b>Neighbourhood Plan progress and reporting – Risk Issues</b> Cllr Butterwick reported major developments with this project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Cllr Barrington had stepped down as project leader</li><li>(2) The grant has been scarcely spent</li><li>(3) There is a need to get consultants on board quickly to take the project forward and to get agreement to reprofile the grant expenditure.</li></ul>
14.91.07	<p><b>Remote Working –Alleviation of Risk</b> This is addressed in the Minute 14.90.03.</p>
14.92	<p><b>GOVERNANCE MATTERS</b></p>



<b>14.92.01</b>	<b>Member Training</b> Final arrangements made for the Member training session with SALC on 8 October at 7pm at Lindos. The session will aim to cover both grants and funding streams and an update on current legislative and policy issues.
<b>14.92.02</b>	<b>Review of Standing Orders</b> Concern was expressed by Members that a set of “Model Standing Orders” had been lifted for adoption and use by Melton Parish Council without any attempt at either customisation or attempting to reflect the workings of the Council and its Committees. The Interim Clerk to initiate a review of Standing Orders and submit revised proposals to Full Council in due course.
<b>14.94</b>	<b>TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA</b> (Paper FRM(14)94) This was <b>NOTED</b> .

<b>14.95</b>	<b>TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS</b>
<b>14.95.01</b>	<b>Accommodation</b> This Working Group (Cllrs Butterwick, Thompson and Taylor) has not met for some time but the agreed way forward is reflected in the strategy to extend the lease on Room 275 at the SCDC Melton Hill offices (see Minute 14.89.04 above).
<b>14.95.02</b>	<b>Communications</b> This Working Group (Cllrs Butterwick, Thompson and West) has not met recently, but there is an approved Communications Strategy which requires both capacity and implementation as part of the review of the way the Council works (see Minute 14.96 below).
<b>14.95.03</b>	<b>Divestment</b> Nothing to report.
<b>14.95.04</b>	<b>Emergency Plan</b> Cllr Taylor reminded colleagues that the gritting season would shortly be upon us. Meanwhile both he and Cllr West would be attending the training course on Rest Centres on 21 November.
<b>14.95.05</b>	<b>Employment Working Group</b> It was reported that this Working Group does not formally exist, and needs to be formalised.





<b>14.96</b>	<b>COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY</b> (Paper FRM(14)96) Cllr Butterwick introduced his report. Although the Communications Strategy was approved by Full Council for adoption in accordance with a timescale that was set out on 14 November 2013, little progress has been made. The Interim Clerk was asked to look at the proposals, consider when they can realistically happen, and report back.
<b>14.97</b>	<b>FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS</b>
<b>14.97.01</b>	<b>Urgent Business</b> The Interim Clerk reported that he now had the necessary information to reclaim VAT and would be putting in a claim for the period April to September 2014 as soon as time allowed.
<b>14.97.02</b>	<b>Melton Messenger</b> The Interim Clerk was requested to put a reminder in the <i>Messenger</i> in relation to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> tranche of grant giving by the Council which will take place in January 2015.
<b>14.98</b>	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b> The next meeting will take place on Monday 8 December 2014 at 18:00 in the Lindos Centre Seminar Room.



# MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

