

## **Minutes of the meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council Finance Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2012 in Fairfield School**

**Present:** Councillors J Kitson (*Chair*), K Green, C Hine, T Jones, S MacDonald and D Roberts.

In attendance : Katie Limm (Clerk).

### **117/12 Apologies**

Apologies were received and accepted from Councillors Bradley, Scurrell and Shotton.

### **118/12 Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared.

### **119/12 Minutes of the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved and were signed by the Chairman.

### **120/12 Electoral Review of Bromsgrove**

The proposal to reduce the number of Councillors for Bromsgrove District Council was discussed. The Committee had no comments on the appropriate number of District Councillors, but noted that the next stage of the review could have an impact on ward boundaries.

### **121/12 Bank reconciliations**

The reconciliation of the Council's two HSBC accounts was noted by the Committee.

### **122/12 Income and spending**

The Clerk had circulated the balance sheet and information about income and spending in 2011/12. Spending included all the items approved and in the pipeline for 2011/12, including the repair of the Top Road bus shelter, Hartle Lane shelter, tree work, and legal advice. So apart from street lighting there were no large items to come forward. The out-turn was an overall surplus of income over expenditure of about £2,500 provided that final bills were in line with expectations.

The balance sheet was reviewed and the Clerk was asked to revalue the Gartmore investment at 31 March 2013 and at each financial year end thereafter.

The Clerk was asked to provide a note of spending split between Belbroughton and Fairfield for the next Finance meeting.

### **123/12 Accounts for Payment**

Accounts for payment set out in a schedule circulated by the Clerk were approved.

### **124/12 Investments**

It had been agreed that the Finance Committee could make short term investments of up to £25,000 a time on a quarterly basis subject to sufficient funds being available to meet spending needs. The Committee considered whether the next scheduled investment in May would be possible in the light of the commitment to give £20,000 in Jubilee grants. The Committee reviewed funds available in the bank accounts (currently £38,000) and Scottish

Widows (currently £66,000) against commitments to end September (about £50,000) and concluded that a £25,000 investment in May could be made. The Clerk was asked to obtain the application form from Natwest and check the interest rate payable.

The Committee undertook a review of the Council's longer term investments. The Santander bond was due to mature in September 2012 and could then be considered for reinvestment.

Mark Pritchard of Prosperity had provided a report on the Council's investments with Gartmore and Investec. His advice continued to be that these were appropriate investments for the Council. The Gartmore investment of £50,000 made at 17.02.11 had a current value of £49,026.31 – a 1.95% reduction in value. It was noted that though the Gartmore investment value was below £50,000 this had been reduced by the initial set up charge of £1,500 and then affected by the recent turbulent market. The Committee agreed that the fund should be regarded as a long term investment- so no action at present. Cllr MacDonald pointed out that Prosperity's fee came out of the annual management charge for the fund so the Council should be aware of this when considering advice given.

The two £25,000 Investec 5 year plans were both indicated to have increased by 3.45% in value to £25,863.94, but this was not any indicator of likely returns. The critical factor was the level of the FTSE 100 index averaging over the last 6 months of the plan term (between 04.03.2015 and 04.09.2015) compared with the index at the time of the investment. No action in relation to this investment.

It was agreed to review the investments again in 6 months.

### **125/12 Annual Risk Assessment**

The Committee reviewed the completed risk assessment schedule circulated by the Clerk. It was agreed that the Council should consider adopting a complaints procedure and the Clerk was asked to circulate the CALC model for consideration. The current and new model financial regulations should be circulated for consideration by the Finance Committee.

The Clerk was also asked to include observation of safety procedures in relation to Council meetings in the risk assessment.

Subject to these points the assessment was recommended to the full Council for approval.

### **126/12 Maintenance items**

The Committee approved in principle the repair of the church green wall in Belbroughton but asked the Clerk to obtain another quote for the work.

The Clerk said that complaints had been received about the state of the path from Belbroughton Rec. to the school. She was making enquiries about the work required and responsibility for maintaining this footpath.

It was agreed that the meeting room hedge should be trimmed.

The Clerk was asked to find out if WCC would paint the railings at Dark Lane, Belbroughton.

**127/12 Contract re inspection of the meeting room**

The Council's insurers required weekly inspections of the meeting room in Hartle Lane after its closure at the end of April. The Committee agreed that Councillors would inspect the meeting room during May on a voluntary basis. James Callaghan should be asked to undertake these inspections from the beginning of June for a period of six months on a contract for services basis. The continuing need for this inspection could then be reviewed.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm.

Signed.....Chairman