



FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of an ordinary meeting of the Parish Council Finance, Employment & Risk Management Committee on Monday 13th January 2014 commencing at 18:00 in Conference Room 4, The Lindos Centre, Saddlemakers Lane Melton IP12 1PP.

Present:

Cllr Mrs BK Abbott [Vice Chairman]
Cllr Mr GK Butterwick
Cllr Miss KS Martin

Cllr Mr CW Taylor
Cllr Thompson [Chairman]

Absent:

In Attendance:

Mr MJ Green Clerk to Melton Parish Council

The Chairman warmly welcome Cllr Martin to the meeting as the newly nominated member of the committee.

14.01 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR AND CONSENT TO ABSENCE

There were no apologies as all councillors were present.

14.02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

14.02.01 To Receive Amendments to the Register

There were no amendments to the Register

14.02.02 To Receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda

There were no declarations of Pecuniary Interest in respect of items on the agenda.

14.02.03 To Receive Declarations of Non Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda

There were no declarations of Non-Pecuniary Interest in respect of items on the agenda.

14.02.04 To Consider Full/Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared

It was noted that there had been no requests for dispensations.

14.03 OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TALK TO COUNCILLORS

As there were no members of the public present it was not necessary to lift standing orders.

14.04 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

It was RESOLVED that minutes FRM(13)M07 from the meeting held on 9th December 2013 previously circulated to councillors only be received, noted and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

Proposed by: Cllr Thompson

Seconded by: Cllr Abbott.

14.05 TO REVIEW MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND APPROVE ORDERS FOR PAYMENT

14.05.01 December 2013

It was **RESOLVED** that the Paper FRM(14)P05.01 Management Accounts for December previously circulated be received, noted and the Orders for Payment contained therein approved.

Proposed by: Cllr Thompson **Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

The cheque for the subscription to the Parish Links remains outstanding since its issue on 30/11/12. Advice to be sought from the internal auditor about how the deal with this in the accounts given that the Parish Links Grouping appears to have ceased to exist.

14.06 TO RECONCILE THE BANK STATEMENTS WITH THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS

Paper FRM(14)P06 previously circulated was received and noted.

Bank Statement - Tracker	£85,626.14
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Plus unreconciled receipts	£0.00
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Less unreconciled payments	£0.00
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Balance as per Balance Sheet	£85,626.14
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Bank Statement - Current	£2,637.85
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Plus unreconciled receipts	
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Less unreconciled payments	(£248.10)
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Balance as per Balance Sheet	£2,389.75
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It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the bank reconciliation contained in paper FRM(14)P06 previously circulated.

Proposed by: Cllr Thompson **Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

14.07 TO CONSIDER ANY CHANGES TO THE DRAFT PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2014/2015 BY FULL COUNCIL

The following matters were raised during the discussions:

- The allowance in the budget expenditure for accommodation is based on the assumption that a revised lease will be entered into with the Lindos Centre but as this seems less likely a more accurate alternative assessment is required
- The Capital Grant Income is based on grants that have either not been applied for or an offer from the provider not yet received. The Committee considered how to treat items where grant income had not been confirmed and concluded that it was appropriate to include the grants in income and the costs in expenditure and to emphasise that each Committee is responsible for its overall budget and not just individual line items thus mitigating the risk that expenditure would be committed without ensuring there was corresponding income
- The Capital Expenditure items are based on estimates received to date
- The provision of the Height Barrier in the Playing Field may be dealt with in the current financial year if the grant applied for is forthcoming and therefore will not be required in the 2014/15 budget
- The terms of reference for committees all include the Management of the Budget allocated to the committee and therefore they have a duty to ensure that the carefully monitor income and expenditure within their control
- The benchmarking exercise is still ongoing and the estimated costs may be subject to further review in drafting the final budget

The Chairman and Clerk to prepare a revised budget for consideration by the committee at an extra meeting to be arranged for 3rd March 2014 to allow the budget to be agreed by committee before presenting to the full council for adoption on 13th March 2014.

14.08 STAFFING MATTERS

14.08.01 Park Warden

It was noted that due to a banking error the Christmas bonus had been paid by cheque not standing order.

14.08.02 Assistant Clerk

An additional temporary contract to run for six months from 6th February 2014 had been signed by all parties.

14.08.03 Clerk

The appraisal will be completed by the Chairman before the April FERM meeting based on the revised Job Description that will form part of the benchmarking exercise.

The Clerk reported that he had authorised a day's leave for the Assistant Clerk during the Easter holidays when there would be no mutual cover and thus the office would be closed. The Chair referred to the discussion at the December FERM and asked whether a risk analysis had been completed. The Clerk replied that providing mutual cover and a formal risk analysis would be a change to the previous "custom and practice" and confirmed that his holiday card for the year had been signed by the previous Chair of FERM. The Chair emphasised that he was not seeking to change working practices unilaterally, encouraged the Clerk to consider the spirit of the revised job description in considering future holiday requests and noted that the Committee's responsibility for risk required risks associated with staffing patterns to be discussed. The Clerk confirmed that this would not be a change to "custom and practice".

14.08.04 Benchmarking Update

The Chairman reported:

- A combined Job Description had been prepared
- A list of customs and practice issues has being prepared
- A summary of hours required to undertake the work in the JD has been prepared
- Further advice is being sought from SALC

14.09 TO REVIEW THE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICES AND PRACTICES OF THE COUNCIL

14.09.01 To Consider Risks Involved in Having/Not Having a Height Barrier at the Entrance to Melton Playing Field

Request for consideration from Recreation Committee.

The Committee considered the risks involved including:

- Concerns about the Park Warden having to open and close the gates in extremes of weather
- Car locked in overnight and gate damaged when they forced the exit
- Concerns over access by traveller's and contractors vehicles - Gate can locked open or closed
- Need to enable MPC contractors to gain admittance – notice would be received and the Park Warden would provide the key

The Committee also noted:

- Possible District Councillors will be able to assist with funding
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- Need to amend Park Warden Responsibilities
- Need for appropriate signage

It was **RESOLVED** to agree to the Recreation Committee applying for grant funding and installing a height barrier.

Proposed by: Cllr Thompson

Seconded by: Cllr Abbott.

14.09.02 Broadband Usage

The Clerk reported that following significant increases in the charges for broadband usage during October and November he had instigated an investigation with the provider. This had shown that the amount of download/upload usage had increased well beyond the 20 Gb limit paid for as part of the contract. Examination of the usage summaries had shown that the usage continued even when staff were not in the office. As a precaution and in order to monitor the situation the password on the router had been changed and the router was being powered down when staff were not in the office.

This has had the immediate effect of zeroing the usage on days when staff are not in the office. The next step will be to resume leaving the power on to the router but to carefully monitor what happens to the usage. The result of this is that currently councillors who previously had used the office wireless broadband during meetings for papers etc., would temporarily not be able to do so.

Additionally a revised broadband arrangement had been provided by Timico to include telephone line rental and calls that was significantly lower than the previous dual arrangements with Timico and BT.

14.10 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA

Paper FRM(14)P10 previously circulated was received and noted.

14.11 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS

14.11.01 Accommodation

(a) Office Lease

The following was reported:

(i) No further contact has been made by the current landlord

(ii) The option for Woodbridge TC is no longer viable

(iii) The option for the Register Office is no longer viable

(iv) The possibility of using the gatehouse to The Retreat in Saddlemakers Lane needs further investigation

(v) A response has been received from SCDC indicating accommodation may be available on a temporary basis

(vi) Cost of the purchase of furniture/removal expenses needs to be assessed for the budget

The Clerk to follow up The Retreat and SCDC and monitor situation with existing landlord. The Committee noted that the SCDC and Retreat options would not include meeting room space, that these costs would need to be considered in any discussion on accommodation and that it hoped the current draft budget total could be reduced.

14.11.02 Communications

Further work on the implementation of the report prepared by Cllr Butterwick for the Full Council will be put in hand.

14.11.03 Divestment

(a) Orchard Close

Awaiting finalisation of legal transfer.

(b) Fison House Land

Awaiting further information from SCDC

(c) To Set up Emergency Plan Working Group

(vii) Terms of Reference

Cllr Taylor agreed to draft Terms of Reference and a task list with a time line.

As part of the process the future use of the emergency mobile phone will be considered.

(viii) Membership
Cllr Abbott
Cllr Taylor
Cllr Thompson

(ix) Convenor
Cllr Taylor

14.12 FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

14.12.01 To consider items for inclusion in the Melton Messenger

None considered appropriate as none finalised.

14.12.02 To receive items for future meetings

Nothing reported.

14.13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

14.13.01 Monday 3rd March 2014

The meeting will take place in the Parish Council Offices, The Lindos Centre, Saddlemakers Lane, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1PP commencing at 18:00

14.13.02 Monday 14th April 2014

The meeting will commence at 18:00 at a venue to be determined.

14.13.03 To Consider Timing of Meetings

It was RESOLVED to keep the start time at 18:00 1900 with effect from the next meeting.

Proposed by: Cllr Thompson

Seconded by: Cllr Abbott

Signed: _____

Date: _____

[Chairman]