



## FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

**Minutes** of an ordinary meeting of the Parish Council Finance, Employment & Risk Management Committee on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2014 commencing at 18:00 in The Lindos Centre Seminar Room, Centre, Saddlemakers Lane Melton IP12 1PP.

**Present:**

Cllr Mrs BK Abbott [Vice Chairman]  
Cllr Mr GK Butterwick  
Cllr Mr MJ Kennedy

Cllr Mr CW Taylor  
Cllr Thompson [Chairman]

**Absent:**

**In Attendance:**

Mr JA West  
Mr MJ Green                      Clerk to Melton Parish Council

**14.39            MEMBERSHIP**

The Chairman wished to record the thanks of the committee to Cllr Martin for filling the temporary vacancy on the committee resulting from the resignation of Cllr Needham.

**14.39.01        To note appointment of Cllr Kennedy to the Committee**

The appointment of Cllr Kennedy to the committee was noted.  
The Chairman thanked Cllr Kennedy for being willing to join the committee.

**14.39.02        To receive apologies for and consent to absence**

There were no apologies as all councillors were present.

**14.40            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**14.40.01        To Receive Amendments to the Register**

Cllr Abbott advised that she would be updating her register as a result of her involvement with the WI. The Clerk to forward a new register form by email for completion.

**14.40.02        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.

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

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

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

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

**14.41            OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TALK TO COUNCILLORS**

There were no members of the public present.

**14.42 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**14.42.01 Finance and Risk Management Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2014**

It was **RESOLVED** to receive, note and sign minutes FRM(14)M03 previously circulated as a correct record.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson

**Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

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

**14.43.01 March 2014**

Monthly Management Accounts Report for March 2014 previously circulated was received and noted.

As there were a number of pages missing from the copies circulated to members it was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

An explanation of the difference between the year-end surplus in this report and the reserves information contained in the budget paper considered and adopted by full council on 13<sup>th</sup> March will be circulated to all councillors.

**14.43.02 To Consider and Adopt the Unaudited Draft Annual Accounts**

Paper FRM(14)P43.02 previously circulated was received and noted.

The following comments were noted:

- The information contained in the draft unaudited accounts provided the most up to date position including the costs associated with the office move
- The Clerk confirmed that provision had been made for known outstanding items
- The internal audit will take place on 29 April 2014 which is sufficient time to make any adjustments prior to the accounts being distributed to full council for adoption on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014
- Any non-material changes identified before submission to full council will not be included

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft unaudited accounts subject to internal audit and recommend them for adoption by full council on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson

**Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

It was noted that the bank statements for March have yet to be received and that when they are the bank reconciliation in the annual accounts will be updated to correspond to the year-end bank statement.

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

Paper FRM(14)P44 previously circulated was received and noted.

<b>Bank Statement - Tracker</b>	£63,635.69
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Plus unreconciled receipts	£0.00
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Less unreconciled payments	£0.00
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<b>Balance as per Balance Sheet</b>	<b>£63,635.69</b>
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<b>Bank Statement - Current</b>	£8,817.33
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Plus unreconciled receipts	£0.00
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Less unreconciled payments	(£6,917.50)
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<b>Balance as per Balance Sheet</b>	<b>£1,899.83</b>
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It was **RESOLVED** to confirm the bank reconciliation contained in paper FRM(14)P43 previously circulated.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson

**Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

#### 14.45 STAFFING MATTERS

##### 14.45.01 To Consider Staffing Recruitment Process

Paper 'Implications of Clerk's Retirement' previously circulated by the Chairman was received and noted..

- (a) Key Issues
- (i) Cllr Abbott has advised all councillors that the Clerk is retiring and that Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee will consider the way forward
- (ii) Cllr Abbott confirmed that the outgoing temporary assistant clerk has indicated that she is prepared to work on a Thursday morning from 08:00 to 12:00 and also cover evening meetings as necessary in the short term
- (iii) The Chairman advised that SALC had provided some guidance on the recruitment process confirming that it will not break employment law to appoint an interim clerk without advertising the post
- (iv) The Clerk confirmed that as he has no involvement in the bank accounts no changes to the bank mandates are required
- (v) The Clerk is to document running instructions prior to departure for
  - Accounting system
  - Payroll
  - Emails
  - Website
  - Enews
  - Answerphone/email forwarding
- (vi) The Clerk is to prepare a summary of all contracts
- (vii) The Clerk is to prepare documentation and process for May commissioning meeting
- (viii) It was confirmed that the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee has delegated power for the responsibility for the employment of council staff and to provide contracts and other such documents as required by employment legislation
- (ix) The Chairman and Clerk will meet to ensure the proper handover of budget working papers
- (x) The Chairman and Vice Chairman will identify any implications for the annual audit
- (xi) The Clerk confirmed that the Lindos Centre Seminar Room had been booked for all the currently planned full council and committee meetings through to the end of September.
- (xii) Divestments: Orchard Close complete. Fison House all on hold pending the car park review by SCDC as Melton Parish Council had requested that the car park be included
- (xiii) The Chairman to agree leaving date/holiday entitlement/working days with the Clerk
- (b) Principles for Recruitment of a Replacement Clerk
  - Issues to be resolved by the Employment Working Group but with decisions being ratified by Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee
  - (i) Recruit a clerk without an assistant clerk
  - (ii) Confirmed requirement is for minimum three days per week plus evening meetings with flexibility as to which days
  - (iii) CILCA qualified or willing to work towards qualification or other appropriate qualification
  - (iv) Knowledge or IT/Accounting systems

**14.45.02 Benchmarking**

It was confirmed that the revised contract for the Clerk has been signed by the Chairman of Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee and the Clerk and was currently being enacted.

**14.45.03 Park Warden**

It was noted that the appraisal for the Park Warden was due in October and that this will pick up on any risks associated with the physical challenges of the role

**14.45.04 Assistant Clerk**

It was confirmed that notice is currently being worked with a last working day of 24/4/2014. This brings the contract in its current form, that has an end date of 5/8/2014, to a close on 30/4/2014.

Arrangements will be made by the EWG to provide the appropriate documentation for the new arrangements for working after 30/4/2014.

**14.45.05 Clerk**

See 14.45.01

**14.46 TO CONSIDER REVISION TO STANDING ORDERS AND TO RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE TO FULL COUNCIL ON 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2014**

Standing Orders MPC Version previously circulated.

The advice from SALC regarding the two clauses 13 (b) and (c) is as follows:

- The confusion is understandable but key to this wording is 'if so required by the council's code of conduct'.
- The Suffolk-wide Code of Conduct requires councillors to declare non-pecuniary interests but allows councillors to remain and vote so it should not be an issue.
- Council could delete the clause (c) but it might be prudent to leave it as the code might change sometime.

The option for councillors is to use the application for dispensation to avoid having to leave the room whilst discussion surrounds their non-pecuniary interest

Cllr Butterwick suggested that the root cause of the confusion was an apparent conflict between the wording of the national model Code of Conduct and the national model Standing Orders, and that this should be taken up with SALC initially.

**It was RESOLVED** to approve the revisions to standing orders and recommend their adoption to full council on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014.

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

**14.47 TO REVIEW THE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICES AND PRACTICES OF THE COUNCIL**

**14.47.01 To Consider Request from Headway to Trade their Mobile Charity Shop in the Village.**

Paper FRM(14)P47.01 previously circulated was received and noted.

After careful consideration of this request **it was RESOLVED** that council should respond that they have great sympathy with the charitable aims of Headway. However, unlike many councils it only has one piece of land on which it could consider giving permission for the mobile to trade, and therefore it is unable to give open permission for trading within the parish. It will be suggested that they may wish to contact the Charity Car Boot Sale organisers to see if they will allow them to trade on car boot sales days.

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

#### **14.47.02 Chairman of Council Election**

Local Government Act 1972

Cllr Abbott has indicated that she has decided after three years as chairman that it is timely to stand down to allow a new chairman to be appointed to have the benefit of the experience of three previous chairmen before the elections of 2015.

The Clerk confirmed that:

- At the annual meeting the Chairman or in his absence the vice chairman must preside.
- The first business of the meeting must be the election of the chairman who must be an elected and not appointed member of the council.
- A local council is not properly constituted until it has appointed its chairman; therefore his appointment must be the first business at its annual meeting

It was agreed to circulate information to all councillors emphasising the importance of electing a chairman as failure to do so on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 will render the council not properly constituted. Therefore no council business can be transacted, including the payment of invoices and salaries, until a chairman is elected.

#### **14.47.03 Staffing during period before new staff commence work.**

See 14.45.01

#### **14.47.04 Co-option of Councillor**

The meeting was advised that both Liz Ashford and John West had offered themselves as councillors and the process of filling the one casual vacancy at the Full Council on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2014 will be:

- (a) Both will be offered the opportunity of giving a short resume of why they wish to become councillors
- (b) Both will then be asked to leave the meeting room whilst the decision is made
- (c) Councillors then consider the matter and vote by show of hands which of the two should be co-opted to fill the vacancy

It was noted that John West had expressed an interest in the workings of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee and Liz Ashford had expressed a similar interest in the Recreation Committee.

Both would be co-opted as non-councillor members of the respective committees and whoever is not co-opted to full council will remain as a non-councillor member of their chosen committee.

#### **14.47.05 To Consider Repayment of Planning Application Fee to Cllr Barrington**

The context of the planning application was discussed:

At its January meeting Council was advised that there was a strong possibility that the Lindos Centre Seminar Room would not, as previously understood, be available for the Council to hire a desperate search for office accommodation began.

Mr & Mrs Thompson offered to seek planning consent to change the use of their Coach House from Residential to Part Residential/Part Office and offer the office to MPC for a lease.

The deadline for the submission of the planning application, to enable a decision before the expiry of the lease, was before the FERM meeting to determine where council should

relocate to. In good faith Mr & Mrs Thompson submitted their application by the deadline date.

The subsequent decision of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee, after consideration of the proposals and associated risks, was to move to SCDC as, primarily, this was available at a lower cost and, also, was not subject to delay because of the planning application.

As the application included provision of an office specifically for MPC and MPC had gone elsewhere we understand that the planning application was refused.

Council is minded therefore to reimburse Mr & Mrs Thompson for the cost of their failed planning application. It was understood a similar situation arose prior to moving into the Lindos Centre when the costs of the planning application for a property on the Street were reimbursed.

Advice had been sought from the Monitoring Officer about whether the Power of General Competence could be used to repay Mr & Mrs Thompson the cost of their planning application. No advice has been forthcoming.

**It was RESOLVED** to offer Mr & Mrs Thompson reimbursement of the cost of their failed planning application whilst not giving financial support to any appeal they might subsequently wish to lodge.

**Proposed by:** Cllr Butterwick

**Seconded by:** Cllr Taylor

**14.47.06 To Consider Safeguarding Policy**

Paper FRM(14)P47.06 previously circulated was received and noted.

**It was RESOLVED** to adopt the safeguarding policy with an annual review and to implement it from the renewal of hire agreements for existing hirers and immediately for new hirers

**Proposed by:** Cllr Thompson

**Seconded by:** Cllr Abbott.

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

Paper FRM(14)P48 previously circulated was received and noted.

**14.49 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE WORKING GROUPS**

**14.49.01 Accommodation**

Office move complete with all potential risks managed effectively.

**14.49.02 Communications**

The Clerk reported that following an Enews item the following locations had been suggested as possible locations for new notice boards:

- Coach & Horses
- Melton Primary School
- Station
- St Andrew's Place
- Warwick Avenue
- Orchard Close

It had also been suggest by a number of people that the notice board by Jenners Close should be relocated closer to the entrance to Melton playing field.

The approximate cost of each notice board was circa £1,000.

The working group will consider this as part of the overall strategy

It was noted that St Andrew's Church was preparing its own website so that shortly there will no longer be any requirement for their pages on the MPC website to be updated.

Concerns were again raised about the provision of information pages for MPC in the Melton Messenger.

**14.49.03 Divestment**

(a) Orchard Close

To note that this has now been concluded.

(b) Fison House  
To note that there has been no further progress with SCDC.

**14.49.04 Emergency Plan**

Draft previously circulated by Cllr Taylor.  
SCDC had provided further information and a meeting is planned with the SCDC Officer who had offered support in completing the Melton Plan.  
John West accepted an invitation to join the working group.  
Two emergency centres had been established in Felixstowe and Leiston for the long term but some local short term provision [i.e. 8-10 hours] was required for Melton.  
Cllr Taylor was thanked for the generally good progress that was being made with the development of the plan for Melton.

**14.50 TO CONSIDER QUALITY COUNCIL SCHEME REVIEW UPDATE**

No further progress but it was confirmed that existing quality parish councils retain their accreditation until the new scheme is launched.

**14.51 FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS**

**It was RESOLVED** to co-opt John West as a non-councillor member of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee

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

**14.51.01 To consider items for inclusion in the Melton Messenger**

- Divestment of Orchard Close Land
- Staffing adverts
- 1<sup>st</sup> Draft Emergency Plan – review progress and learn more at the Annual Parish Meeting

**14.51.02 To receive items for future meetings**

There were no items recorded.

**14.52 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2014 at 19:00 in the Lindos Centre Seminar Room. **PLEASE NOTE THIS REVISED START TIME.**

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20:45

Signed:

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

[Chairman]