

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade on Tuesday 28 May 2019 commencing at 7.30 p.m.

Councillors present: Mr I Davies (Chairman), Mrs A Brindle, Mr V Davies, Mr P Dengate, Mr G Hayday, Mr B Hinder and Mrs W Hinder together with the Clerk Mrs P Bowdery.

1. Apologies and non-attendance

Apologies: Cllr Clarke.

2. Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying.

None received.

3. Minutes of the meeting of 12 March 2019

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed** and **signed** as a correct record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

4.1 Minute 3225/4.3 Long Term Investments Working Group. Further details will be forwarded to members prior to the meeting. Clerk was asked to provide an update. **Action: Clerk.**

4.2 Minute 3225/4.5 Cyber Crime. Amendments to be made to the agreed draft. **Action: Office**

4.3 Minute 3225/4.7 Upgrade to Fire Alarm and external installation of defibrillator box. The work has been completed, insurance cover is in place for the defibrillator and once a new battery has been installed the unit will be relocated outside and logged with SECAMB. **Noted.**

4.4 Any other matters arising from the minutes, but not on the agenda. **None.**

As no members of the public were present the meeting was not adjourned.

5. Financial report.

5.1 Reconciliation of accounts. The Chairman reported that, prior to the meeting, he had successfully undertaken a reconciliation of all the bank accounts. **Noted.**

5.2 Income/Expenditure report as at 31.03.19. **Received** and **noted**, members asked for clarification on some codes. **Action Clerk.**

5.3 Income/Expenditure report as at 17.05.19. **Received** and **noted**, members asked for clarification on code 4020/100. **Action Clerk.**

5.4 Petty cash reconciliation. The Chairman reported that, prior to the meeting, he had undertaken a reconciliation which identified more petty cash than there should have been. The Clerk was investigating and will report back to members. **Action Clerk.**

5.5 Investments Report. **Received** and **noted**. Members to decide at the July meeting whether to reinvest the two maturing Lloyds funds.

5.6 Cllr Huntingford's Internal Audit 21 May. **Received** and **noted**. Members asked that their thanks to Cllr Huntingford for undertaking the audit be minuted.

5.7 Beechen Hall Extension end of build expenditure report was **received** and **noted**. Members acknowledged that the £3,531 remaining in the budget was earmarked for landscaping, additional wall heaters and any further acoustic work that was required. **Noted.**

5.8 Confirmation was given that the first instalment of the Public Works Loan was paid on 01.04.19. **Noted.**

6. End of Year Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return was **received** and **noted**. An error in the asset sum listed at Section 2 (9) was identified. The Clerk was asked to update the sum and to check with the Internal Auditor that he was happy with the change. Subject to this amendment members **agreed** the RFO's recommendation that the End of Year Return be submitted to full council for adoption and signing. **Action: Clerk.**

7. **Earmarked Reserves**

The Clerk's report and recommendation on the Earmarked Reserves was **received, noted** and **agreed. Action: Clerk.**

8. **General Data Protection Regulation**

The Clerk's update on outstanding work and issues was **received** and **noted**. After discussion it was **agreed** to renew the Satswana Data Protection Officer Service for a further 12 months with a review in January 2020 as to whether a further renewal was considered necessary. **Action: office.**

9. **Changes to IT and website**

The report on outstanding work was **received** and **noted**. The parish office was currently drawing together the requirements list for a new website. **Action: parish office.**

10. **Insurance and Assets**

Members **received** and **noted** the update on the recent review of insurance cover, with CAS Ltd acting as the council's agent. The Beechen Hall and parish office policy ("Village Hall insurance") was being renewed as agreed with CAS, members' **approved** the review and renewal. Members **noted** that due to a change in the provider of the "Parish Council" cover, from Zurich to Royal and Sun Alliance, there is a delay in receiving the renewal premium however written confirmation that the parish council's cover would be extended until this was issued had been received. **Action: Clerk.**

The availability of Cyber and Crime insurance was noted. Cllr Dengate felt that the risk was small however it would not hurt to obtain details. **Action: Clerk.**

The Clerk notified members that the asset list had been reviewed. An error in one of the figures in the list was identified and would be changed. **Action: Clerk.**

11. **Bank Mandates**

Members **noted** that the work had been delayed allowing the changes to incorporate the details of the new Clerk. **Action: parish council.**

12. **Contingency Fund and Budget adjustments**

After discussion members **agreed** changes to budget code 4021/100 and 260 Telecommunications and IT to be changed to; IT General; IT subscription; and Telecom. When possible the website code to be moved to the same block of code numbers. The Clerk confirmed that unused codes are deleted from the system as soon as possible. **Action: office.**

Members **received** and **noted** the report on the recent threefold increase in the rates bill for Beechen Hall, including the parish office. The small increase in square footage of the hall, due to the extension, had resulted in this large reduction in Small Business Rates Relief owing to its tiered structure. The Clerk had investigated challenging the reassessment but saw no possibility of success. Members **agreed** the recalculation of the 2019/20 budget provision to reflect this with £4,767 being taken from reserves.

After discussion it was **agreed** that a briefing note on Charitable Incorporated Organisations would be presented to the Estates Committee in order that its members could consider whether to recommend to the parish council that the hall becomes a CIO. **Action: Office and Estates Committee.**

13. **Policies and Procedures: Reports and Reviews**

13.1 Health and Safety Policy Review. Due to pressure of work at the office this has been deferred until the next meeting. **Noted.**

13.2 Financial Regulations (committee review). Due to pressure of work at the office this has been deferred until the next meeting. **Noted.**

13.3 Direct Debits, Standing Orders and Bacs Transfers. It was **agreed** that this needed updating and would be deferred to the next meeting. It was **noted** that the Estates Committee proposal to accept card payments would require changes to the policy. **Action: office.**

13.4 Petty cash. The policy was reconfirmed. It was **noted** that the system for topping-up cash was reliant on the Clerk being happy to adopt the system. The new Clerk to be approached. **Action: office.**

14 **Grants**

Bearsted Parish Council donation for summer playscheme. After discussion Cllr Wendy Hinder seconded by Cllr Hayday proposed £250. **Agreed** with 2 abstentions. Members felt that as it was subsidising the playscheme it should be advertised in the parish, Bearsted PC to be approached about this. Members would also like to be informed, at the end of this summer's playscheme, how many Boxley Parish children had attended. **Action: office.**

15 **Matters for Information**

15.1 The new March 2019 Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England 2019 and the Summary of Changes is available on the KALC website or from the office. **Noted.**

15.2 2019 Parish Services Scheme breakdown. Clerk to check when first instalment due. **Action: Clerk.**

16 **Items for Next Agenda**

Councillors' reports and requests for items to be included on the agenda to be submitted no later than 1 July 2019. **Noted.**

17 **Date of Next Meeting**

Monday 15 July 2019 at Beechen Hall, Wildfell Close, Walderslade commencing at 7.30 p.m.

As there were no public or press present the Chairman did not move to exclude them but took the next item in confidential session.

18 **Personnel matters**

18.1 TOIL, training, leave and sickness cover. The Clerk reported that since the temporary increase in the Assistant Clerk's hours the amount of TOIL being generated had stopped.

The Chairman proposed a permanent increase in the Assistant Clerk's hours, from 25 to 35, **unanimously agreed.** Consequential adjustments to be made to the budget for this and for the result of a review of the compensation payable to the Assistant Clerk for additional responsibility and extra hours spent covering any lengthy absence of the Clerk. A new contract to be agreed with the Assistant Clerk and the Chairman to approve the wording for the additional absence cover payment. **Action: Clerk and Cllr Ivor Davies.**

The additional costs incurred will be borne in full by the F&GPC budget during the first year however during this period the Clerk/Asst Clerk will be required to monitor how much of the latter's time is taken up by Beechen Hall business as it was considered that the current allocation of 10 hours per week was too small. A report to be submitted in time for the setting of the 2020/21 draft budget. **Action: Clerk and Assistant Clerk.**

As it was 9.30pm the Chairman used his delegated powers to extend the meeting for a further 30 minutes.

18.2 Appointment to Clerk position. Members were informed that satisfactory references were awaited. The starting date of the new Clerk had yet to be agreed however members requested a handover period and the Clerk confirmed she would be willing to extend her leaving date to accommodate this.

The Clerk left the meeting whilst members received a report from the Chairman regarding the Clerk's gratuity and current balance of TOIL and annual leave. After discussion the Chairman proposed that the Clerk should receive her gratuity and be paid for any outstanding TOIL and annual leave on her departure. **Unanimously agreed. Action: office.**

Meeting closed at 21.46 p.m.
Signed as a correct record of the proceedings.

Chairman..... Date.....

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