



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE ON TUESDAY 30TH JULY 2019 HELD IN THE PARISH MEETING ROOM, GOUDHURST ROAD, MARDEN COMMENCING AT 7.30PM

Cllr Tippen opened the meeting prior to electing a Chairman.

01/19 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Boswell proposed and Cllr Mannington seconded that Cllr Adam be elected Chairman for the forthcoming Council year. All in attendance agreed and Cllr Adam accepted the position. Cllr Adam took the chair.

02/19 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Cllr Adam proposed and Cllr Jones seconded that Cllr Stevens be elected Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming Council year. All in attendance agreed and Cllr Stevens accepted the position.

03/19 PRESENT

Cllrs Adam (in the chair), Boswell, Jones, Mannington, Stevens and Tippen were present. Cllrs Barker and Turner together with the Clerk were also in attendance.

04/19 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

05/19 PARISH COUNCILLOR DETAILS

Declarations of Interests

There were declarations of interest.

Granting of Dispensation

There were no requests for dispensation of any item on this agenda

06/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th April 2019 were agreed and signed as a true record.

07/19 IDENTIFICATION OF ITEMS INVOLVING PUBLIC SPEAKING

There were no members of the public in attendance

08/19 UPDATE FROM HR SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

The HR Sub-Committee met on 29th July and Cllr Tippen, as the newly elected Chairman of the Sub-Committee, updated the meeting. The one item which was reported involved changes to the annual leave calculations for Council staff. Although previously Marden Parish Council had followed the government guidelines it was felt more appropriate to follow those provided by NALC. In doing this a further day's leave was proposed together with bank holidays being in addition to the leave entitlement. This proposal would be taken to the next Full Council meeting and Cllrs would also be asked to consider back dating to the start of this annual leave year.

09/19 2019/20 FINANCIAL YEAR – 1ST QUARTER REPORT

The Clerk had circulated prior to the meeting and provided hard copies to Cllrs in attendance.

Expenditure

Several questions were raised with the Clerk/RFO which were duly answered

Income

The Clerk informed the Cllrs that additional income had been received in July for Play Scheme which took the income over what was budgeted. This also applied to burial income. The Clerk was asked to add an additional column to indicate the difference in actual compared to budget.

Cllrs noted the income and expenditure for the first quarter.

The Clerk was also asked for the next quarter's figures to add a Forecast column to the end of the financial year.

10/19 4-YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

Now that the accounts for 2018/19 had been audited this would be updated and circulated. The details of this and why Marden PC has a financial plan were explained to Cllr Barker.

11/19 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

Although some of these documents had been reviewed at the last Finance meeting amendments were required to change "Assistant Clerk" to "Deputy Clerk"; to delete NS&I account as this had now been closed; and to amend the way salaries are paid: these were agreed by Cllrs.

The Clerk was also asked to add an item regarding fraud (ie via email).

12/19 2020/21 BUDGET

Cllrs were asked to consider the following items and whether they should be added to the budgeting agenda in November 2019:

Parish Council Newsletter

The Deputy Clerk had indicated that she was able to produce newsletters in a similar format to that which is currently used. Cllrs discussed this as it would save on some expenditure. The Clerk was asked to discuss this with the Deputy Clerk and to obtain printing costs. The item would be added to the next Full Council agenda to discuss the timescale.

Southons Field benches

At least one of the benches was coming to the end of its life and the Clerk had obtained some information regarding recycled plastic benches. This item would be added to the next Amenities agenda to discuss the costings between recyclable and wooden and then bring back to the next Finance meeting.

Purchase of Parish Council events gazebo

Currently the Parish Council, when requiring a gazebo for an event, uses the Play Scheme's one which is not heavy duty. This item, along with other possible capital expenditure, would also be placed on to the next Amenities Committee.

13/19 OTHER FINANCIAL ISSUES

Internal Audit Report from End of Year Audit

The following items were raised from the report:

Bank reconciliations should be subjected to regular scrutiny by Cllrs (as least quarterly);

Cllrs agreed that a minimum of 2 Finance Committee Cllrs meet with the RFO 10 working days prior to each quarter's Finance meeting. The Financial Risk Assessment would be amended to reflect this.

Councils should consider the need to retain Nat West bank accounts and transfer to Unity;

Cllrs had discussed this at previous meetings and it was agreed that the two accounts would remain in respect of the FCSA (maximum of £85,000 per bank) together with Nat West provides interest on money held, Unity does not.

Consider placing surplus funds in a suitable form of interest earning account such as CCLA:

The Clerk explained to Cllrs about CCLA (Charities, Churches and Local Authorities) and felt that this type of investment bank would be more suitable for investing larger amounts of money. Cllrs agreed to continue with Santander but would discuss further at the Finance meeting in January 2020.

VAT Code to be reviewed on RBS Software: The Clerk had already spoken to RBS and this had been rectified.

Higher controls on agreeing invoices – Cllr to initial invoices to approve payment / suggestion of buying a certification stamp containing information: The Clerk had provided a front sheet for invoices which covered the Clerk's initials confirming the receipt of goods/services; payment date; payment reference number; budget coding; initials of two Cllrs and this had been used since March 2019.

Consideration should be given to the best way of ensuring that all interment fees are recovered and a breakdown of fees to be added to the interment form: Cllrs asked that the Amenities Committee consider how to deal with non-payment of fees although the information to Funeral Directors indicates when payment should be received (ie 3 working days prior to interment taking place). Amenities Committee to consider whether this should be amended together with an additional item needs to be added to the rules; the Clerk had produced a front sheet for any cemetery income which indicated whether deceased lived in the village at time of death or not and what the income was for.

Cllrs also discussed whether a fee recovery policy should be produced and the Clerk would look into drafting one for the next Finance Committee meeting.

The Clerk reported to Cllrs that PKF Littlejohn (Marden PC's external auditor) had contacted her with a couple of queries which included the VAT payment as mentioned above. The Clerk had responded and had returned an initialed copy of Section 2 of the AGAR but it was unclear whether the Chairman needed to sign. The Clerk was waiting for a response on this.

Cyber Insurance

Cllr Tippen read through the current Marden PC insurance policy but it was unclear if any cover was provided for cyber claims. The Clerk was asked to contact the insurer for more information, obtain a quote and to bring back to Finance Committee once information had been received.

Office/Cllr IT

The office staff were continuing to experience problems with the email system in that the storage allocated per email address was not sufficient. Cllr Tippen had raised whether Cllrs should also have their own PC email address. Cllr Stevens suggested the possibility of Microsoft 365 and Sharepoint and offered to speak to a colleague regarding this. Cllr Stevens would provide the clerk with the information and this would be reported back to all Cllrs.

Pear Technology

The Clerk, as mentioned at previous Parish Council meetings, that the plotting of the cemetery was now with Pear Technology. However, Pear Technology could provide a database which would be linked to the mapping which provided details of everything regarding the grave and would also have the option of adding photographs if required. There would be an additional cost of £425 plus VAT for this software. Cllrs discussed this and agreed that the Clerk should contact Pear Technology to proceed.

14/19 INVOICES

Electronic Payments

SSE: Final payment for electricity – toilets £22.21

SSE: Final payment for electricity – changing rooms £20.03

Citizens Advice: Outreach session – July £50.00

Staff: Salaries – August £4,627.64

P&P Signs: Play Scheme T-Shirts £111.90

Ben Ralph: Play Scheme DBS Check £25.00

Broxap: 2 benches for playing field £1,197.60

Viking: Supplies – toilets £43.15

KALC – Clerks Conference £72.00

Total: £6,169.53

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.15pm

Date: 15th October 2019
Signed:
Cllr Richard Adam
Chairman, Finance Committee

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