



## FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Minutes** of an ordinary meeting of the Parish Council Finance, Employment & Risk Management Committee on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2013 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 HM Needham

Cllr Mr CW Taylor  
Cllr Thompson [Chairman]

**Absent:**

Cllr Mr GK Butterwick

**In Attendance:**

Mr MJ Green                      Clerk to Melton Parish Council

**13.87            TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR AND CONSENT TO ABSENCE**

**13.87.01       Cllr Mr GK Butterwick – Attending SALC Area Meeting**

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the apology and consent to the absence.

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

**13.88            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**13.88.01       To Receive Amendments to the Register**

There were no amendments to the Register

**13.88.02       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.

**13.88.03       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.

**13.88.04       To Consider Full/Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared**

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

**13.89            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.

**13.90            TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

It was **RESOLVED** that minutes FRM(13)M06\_Confidential from the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014 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.

**13.91            TO REVIEW MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS AND APPROVE ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

**13.91.01       September & October 2013**

Paper MPC(13)P112

**13.91.02       November 2013**

Monthly Management Accounts Report for November 2013.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Management Accounts for September, October and November previously circulated be received, noted and the Orders for Payment contained therein approved.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson

**Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

It was noted that a payment of £900 to Wildwood Contracting for survey work had been delayed until full consideration of the amount invoiced was carried out by Recreation Committee.

**13.92 TO RECONCILE THE BANK STATEMENTS WITH THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS**

Paper FRM(13)P92 previously circulated was received and noted.

<b>Bank Statement - Tracker</b>	£85,616.44
Plus unreconciled receipts	£0.00
Less unreconciled payments	£0.00
<b>Balance as per Balance Sheet</b>	<b>£85,616.44</b>

<b>Bank Statement - Current</b>	£10,530.34
Plus unreconciled receipts	
Less unreconciled payments	(£6,163.80)
<b>Balance as per Balance Sheet</b>	<b>£4,366.54</b>

It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the bank reconciliation contained in paper FRM(13)P63 previously circulated.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson

**Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

**13.93 TO REVIEW THE DRAFT PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2014/2015**

Paper FRM(13)P93 previously circulated was received and discussed.

**13.93.01 Consider if the Budget Satisfies the Strategic Objectives set by Full Council on 14/11/13**

- (a) Not to breach the reserves policy by having a general reserve level of less than 50% of precept?
- (b) Not to raise the precept above the 2013/14 level
- (c) To have a balanced budget

The following comments were made:

- The grants budget was considered too low and was adjusted upwards to £2,000 with the increase being reflected in a reduction of contingency.
- The Neighbourhood Plan grant needs to be reflected in full as the current amount received in 2013/14 is only a part payment of the grant. The anticipated expenditure should also be shown – this will bring the treatment of grants equitable between the committees.
- The capital expenditure on Recreation Committee projects e.g. Car Park and Height Barrier is subject to grants being received equal to the cost of the projects. Should there be a shortfall during the year Recreation Committee will need to approach Full Council to request the balance from Reserves before any work is commissioned.
- The balanced budget is only possible by drawing down £10.6k from reserves which will not be a sustainable option in the future as this would breach the reserves policy of 50% of precept.

- Committees will be individually responsible for applying for the grants to meet their project needs.
- The increase in accommodation costs is justified for the following reasons:
  - Current lease renewal is not on offer by the landlord.
  - Benchmarking evidence suggests that other 'external' local accommodation costs are significantly higher than those proposed.
  - The proposed deal will retain the identity of Melton Parish Council as being part of the Melton scene
- The reduction in future years liability to repay the tennis court loan should be more clearly shown in the longer term replacement reserve.

**13.93.02 To decide if any Further Input is required from Recreation Committee and Planning and Transport Committee**

The rationalisation of the way in which grants and expenditure from grants is expressed in the budget to be advised to the committees together with the confirmation that capital expenditure can only proceed if funded by grants with any shortfall being agreed from reserves by Full Council prior to work commissioning.

**13.93.03 To Agree a Way Forward for Addressing the Future Financial Challenges**

Suggestions included:

- Raising income through the investigation of available external funding and applying where appropriate by the committee responsible for the work
- Reviewing income levels vv cost of providing the service
- Reviewing the strategic philosophy of why various services are provided e.g. football pitches
- Setting challenges for each committee for the 2015/16 council year

**It was RESOLVED** to present the budget of £104,332 and a precept of £65,796 to Full Council on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2014 with a recommendation to adopt.

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

**13.94 STAFFING MATTERS**

**13.94.01 To Confirm the Office Closure Dates and Staff Holidays over the Christmas period**

**It was RESOLVED** to confirm the Office Closure dates for Christmas and New Year as December 24<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, and 31<sup>st</sup> and that due to staff holidays the office will also be closed on 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

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

Concern was expressed that the office would be closed for 3 weeks and the dates were accepted on the basis of:

- The continuance of the custom and practice pending the outcome of the benchmarking review.
- Confirmation from the Clerk that the risks associated with the closure [response to external contacts, provision of agendas and papers for January meetings of Full Council, Committees and finalisation of the lease arrangements] were addressed

**13.94.02 Park Warden**

Nothing to report

**13.94.03 Assistant Clerk**

It was noted that a new 6 month contract of employment commencing on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014 has been entered into with Mrs Cheryl Tye.

**13.94.04 Clerk**

The Chairman reported that the appraisal for the Clerk that was due in April 2013 would be undertaken early in the New Year based on the draft revised job description.

- 13.95 TO REVIEW THE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICES AND PRACTICES OF THE COUNCIL**
- 13.95.01 ½ Yearly Interim Audit Report**  
 Paper FRM(13)P95.01 previously circulated was received and noted.  
 It was noted that SALC had confirmed that the Annual Review of the General Power of Competence referred to on page 1 was only required following an election. I.e. it is not due until May 2015. This had been accepted by the internal auditor.  
**It was RESOLVED** to confirm that the ½ yearly interim audit report be adopted.  
**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson **Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.
- 13.96 TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN ON MATTERS ARISING NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**  
 Paper FRM(13)P96 previously circulated was received and noted.
- 13.97 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS**
- 13.97.01 Accommodation**  
 See item 99.
- 13.97.02 Communications**  
 It was noted that the grant payment of £1,000 to Melton PCC towards the cost of producing the Melton Messenger had been paid in December 2014.  
 The recommendations contained in the Communications Working Group paper presented to and adopted by Full Council in November would be implemented by the staff in the New Year.
- 13.97.03 Divestment**  
 The following position was reported regarding the various divestments:
- (a) Orchard Close  
 The solicitors acting for the parish council had indicated that the final transfer would take place shortly, after which the parish council would be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the land. Any costs involved in the maintenance of the land in this financial year would have to be provided from reserves should the Recreation Committee budget be fully utilised in this financial year. The 2014/15 budget provides for the ongoing maintenance.
- (b) Plots of Land by Fison House  
 SCDC Estates Officer had confirmed that the request for a decision on the divestment had been escalated through his management. The matter was also being followed up by Cllr Bidwell. The Clerk to follow up if a response is not forthcoming before the Christmas break.
- 13.98 TO CONSIDER THE RESULTS OF THE BENCHMARKING UNDERTAKEN BY SALC ON BEHALF OF THE COMMITTEE**  
 Paper FRM(13)P98.01 – Combined Detailed Work.  
 Paper FRM(13)P98.02 – List of regular reports.  
 Both papers previously circulated were received and noted.  
 The Chairman reported that this was still ‘work in progress’ as there were still discrepancies between the hours quoted by SALC and those contained in the two papers.  
 The Clerk to circulate the SALC hours paper to committee members as only the working group has received them.
- 13.99 LEASE FOR OFFICE ACCOMODATION**  
 The Clerk confirmed that the ‘without prejudice’ offer had been made to the landlord but although she had acknowledged receipt verbally no response had been forthcoming.  
 The Clerk to set a date for a response by which a decision is required to enable alternative options to be pursued should the offer be rejected.
- 13.100 TO RECONSIDER SAFEGUARDING POLICY**  
 Papers FRM(13)P52.01(a) and FRM(13)P51.02(b) previously circulated were received and noted.  
 The following minute for a previous meeting was noted:  
  
*To Consider A Parish Council Safeguarding Policy*

*Papers FRM(13)P52.01(a) – copy of the SCDC/Waveney District Council Safeguarding Policy and FRM(13)P52.01(b) - draft Melton Parish Council Safeguarding Policy [based on the Rippingdale Parish Council Policy] previously circulated were received and noted. An in-depth discussion on whether or not to consider adopting a safeguarding policy followed during which it was noted that SALC had been approached to confirm whether parish councils actually needed such a policy. The matter has been referred to their solicitors and advice will be circulated when it is received. Council were supportive of the concept of the policy but **it was RESOLVED** to await the legal advice through SALC before deciding what action to take next.*  
**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson                      **Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

The issues surrounding the need for such a policy were considered in the lack of any specific recommendation from SALC.

- The implications of implementing the policy
- Level of supervision required
- Unidentified benefit of the policy
- Need to have a decision prior to the 2014 fete to enable the appropriate risk assessment to be carried out
- Consistency of 'Children or Vulnerable Adults' in the document

The Clerk to reword the proposed document to be Melton Parish Council specific to ensure that the spirit of what was intended is retained.

### **13.101 FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS**

#### **13.101.01 Emergency Plan**

The Chairman of Council raised her concerns about the lack of a Melton Parish Council Emergency Plan in view of the recent evacuation of residents during the tidal surge and the lack of any notification to MPC of the impending problems.  
Cllr Taylor agreed to revisit the documentation from the briefing he attended on the need for an emergency plan and bring forward proposals to form a working group to develop a plan for Melton at the next meeting.

#### **13.101.02 Howard Needham**

The Chairman expressed the warm and sincere gratitude of all the council to Howard for all his hard work over a number of years and wished him well in his aspirations to continue serving his community as an Ipswich Borough Councillor.

#### **13.101.03 To consider items for inclusion in the Melton Messenger**

Office move when the final decision is made.

#### **13.101.04 To receive items for future meetings**

Policy on grant making

### **13.102 DATE NEXT MEETING**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2014

The meeting will take place in Conference Room 4, The Lindos Centre, Saddlemakers Lane, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1PP commencing at 1800.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 2020

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

[Chairman]

Date: \_\_\_\_\_