



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

FRM(20)M02

FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council Finance, Employment and Risk Management (FERM) Committee held via Zoom on Wednesday 14 October 2020 commencing at 19:00.

Present:

Cllr Mrs B Abbott
Cllr Mr B Banks (in the Chair)
Cllr Mr N Brown
Cllr Mrs C Gradwell
Cllr Mr A Porter
Cllr Mr C Taylor

Absent:

None

In Attendance:

Mr W J Grosvenor *Clerk and Executive Officer to Melton Parish Council*
Mrs P Alder *Assistant Clerk and Management Officer to Melton Parish Council*

	PART ONE – OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
20.11	TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no absences.
20.12	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
20.12.01	To receive Amendments to the Register There were none.
20.12.02	To receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda There were none.
20.12.03	To receive Declarations of Non Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda There were none.

20.12.04	<p>To consider Full / Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared It was noted that there had been no requests for dispensations.</p>
20.13	<p>OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TALK TO COUNCILLORS There were no members of the public present.</p>
20.14	<p>TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING It was RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the FERM Committee held on 5 February 2020 (Minutes FRM(20)M01 previously distributed). Proposed by: Cllr Porter Seconded by: Cllr Brown</p>
20.15	<p>TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL AND INTERNAL CONTROL MATTERS</p>
20.15.01	<p>To consider the Management Accounts – 1 April 2020 to 30 September 2020 (Papers FRM(20)15.01 and FRM(20)15.01a-k) The Assistant Clerk reported on the Council’s financial position as at the end of period 6 of 2020/21. Gross income received was £195,468 including Community Infrastructure Levy monies (CIL) of £84,916. Without CIL, the income was £110,552. Expenditure for the period to 30 September at £60,453 was 44.8% of budgeted expenditure for the year. In terms of cash resources at 30 September, cash in the Council’s bank accounts totalled £513,129. After adding £462 in respect of refundable VAT and deducting £5,120 for the contingent liability in respect of the tenant’s rent deposit, the total liquid assets amounted to £508,470, including CIL monies totalling £399,343 and a further £698 held in reserve for WWI Heritage Fund / Behind the Name. Following receipt in September of the 2nd instalment of the precept, the general reserves total £108,429, an increase from £74,588 at the end of August. The Assistant Clerk asked Members if, in the interests of reducing the number of financial reports presented electronically to future meetings, they would be happy to only receive the cash book and bank reconciliation details for accounts which had transactions in the period. This was AGREED, and in future where there have been no changes this will be reported as “No change”. Once face to face meetings are resumed, the Chair will be presented with printed copies of all the bank statements (and Building Society Pass Book) to inspect and sign off the reconciliations. In response to a query about interest on the Building Society account, the Clerk explained that this is credited to the account annually, in December. Following this discussion, it was AGREED to NOTE the report.</p>
20.15.02	<p>To consider the budget report (Papers FRM(20)15.02 and FRM(20)15.02a) The Clerk took Members through the narrative Budget report at FRM(20)15.02 which provided observations in respect of the detailed figures set out at FRM(20)15.02a. Additionally the Clerk reported receipt of a further amount of CIL totalling £98,751.60 – a sum larger than anticipated notwithstanding Covid-19 - immediately prior to the meeting. At the date of the meeting CIL resources now total £490,094.32. Cllr Banks enquired about progress with the conveyance of the parcels of land being divested from East Suffolk Council. The Clerk explained that the transfer had been held up due to shielding by the solicitor concerned. However progress is now being made and he will chase regularly to ensure early exchange of contracts. It was AGREED to NOTE the report.</p>

20.15.03	<p>To agree arrangements for Budget Working Group to meet to (1) review the position for 2020/21 and (2) start work on budget setting for 2021/22</p> <p>It was AGREED to hold a socially distanced meeting of Budget Working Group on Tuesday 10 November, starting at 2.30pm at the Council's offices. Membership will consist as usual of the Chair of the Council, Vice-Chairs, together with the Chairs of Committees. The Clerk will distribute papers in advance of the meeting.</p>
20.15.04	<p>To receive an update on the external audit for 2019/20</p> <p>The Clerk reported that no response has yet been received from P K F Littlejohn in respect of the annual governance and accountability return, together with accompanying documents, sent to the auditor on 29 July. The external audit report has to be published by 30 November and needs therefore to be considered by Full Council on 18 November.</p>
20.15.05	<p>To consider the appointment of the internal auditor for 2020/21</p> <p>Following discussion it was AGREED that the Clerk will ask SALC if they can supply a suitable auditor to carry out the internal audit for 2020/21.</p>
20.15.06	<p>To review the position on grant giving for 2020/21</p> <p>There was a long discussion on whether or not the Council should pay a contribution to support the publication of the <i>Melton Messenger</i> whilst no print version is produced. Cllr Brown confirmed that all payments made in support of the <i>Messenger</i> go into a dedicated account. Whilst the Council understands that the decision to withhold printed copies is based on a need to protect the safety of the distributors, the Council itself is willing to offer assistance with distribution either directly or via the involvement of the Melton Good Neighbour Scheme.</p> <p>Meanwhile on the basis of an electronic version only in 2020/21, it was RESOLVED by a majority to recommend to Full Council to make a payment of £400.00 only for the current financial year, instead of the £1,150.00 budgeted.</p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Brown Seconded by: Cllr Gradwell</p> <p>It was further RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to use £500.00 from the balance of £750.00 remaining, to offer small grants in 2020/21. Applications would need to be made by 31 December.</p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Banks Seconded by: Cllr Gradwell</p>
20.16	<p>TO CONSIDER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS</p>
20.16.01	<p>Staffing report</p> <p>The Clerk reported that the Assistant Clerk has commenced training for the CiLCA qualification. This is likely to be completed in late 2021.</p>
20.16.02	<p>To consider revised / updated Grievance and Disciplinary procedures (Paper FRM(20)16.02)</p> <p>The Clerk explained that the draft new procedures replace a previous very short document drawn up in 2009. The new procedures are based on the ACAS models for small organisations, adapted for use by the Council, preserving key aspects of the old procedures, and expanded where appropriate.</p> <p>In discussion the following substantive points were made by Members:</p> <p><i>Grievance procedure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the paragraph headed "Appeals" following the words "as soon as possible" should be added "usually within 10 working days". • It should be made clear as to the number of Councillors who will sit on both the Grievance Panel and the Appeals Panel.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It should be made clear that the Appeals Panel will, like the Grievance hearing itself, be heard in private. <p><i>Disciplinary procedure</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Disciplinary procedure in the paragraph headed “Appeals” following the words “as soon as possible” should be added “usually within 10 working days” • It should be made clear as to the number of Councillors who will sit on both the Disciplinary Panel and the Appeals Panel. • It should be made clear that the Appeals Panel will, like the Disciplinary hearing itself, be heard in private. <p>Subject to these amendments it was RESOLVED to recommend the new Disciplinary and Grievance procedures to Full Council for adoption Proposed by: Cllr Abbott Seconded by: Cllr Gradwell</p>
20.17	TO REVIEW RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES
20.17.01	<p>Risk Register (Paper FRM(20)17.01)</p> <p>Members of FERM Committee reviewed the Risk Register updated for October 2020. It was AGREED to remove the low level risk associated with the adequacy of fidelity guarantee cover as the cover has now been increased to cover the level of the Council’s liquid assets. Otherwise the report was NOTED.</p>
20.17.02	<p>Data protection compliance Risk Register (Paper FRM(20)17.02)</p> <p>The Clerk reminded Members that the Data Protection Risk Register should be considered at 6 monthly intervals by FERM Committee. There are not considered to be any changes in risk levels; the greatest exposure is still considered to arise via use of personal devices in Councillor’s homes.</p> <p>In discussion it was observed that the hard drives used to back up the office computers should be password protected / encrypted. The Assistant Clerk will investigate with the Council’s ICT consultant who supplied them. Also the backups should always be placed in the fire safe when the office is unoccupied. The report was NOTED and the Assistant Clerk will update the Committee on the outcome of the further investigation.</p>
20.17.03	<p>Business continuity planning – cloud based storage systems</p> <p>The Assistant Clerk presented an interim report on the results of her investigations into feasible arrangements for remote working. These began as research into off-site / virtual backup provision for data, systems and documentation to reduce the impact on the Council’s business in the event of a critical incident, but have now broadened into requirements for remote working generally.</p> <p>Findings to date in respect of the following areas can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents – these should be stored on Microsoft OneDrive as the Council already pays for this. This will provide up to 1TB of storage and allows editing and sharing across multiple devices remotely. Upgrading to Microsoft Business would bring further increased storage and access to <i>Teams</i> (that could be used instead of <i>Zoom</i>). • Software – Not all software can be accessed remotely e.g. the finance software <i>Alpha</i>, as it is downloaded to each computer, and both computers are connected.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email – This can be accessed via webmail but no remote access to archived emails. • Printing - This can only be carried out in the office. • Telephone – Can be taken home and connected to home internet. • Internet connectivity – Home working obviously requires good internet connectivity. <p>This interim report was presented for information and comments will be welcomed from Members. The work is ongoing.</p>
20.17.04	<p>Fire risk assessment for 17 Riduna Park</p> <p>This was commissioned as it is a statutory requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) 2005. It was carried out on 12 October by Guardian Fire Safety Management Ltd. The inspector covered all the risks arising from the structure and fittings in the building as a whole and the equipment and facilities in the ground floor. The tenants upstairs are separately required to risk assess their own equipment and working practices. Main areas to be addressed are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written emergency evacuation procedure (proportionate to the size of the building) is required • Safety signage is allegedly non-compliant (this is disputed by the installer) • Office equipment needs to be PAT tested. <p>These findings will be investigated / addressed and it was AGREED that prices should be obtained for PAT testing and the testing carried out as soon as possible.</p>
20.18	TO CONSIDER GOVERNANCE MATTERS
20.18.01	<p>Report of Decisions Made by Clerk under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014</p> <p>Nothing to report.</p>
20.19	<p>TO CONSIDER THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR HANDLING COMPLAINTS</p> <p>(Paper FRM(20)19)</p> <p>The Clerk introduced this report, previously distributed. The report sets out a revised and updated <i>Code of practice for handling complaints</i> (first revision since 2014) which FERM Committee is invited to recommend to Full Council for adoption. In discussion it was requested that it should be made clear (paragraphs 3 and 4) that where a written complaint that cannot be settled needs to be brought to a meeting of Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It needs to be done in a timely manner • The complaint will be heard by Full Council with public and press excluded • If necessary a special meeting of Full Council will need to be called to avoid unnecessary delay. <p>Subject to these amendments it was RESOLVED to recommend the new Code of Practice for Handling Complaints to Full Council for adoption</p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Porter Seconded by: Cllr Banks</p>
20.20	<p>NEW PAVILION / ELECTRIC CAR CHARGING POINTS – UPDATES</p> <p>New pavilion</p> <p>The revised drawings provided by the architect earlier in the day of the meeting, and distributed to FERM Committee Members, were discussed. The following further suggestions were made:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The internal storage area should be reduced to make the meeting / multi-purpose area larger. • The Council's Maintenance Officer should be asked if the external store could be split into two with separate access doors; one for the football hirers and one for his requirements. • Subject to the ruling by Building Control on whether a lobby is required between the meeting area and the inside wc; if it is not required then could a second internal wc be provided? • Construction materials need to be climb resistant and robust – can details be provided of both materials and colours? • Members expressed a preference for the hipped roof design - can the roof be fitted with solar panels? <p>It was AGREED that the Clerk will feed these comments back to the architect once the Maintenance Officer has been consulted. Meanwhile the revised drawings will be made available on the Council's website.</p> <p><i>Electric car charging points</i></p> <p>The Assistant Clerk reported that she is to meet a representative from the company EO Charging, for a free, no obligation survey of both the car park at the playing field and the approach to Winifred Fison House in terms of feasibility for charging points. She will then report back to Full Council next month.</p>
20.21	<p>FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>Given the high quality of the restoration of the 2012 roundel it was suggested that it could both be featured in Cllr Porter's next article for the <i>Melton Messenger</i> and also be a good photo opportunity.</p>
20.22	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 9 December 2020 at 7pm. There being no further business for the Open part of the Agenda, and following consideration of the Confidential Item, the meeting closed at 21.05.</p>
	<p>PART TWO - CONFIDENTIAL</p>
	<p>Exempt / Confidential Item</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining item of business on the grounds of commercial confidentiality</p>