

## **Minutes of the meeting of Belbroughton Parish Council Finance Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013 in Fairfield Village Hall**

**Present:** Councillors J Kitson, J Bradley, K Green, C Hine, T Jones, D Roberts, P Shotton and C Scurrall.

In attendance : Katie Limm (Clerk).

**045/13 Apologies :** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr MacDonald.

**046/13 Declarations of interest:** No interests were declared.

### **047/13 Minutes of the meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2013**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

### **048/13 Bank reconciliations**

The bank reconciliations for the Council's two accounts were noted.

### **049/13 Accounts for Payment**

Payments for February were agreed.

### **050/13 Letting the Parish Council Meeting Room**

The Committee considered the evaluations received from 3 local valuers about letting the meeting room. The Committee agreed to instruct Walton and Hipkiss to handle the letting. The need for an Energy Performance Certificate should be queried, but if needed the agent should be asked to obtain one. The length of a potential lease had not been decided by the Council but 3 to 5 years was the kind of timescale envisaged. Details to be decided when the Council had information about interested parties and their proposals for the room.

### **051/13 Investment with Natwest**

One of the Council's one year investments of £25,000 with Natwest was maturing on 25<sup>th</sup> February. The Committee reviewed the Council's current cash flow position and concluded that it would allow reinvestment of the £25,000 in another one year product. Cllr Kiston said that one year investments paying 2% were available with both Nationwide and Santander. It was agreed that the funds should be reinvested whichever provided the more straightforward application process.

### **052/13 Footpath Work**

The Committee considered whether to part fund tarmac for part of the track from the side of the cricket ground in Belbroughton to the road- a length of about 15-20 yards. The total cost was around £2,500 but County Councillor Ed Moore had indicated that he might be able to provide £1,000-£1,500 from his local funds.

The Committee discussed the value of this proposal. There was pavement on the opposite side of the road which would provide a continuation of the path towards the village. However, there was already safe access to the cricket club and this new stretch of tarmac would only need to be used if a pedestrian was walking to the footpath beyond the Cricket Ground. The Committee was not convinced that this project should take priority for additional spending this financial year and wanted to assess it against other areas that might need attention. It was agreed not to fund this item at the moment but to consider it again alongside projects for 2013/14.

### **053/13 Risk Assessment**

The Clerk tabled a draft risk assessment schedule. This still needed more work and it was agreed that it should be developed further by Cllrs Bradley, Roberts and the Clerk and then brought back to the Committee for consideration.

**054/13 Grass Cutting and gardening work**

The Committee agreed to the continuation of the grass cutting contract for 2013/14 season with Keith Basketfield. The price would increase by 3% for the new season. The Clerk was asked to remind the contractor about the need to collect grass cuttings when cutting the smaller areas of grass and to avoid damaging tree trunks and roots with his strimmer. The Committee agreed to the use of some moss killer on the grass at the area by the Church in Belbroughton.

In relation to gardening work, it was agreed to use James Callaghan again in Belbroughton on the same terms as last year. If the Fairfield gardener was no longer available, James Callaghan should be asked to garden in Fairfield also.

**055/13 Internal Audit**

The Committee reviewed the Council's internal audit arrangements and confirmed that these were appropriate. The appointment of John Benner as the Council's internal auditor for the 2012/13 accounts was confirmed. The Committee discussed whether it would be desirable in principle to seek a new internal auditor but concluded that Mr Benner's experience, including his knowledge of Quickbooks, was invaluable. It also noted that there would be new external auditors for the Council's accounts this year.

**056/13 Maintenance work**

Cllr Green asked for the lengthsman to side out the path on the Stourbridge Road in Fairfield from the church wall to the mini-island.

Clerk asked to chase WCC about the cracked manhole cover by the Queens in Belbroughton- Cllr Bradley to check first that it had not been mended.

Cllr Kitson said that he had found someone who might be able to store grit and refill the bins for the Council. Item for discussion in good time for the next winter season.

The Meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

Signed.....Chairman