

Minutes of the meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council Finance Committee held on 22nd April 2013 in Belbroughton Recreation Centre

Present: Councillors J Kitson, J Bradley, K Green, C Hine, T Jones, S MacDonald, P Shotton and C Scurrall.

In attendance : Katie Limm (Clerk). One member of the public also attended.

113/13 Apologies : Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Roberts.

114/13 Declarations of interest

Cllr Kitson declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the item relating to the Council's investments through Prosperity; the Council had granted a dispensation to enable him to take part in the discussions concerning these investments.

115/13 Minutes of the meeting on 18th March 2013

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

116/13 Bank reconciliations

The Clerk reported the current sums in the Council's two accounts - £11,624 in the General Account and £3,106 in the Allotments Fund Account. Just over £75,000 was available in the Scottish Widows short term notice account. It was agreed that the Committee should explore alternative short term notice accounts because the rate offered by Scottish Widows was reducing to 0.4% from July.

117/13 Accounts for Payment

Payments for April were agreed, including an overtime payment to the Clerk. The Committee suggested a future discussion about the Clerk's hours and working arrangements. The Council was willing in principle to increase the Clerk's formal working hours or to consider employing an assistant.

118/13 Annual Audit

The Clerk outlined the audit timetable. The internal auditor was reviewing the accounts on 10th May. The deadline for submission of the Annual Return to the external auditor was 1st July. The return would be on the agenda for approval at the June Council meeting.

119/13 Parish precept 2013/14

The District Council's decision in January to pay the parish grant provided by central government to parish councils had been reversed at a recent Council meeting. The District now proposed to defer the payment of the grant to 2014/15 to enable this to be taken into account when setting the 2014/15 precept. The Committee agreed that the Clerk should write to the local District Councillors and MP to express its concern about this illogical decision which amounted to theft of money intended for the parish.

120/13 Henderson Fund

Cllr Kitson explained that, in relation to the Council's current investment in the Henderson fund (formerly Gartmore), Prosperity (the Council's financial advisers) received an annual fee of ½% of the value of the investment to pay for ongoing advice about the fund. The funds were held by Skandia but if the Council moved the funds to Hargreaves Lansdowne the fee to Prosperity would no longer be paid and the Council would receive a 0.25% loyalty bonus of about £125 pa. The Committee agreed that there was no need for ongoing advice in relation to this investment and therefore to recommend to the Council that it should move this investment to Hargreaves Lansdowne. This was subject to the Clerk checking that Skandia would not make any charges for this transfer.

The Clerk was also asked to check that all the investments made via Prosperity were in the Council's name.

121/13 Community Payback Work

The footpath wardens had proposed two day's work at Hill Farm, Belbroughton and one day's work to clear the footway from Bradford House to the village in Belbroughton to be undertaken by the Community Payback Team. The cost was £150 per day. The Committee approved this work.

122/13 Parish Room Furniture and photocopier

Both Belbroughton Rec. and Fairfield Village Hall were interested in having some of the furniture and other items in the parish room. It was agreed that Fairfield Village Hall should have first claim on the tables since these would be an improvement on those available in the Barton Room. With this caveat it was agreed that the two organisations should be asked to get together and agree which items they would take. There would be no charge but they would need to arrange to move the items.

The Committee agreed that the Clerk should terminate the maintenance agreement on the Council's photocopier which was not now much used. The Council had bought the copier in 2005 for £1,400. The annual maintenance charge was about £200. It was agreed that the copier could be offered to Belbroughton Rec.

123/13 Financial Regulations

It was agreed that the Chair and Vice Chair of Finance and the Clerk would review the Council's Financial Regulations and report back to the Committee.

124/13 Maintenance work

- Corner of Woodhouse Orchard, Belbroughton - Clerk to ask the County Council to clear the vegetation growing over the footway
- Blocked drains in Wood Lane, Fairfield – Clerk to report again to WCC
- Footpath in Bell Heath (Munches Lane) overgrown and boggy- Clerk to ask footpath wardens to consider
- Notice board in Fairfield was not visible or accessible- Fairfield Councillors to consider alternative locations
- Lengthsman had reported fallen trees at Little Bell Hall Pool- maintenance already under consideration- and two herons found dead (shot) at the site. Clerk to mention the herons in the parish magazine

The Meeting closed at 9.15 pm.

Signed.....Chairman