



MELTON PARISH COUNCIL

FRM(21)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 Thursday 15 April 2021 commencing at 11:00.

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
21.11	TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no absences.
21.12	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
21.12.01	To receive Amendments to the Register There were none.
21.12.02	To receive Declarations of Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda There were none.
21.12.03	To receive Declarations of Non Pecuniary Interest in Respect of Items on the Agenda There were none.
21.12.04	To consider Full / Partial Dispensations for Pecuniary Interests Declared It was noted that there had been no requests for dispensations.

21.13	<p>OPEN FORUM FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO TALK TO COUNCILLORS</p> <p>There were no members of the public present.</p>
21.14	<p>TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</p> <p>It was RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the FERM Committee held on 10 February 2021 (Minutes FRM(21)M01 previously distributed).</p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Porter Seconded by: Cllr Taylor</p>
21.15	<p>TO CONSIDER FINANCIAL AND INTERNAL CONTROL MATTERS</p>
21.15.01	<p>To consider the Management Accounts – 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (Papers FRM(21)15.01 and FRM(21)15.01a-k)</p> <p>The Assistant Clerk reported on the Council's financial position as at the end of period 12 of 2020/21. Gross income received was £324,347 including Community Infrastructure Levy monies (CIL) of £183,667. Without CIL, the income was £140,680. Expenditure for the year at £122,076 was 92.3% of the annual revised budget for the year. In terms of cash resources as at 31 March, cash in the Council's bank accounts totalled £580,842. After adding £3 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 £575,725, including CIL monies totalling £510,381 and a further £500 held in reserve for renovations to the WW2 memorial. The general reserves total £64,845, a decrease from £71,083 at the end of February 2021. This level is however more than acceptable for an authority with the Council's annual precept income having regard to the guidance issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance. It was emphasised that this is a period 12 not year end report. Accounting adjustments will now be made to produce the final year end accounts.</p> <p>It was AGREED to NOTE the report. Councillors felt it was a good result but there will be a need to exercise prudence going into 2021/22.</p>
21.15.02	<p>To consider the budget for 2021/22 (Paper FRM(21)15.02 and FRM(21)15.02a)</p> <p>The Clerk summarised the narrative report supported by the budget sheet. This shows on the basis of the proposed changes to the base budget that the budgeted income in 2021/22 decreases from £119,035 to £117,581 and the expenditure increases from £118,595 to £123,037. However over £10k's worth of expenditure will qualify for the use of CIL monies if required. Grant aid may also be available for the refresh of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p> <p>Following discussion in relation to the arrangements for the NHS Thank You Day on 5 July, it was agreed that funding should be provided for the purchase of the NHS Rainbow Flag, and 3 banners. [The cost of procuring a flagpole was approved by Full Council on 17 March.]</p> <p>It was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recommend the budgetary changes to Full Council for adoption • To allocate £300 for the purchase of the NHS Rainbow Flag and Banners. <p>Proposed by: Cllr Porter Seconded by: Cllr Abbott</p>
21.15.03	<p>Internal and External Audit arrangements for 2020/21 – update</p> <p>The Clerk reported that arrangements have been made with the Internal Auditor for him to visit the Council's offices on 12 May. The audit timetable for this year has just been received from the External Auditor. The submission deadline for a completed Annual Governance and Accountability Return to be submitted to PKF Littlejohn is 2 July. After the internal audit the</p>

	<p>accounts and return for 2020/21 will be finalised and will be considered by a meeting of FERM Committee in early June, and then finally approved by Full Council in late June prior to submission.</p>
<p>21.15.04</p>	<p>To consider proposals and prices for the renewal of the fencing around the Playing Field car park following extension / resurfacing (Paper FRM(21)15.04)</p> <p>The Clerk reported prices received in respect of the above. Three contractors were approached; one declined as having a full order book; two responded as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractor A: £5,033 + VAT This price includes supplying materials and labour to fabricate the railings, cutting and removal of existing, supplying and fitting the new railings, including vehicle barriers and pedestrian access points. Railings to be all hot-dipped galvanised. <i>Additionally this price is subject to the post holes being dug and the posts concreted by the Council's Maintenance Officer.</i> • Contractor B: £5,100 + VAT This price additionally includes polyester green powder coating of the fencing. <i>This contractor has offered his price based on measurements as given, a clear line, good access, normal digging and subject to survey.</i> <p>Both contractors cannot commit to holding materials prices for more than a limited period because of the fluctuation in metal prices since Brexit. However materials costs should not be more than approximately 20% of the total contract price. <i>Additionally</i> an option was suggested involving the erection of oak posts with a chain link fence between them. This would be a little cheaper and could be undertaken by the Council's Maintenance Officer.</p> <p>Following discussion Councillors RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To decide to stay with metal fencing for a new field barrier • To accept the price from Contractor B, subject to (1) the company being responsible for accurately measuring the quantities and lengths required, the Council not accepting any responsibility for any shortcomings, and (2) confirming the price. <p>Proposed by: Cllr Porter Seconded by: Cllr Abbott</p>
<p>21.15.05</p>	<p>To consider update report on insurance matters</p> <p>The Clerk reported an exchange of emails with the Council's Insurance Broker, Came and Co, in respect of any insurance implications following the assumption of responsibility for the new parcels of land. The Broker has confirmed that the Council is automatically covered for all public liability arising from the new sites without any additional premium. Came and Co have been asked to quote for insuring the additional play equipment and other outdoor furniture inherited with the new land and a quote is awaited.</p> <p>The Clerk also reported that the previous concerns raised about the need for the Council to take out ill health liability insurance to cover potential additional liabilities have been resolved by Suffolk CC Pension Fund taking out insurance cover itself.</p>

21.15.06	<p>To consider purchase of Notice board for Old Maltings Approach (referral from Recreation committee) (Paper FRM(21)15.06)</p> <p>The Assistant Clerk introduced her report, which was produced in response to a request made to Recreation Committee. The proposal is for the purchase of a metal notice board to serve the residents in the Old Maltings development. Two options were considered – a 21 sheet size (£845.00) and an 18 sheet version (£622.58). Following discussion it was RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To purchase the larger model • Additionally to ask for it to be powder coated in Melton green • To allow a budget of up to £945.00 accordingly • To charge the purchase to CIL. <p>Proposed by: Cllr Porter Secoded by: Cllr Abbott</p>
21.15.07	<p>To consider review of Standing Order 19c (referral from Full Council) (Paper FRM(21)15.07)</p> <p>This report proposed a change in the wording of Standing Order 19c to bring it up to date with modern practice.</p> <p>Standing Order 19c currently reads as follows: “The chairman of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee shall conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Proper Officer. The review and appraisal shall be reported in writing and is subject to approval by resolution by the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee.”</p> <p>Following discussion it was RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council that it is amended to read: “The chairman of the Finance, Employment and Risk Management Committee shall conduct a review of the performance and annual appraisal of the work of the Proper Officer.”</p> <p>Proposed by: Cllr Banks Secoded by: Cllr Taylor</p>
21.15.08	<p>To consider review of Financial Regulations section 11 (referral from Full Council)</p> <p>The Clerk withdrew this Item. The issues here relating to tendering, both in terms of thresholds and the use of e-tendering, are complex. Clarification is awaited on the threshold aspect from NALC via SALC.</p>
21.16	<p>TO CONSIDER EMPLOYMENT MATTERS</p>
21.16.01	<p>Staffing report</p> <p>There were no issues to report, other than that the office is currently very busy with numerous projects, as well as the year end work. The Clerk reminded Members that they would soon need to consider how they want to approach the recruitment of a new Clerk, and any other structural issues that they want to consider at the same time, so that recruitment can start in the early autumn.</p>
21.16.02	<p>To consider draft Equality and Diversity Policy (Paper FRM(21)16.02)</p> <p>The Clerk introduced this draft policy, which is based on a draft available from NALC, tailored to meet the needs of Melton. Following discussion it was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recommend the draft policy to Full Council for adoption

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To express concern that there are no corresponding policies in relation to Councillors (other than in the Code of Conduct requirement not to cause the Council to breach its duties under the Equality Act 2010). The Clerk reminded members that the Council had responded to the consultation on a new Model Code of Conduct in 2020, but a new Code has not yet been published. <p>Proposed by: Cllr Brown Seconded by: Cllr Abbott</p>
21.16.03	<p>To consider draft Lone Working Policy (Paper FRM(21)16.03)</p> <p>The Clerk introduced this draft policy, which has drawn on a number of sources. It was acknowledged that this is a difficult issue for Melton, because it employs 3 staff all of whom work alone for some of the time, either in the office or outside. In discussion Councillors supported the draft policy (subject to the deletion of the final sentence in the penultimate paragraph on page 3). It will need to be underpinned with risk assessments and then practical policies which put all identified mitigations into practice.</p> <p>In terms of taking the policy forward, it was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare appropriate risk assessments To take to Full Council with the risk assessments completed To investigate and consider the use of a personal alarm system / door entry system. <p>Proposed by: Cllr Brown Seconded by: Cllr Abbott</p>
21.16.04	<p>To consider draft Sickness / Absence Policy (Paper FRM(21)16.04)</p> <p>The Clerk explained the background to and basis of this draft policy which rectifies a longstanding omission in terms of the Council's suite of policies. Following discussion it was RESOLVED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To approve the draft policy subject to the following amendments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stating that in the case of sickness absence by the Clerk, the arrangements will be managed by the Chair of FERM Committee Clarifying the meaning of and status of the "Green Book" Notwithstanding the delegated authority of FERM Committee in employment matters, to take to Full Council for sign off on the basis that Full Council should exercise oversight on Policies. <p>Proposed by: Cllr Porter Seconded by: Cllr Brown</p>
21.17	TO REVIEW RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES
21.17.01	<p>Risk Register (Paper FRM(21)17.01)</p> <p>Members of FERM Committee reviewed the Risk Register updated for April 2021. No changes were required and the report was NOTED.</p>
21.17.02	<p>Data Protection Risk Register (Paper FRM(21)17.02)</p> <p>This was reviewed and NOTED. No changes were required. Bearing in mind that the area of greatest (medium) risk is in relation to Councillor's behaviours, the Clerk was requested to investigate training available in this area that is specifically directed at Members, and (if any) to draw it to their attention.</p> <p>It was also requested if the format of both the risk registers could be standardised. This will be looked at as soon as possible.</p>

21.17.03	<p>To consider risk assessment for reopening the Meeting Room at 17 Riduna Park (Paper FRM(21)17.03)</p> <p>The Assistant Clerk took Members through a fairly detailed risk assessment relating to the reopening of the Meeting Room for face to face meetings after 6 May. The report was NOTED. In discussion it was AGREED to wait for the result of the Administrative Court hearing on 19 April and review at Full Council. Councillors indicated that they would support an option for remote meetings or a hybrid option if possible. The Clerk indicated that he is likely to put up a paper to Full Council proposing a scheme of delegation if the requirement to return to face to face meetings cannot be avoided.</p>
21.18	<p>TO CONSIDER AND AGREE PROPOSED MENU STRUCTURE ON THE UPGRADED MELTON PC WEBSITE (Paper FRM(21)18)</p> <p>The Assistant Clerk presented her proposed changes to Members. Following discussion it was AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To move MGNS out of the menu items • To go live on the proposed basis and then reconsider as necessary in the light of experience • It would be helpful to know which areas of the website are the most visited; the Assistant Clerk will investigate and report back.
21.19	TO CONSIDER GOVERNANCE MATTERS
21.19.01	<p>Report of Decisions Made by Clerk under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 Nothing to report.</p>
21.20	<p>FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>The Clerk raised an urgent matter for discussion. A resident in Saxon Way has raised concerns about two pine trees which are on a public footpath behind the house. Both trees are "end of life" but not imminently dangerous according to the Council's recent tree safety assessment. However dead ivy has fallen into the resident's garden from the trees and only the top branches remain on the trees; all the lower limbs have fallen. Tree surgeons who have visited the site have confirmed the assessment: the trees are not imminently dangerous. The East Suffolk Council Arboricultural Manager is of the same view but accepts that the trees are "end of life" and would not oppose a TPO application to fell them. In discussion it was AGREED that if the resident is willing to pay for their removal Melton PC will not oppose such an application.</p>
21.21	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>The next meeting will be fixed at the Council's AGM on 5 May 2021. There being no further business the meeting closed at 13.11.</p>