



FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee held on Tuesday 2 December 2014 commencing at 18:00 in the Lindos Centre, Melton IP12 1PP.

Present:

Cllr Mrs B Abbott
Cllr Mr G K Butterwick
Cllr Mr C W Taylor
Cllr Mr A Thompson [Chairman]
Cllr Mr J West

In Attendance:

Cllr Mr A H Porter
Cllr Miss K S Martin
Mr W J Grosvenor *Interim Clerk to Melton Parish Council*

14.99	TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR AND CONSENT TO ABSENCE
	There were none.
14.100	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
14.100.01	To receive Amendments to the Register
	There were none.
14.100.02	To receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda
	There were none.
14.100.03	To Receive Declarations of Non Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda
	There were none.
14.100.04	To Consider Full / Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared
	It was noted that there had been no requests for dispensations.



	<p><i>There was no resolution to lift Standing Orders as no members of the public were present</i></p>
14.101	<p>OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TALK TO COUNCILLORS There were no members of the [public present.</p>
14.102	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING It was RESOLVED to agree the Minutes of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee held on 6 October 2014 (Minutes FRM(14)M07 previously circulated).</p>
14.103	<p>TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR WEST AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OF FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT & RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE The role had become vacant due to the resignation of Cllr Abbott. Cllr West was unanimously voted to become the new Deputy Chairman.</p>
14.104	<p>TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL AND INTERNAL CONTROL MATTERS</p>
14.104.01	<p>Timing of Financial Report for November 2014 The Interim Clerk reported that due to the bringing forward of the Committee meeting from 8 December to 2 December, it had not been possible to provide financial reports up to the end of November 2014. In particular the bank statements had only been received on the day of the meeting. The Financial reports would be completed as soon as possible and distributed to all Members.</p>
14.104.02	<p>Update on Erroneous Direct Debits (Paper FRM(14)104.02) The Interim Clerk reported that during October, three newly initiated direct debits were erroneously taken from the Council's current account with Barclays. One was for Vodafone and two for O2. The amounts involved totalled £123.25. Barclays had declined to take responsibility, saying that the debits were initiated automatically by the companies via the automated direct debit instruction service, which meant they could claim payments electronically without Barclays seeing the mandates. The interim Clerk had cancelled the debits and written to Vodafone and O2 accordingly. The Committee concluded that the position taken by Barclays did not accord with the legal position on direct debits and instructed the Interim Clerk to pursue the matter with Barclays with a view</p>



	to obtaining a refund.
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14.104.03	Initial Budget Proposals for 2015/16 (Paper FRM(14)104.03) The Committee considered the initial draft budget paper for 2015/16 which the Chairman went through in detail. In terms of the budget paper, it was agreed that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision to be made under <i>Income</i> for Community Infrastructure Levy income• FERM income and expenditure to be further considered and advised to the Interim Clerk in the next two weeks• Recreation Committee to finalise its budget proposals at its meeting on 11 December• Planning and Transport Committee to finalise its budget proposals at its meeting on 15 December. The Chairman emphasised that it was a question of having to make a decision re the precept or not do things. Committees were also urged to maximise the potential of grant aid where possible.
14.104.04	To Agree Budget Timetable for 2015/16 It was agreed that the Interim Clerk would update the budgets in the light of the Committees' final proposals, and the resulting final draft budget papers to be considered by Full Council at the January meeting. It was noted that a FERM meeting may be required to finalise the budget proposals if further refinement is requested by Full Council. SCDC requires the Melton precept to be notified to them by 23 January 2015.
14.104.05	Internal and External Audit Arrangements for 2015 The Interim Clerk reported that the External Audit would be carried out again by BDO LLP in June 2015. In relation to the Internal Auditor, FERM Committee in October had agreed to appoint SALC to undertake that role. However the Interim Clerk reported that he had subsequently received a letter from the 2013/14 Internal Auditor, Heelis and Lodge, informing him that they would be carrying out the internal audit for 2014/15 as well. Committee instructed the Interim Clerk to clarify whether Heelis and Lodge had been appointed for the two years. If they had, the appointment would be honoured; if not the council would use SALC.
14.104.06	Use of Debit Card / Electronic Banking The Interim Clerk gave an oral report on the difficulties and drawbacks with the current banking arrangements, in particular the inability to



	<p>manage transfers of funds between accounts quickly and flexibly, and to view the accounts positions on a day to day basis, and also the difficulty in making electronic purchases for e.g. Land Registry documents or software upgrades without use of a personal debit card.</p> <p>Following discussion, Committee agreed to refer the matter to a Working Group which would make recommendations on the way forward and report back to the March meeting of Full Council. Membership to consist of Councillors Thompson, Porter and Taylor.</p>
14.104.07	<p>VAT</p> <p>The Interim Clerk reported that he had reclaimed £2,187.03 for Quarters 1 & 2 of 2014/15.</p>
14.105	<p>TO CONSIDER RESOURCES MATTERS & ACTION PLAN (Paper FRM(14)105)</p>
14.105.01	<p>Finance System</p> <p>The Interim Clerk spoke from his paper in relation to the Council's Finance System. In summary the current position was that the Alpha software was on order, an on-line demonstration had been satisfactorily given, and a date for the software to be uploaded was awaited. This was subject to the software provider's capacity, but it was hoped to be provided by Christmas. It was queried whether the software supported the bank reconciliation process and the Interim Clerk to confirm.</p>
14.105.02	<p>Website</p> <p>The Interim Clerk went through the issues set out in his paper in some detail, following which Committee had a full discussion. Concerns that Members had in relation to a new system were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The need for a "Members only" area• Capacity for storage of documents – in particular large planning files. <p>The Interim Clerk to investigate what the "One Suffolk" system can provide, what the Webmaster arrangements are, and the system's storage capacity. He will also talk to Chris Walker at Woodbridge to get a user's view of that system. It was agreed that the importance of getting a new website installed and up and running was second only to having the new Finance System – progress to be made by March 2015.</p>



14.105.03	Communications Strategy – Implementation The Committee considered the appended Communications Strategy document (the Policy agreed by Full Council in November 2013 and reviewed by FERM in October 2014) with the Implementation Progress column updated, and a new final column setting out a realistic timescale for implementation. Following discussion it was agreed to carry out the actions that can be implemented immediately without further work and to park the remainder.
14.105.04	Accommodation Issues and Planning (Paper FRM(14)105.04 and Supporting Document) Cllr Butterwick introduced his report. Wednesday had emerged as the best day of the week for meetings and, subject to the new Clerk being available, FERM agreed to the recommendation to Full Council that future Council and Committee meetings be held on Wednesday evenings. Cllr Butterwick also reported on the availability of alternative meeting venues to Lindos. The Burness Parish Room, Melton Primary School and St Andrew’s Church Hall all can provide accommodation on a Wednesday evening, although the school’s accommodation would be tight for Full Council and St Andrew’s has no dedicated car parking. Of these options, Burness emerged as the best all-round alternative venue. It was agreed to wait on this until the potential for larger, comprehensive accommodation at Melton Hill is clarified. The Interim Clerk is pursuing this, with a fallback position of the promise of a 3 year lease on the existing office with up to a 6 month break clause already secured.
14.106	TO CONSIDER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS
14.106.01	Park Warden The Interim Clerk reported that a 1:1 meeting with Keith Stebbings was set up for 9 December 2014. The Chairman emphasised that it was important to ensure that Keith is comfortable with what he is doing and that MPC does all that it can to support him in his role.
14.106.02	Recruitment of Clerk to the Council (Paper FRM(14)106.02) Cllr Butterwick reported on the recruitment process for a new permanent Clerk. Expenditure of £613.00 plus VAT from FERM Contingency budget was approved. A panel of Employment Working Group Members and other councillors would shortlist in w/c 8 December with interviews in w/c 15 December.



	<p>The interview panel would consist of 3 Members, ensuring gender balance.</p> <p>The Interim Clerk reported that so far 26 application packs had been issued, but no completed applications received.</p>
14.107	TO REVIEW RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES
14.107.01	<p>Playing Field, Woods, Trees and Drainage – Risk Issues Update (Paper FRM(14)107.01)</p> <p>The Interim Clerk went through the report, outlining the current position with the field and woods drainage problems. Recreation Committee had approved the spend of £1,500 plus VAT on the consultancy report. It was agreed to endorse the actions taken. Committee felt that funding needed to be found to address identified risks.</p> <p>On the matter of the planning application for the discharge of conditions attached to the planning consent for the Jenners Close site, the Interim Clerk was requested to write to Anita Kittle, the case officer, with copies to Stephen Cordery of SCC and Cllr Michael Bond, to ask what action SCDC are taking, if any.</p> <p>In the context of the potential need to take legal action to enforce the covenants affecting MPC land, Committee noted that there will probably be a need to find money for legal fees at some point in the near future and that this should be considered in setting the budget.</p>
14.107.02	<p>Hire of Field – Risk Issues</p> <p>The Interim Clerk reported that a Hire Agreement had been entered into with Luba Coult and e mails were being exchanged with the other personal trainer, Michel Tester, with a view to signing an agreement with him to be effective from 1 January 2015. Risk assessments are in place for Luba's activities and the same approach will be adopted with Michel Tester.</p>
14.107.03	<p>Winter Gritting (Paper (14)107.03)</p> <p>Cllr Taylor reported on the Winter Gritting Workshop which he attended on 26 November in Woodbridge. The informative Paper and Report were noted with thanks.</p>
14.107.04	<p>Neighbourhood Plan progress & Reporting – Risk Issues (Paper FRM(14)107.04)</p> <p>Cllr Butterwick introduced his report focusing on the risks to the Council from over-running the timescale set out in the Government's grant conditions and failure to secure the 10% of grant held until completion. The report was noted. Substantial mitigation of risk had been achieved by</p>



	rescheduling the grant and appointing Navigus to work with the Council in completing the plan.
14.108	TO CONSIDER GOVERNANCE MATTERS
14.108.01	Member Training – Review of Session on 8 October 2014 and Discussions on Future Arrangements The consensus was that the session on 8 October was seen as positive and funding was available for training for Members of the new Council after May 2015. Training needs to be considered on the agenda for the May Full Council meeting, and a list drawn up of priority topics.
14.108.02	Review of Standing Orders The Interim Clerk reported that, although he had looked at what was required, he had so far not had an opportunity to propose revisions. Following discussion, it was agreed that a small group of Members would work with the new Clerk to revise the Standing Orders before May.
14.108.03	New Legal Requirements in relation to Decisions taken by the Clerk / RFO (Paper FRM(14)108.03) The Interim Clerk introduced his paper covering the requirements for recording and publicising decisions made by Council Officers. Where certain decisions are delegated to the Clerk they must be recorded in writing and that record retained and made available for public inspection. Decisions covered by these requirements relate to those where the decision falls within the ambit of administrative law e.g. appointment of a contract. The written record must contain: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the date of the decision• a record of what was decided, and• details of all other options considered. Committee agreed to put this as a standard item on all future FERM agendas.
14.109	TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA (Paper FRM(14)109) This was noted.
14.110	TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS
14.110.01	Divestment Nothing to report.
14.110.02	Employment Covered by Minute 14.106.02 above.



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14.110.03	Communications Covered by Minute 14.105.03 above.
14.110.04	Emergency Plan Cllr Taylor reported that he might be attending a course on Rest Shelters in the New Year.
14.111	FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS
14.111.01	Urgent Business not Otherwise on the Agenda The matter of the contractor's vehicle accessing the playing field to empty the bins now that the barrier is in place was raised. Agreed that this will be considered by Recreation Committee at their meeting on 11 December.
14.111.02	Items for Inclusion in the Melton Messenger Nothing specific – not clear when is the deadline for the next edition.
14.112	DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting will take place on Monday 12 January 2015 commencing at 18:00 in the Lindos Centre Seminar Room.



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