

Finance and Staffing Committee

Meeting held 7:30pm

Thursday 16th June 2016

Catshill Village Hall, Golden Cross Lane, Catshill

- Members present** Cllrs – P Baker (Chairman), J Bate, P Callaway, B McEldowney, O Sweeting
- In attendance** Clerk - Rebekah Powell, Cllr M Knight
1. **Election of Chair and Vice Chair** This Agenda item was deferred until the Full Parish Council in June along with the election of Chairs and Vice Chairs for all other Committees
 2. **Apologies for Absence** Apologies had been received from Cllr M Shepherd
 3. **Declarations of Interest** None
 4. **Dispensations** Cllrs J Bate and O Sweeting have current dispensations in place in relation to the Village Hall due to their involvement with the Management Committee. The dispensations allow both Councillors to stay and participate with discussions related to the Village Hall as relevant to Agenda Item 8.
 5. **Public Questions** No members of the public were present. Cllr M Knight was present and informed the Committee he was interested in Agenda Item 8 relating to the Village Hall. Cllr Knight was granted permission by the Committee to ask any questions he felt hadn't been answered during the discussion of the item at that point in the meeting to prevent repetition.
 6. **Exclusion of the Public** There was no need to exclude the public at this point in the meeting. The meeting re-opened to consider the points below
 7. **Minutes of previous meeting** The minutes of the meeting held 18/02/16 were approved as an accurate record and signed.
Members took this opportunity to request an update in relation to some of the matters arising within the minutes. The Clerk confirmed that:
 - The salary relating to the Assistant Clerk had been researched and provided in line with NALC recommendations
 - The Account Scrutiny had been performed by Cllr S Boxall-Southall for three of the quarters of 2015/16. As per Agenda Item 14 below, two new Members needed to be appointed to carry this out now that Cllr S Boxall-Southall had resigned from the Council
 - The Clerk had referred the request for Lengthsman duties to the Environment and Highways Committee and the decision had been made to go to Tender next year and to inform the applicant as such
 - Lone Worker system was to be discussed during the Clerk's report at a later point in this meeting
 - Cllr P Baker had not yet completed the amendments to the Internet

and Email Acceptable Use policy but would do so in liaison with the Clerk

8. **To consider the future of the Village Hall as per the Extra-Ordinary Management meeting held 23/05/16 and whether the Parish Council can assist (Cllr J Bate)**
- Minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Management meeting had been circulated to Members. Cllr J Bate and O Sweeting lead a discussion relating to the possibility of the Parish Council employing one/two people on behalf of the Village Hall following the resignation of their Village Hall Manager. The Village Hall is a charity and as such cannot employ people but also due to the setup of the Village Hall and Management Committee it was not deemed that this was something they could take on due to implications with systems and the need for organisation of NI, PAYE, Pension etc. It was felt that the Parish Council was better equipped to assist with this, due to already employing 3 people. It was noted that the Trustees wish to remain as active as possible and that the request was not for the Parish Council to take over the Management of the hall but to assist with the employment of staff. It was also noted that the revenue from the Village Hall could at present cover the salaries of the two roles with a review suggested at a later date to see if this continued to be viable. It was also noted that the Clerk had sought advice from CALC and that other Parish Councils were involved in their Village Halls in various ways. Richard Levett at CALC had also offered to research the implications for the Council if he was informed of any decisions made. Cllr O Sweeting had brought relevant paperwork to the meeting and following an in-depth discussion both he and Cllr J Bate were also able to cover all questions asked by Cllr M Knight.
- It was agreed** that the Finance and Staffing Committee would recommend to the Full Parish Council that they accept in principle the suggestion that the Parish Council employ one/two people to take on the role of Hall Manager/Cleaner providing the Village Hall pay the costs.
- It was agreed** the Village Hall Committee would provide further information in the form of job descriptions and suggested hours of work required.
- Cllr M Knight left the meeting here at 20:24hrs
9. **Clerk's report to include:**
- 9.1 Progress with request for Annual Report from CAB Bromsgrove and Redditch in relation to their request for Grant funding**
- A letter had been sent to the Treasurer to request the Annual Report as agreed at FPC due to telephone attempts failing. Unfortunately, the Clerk could provide no further update as nothing had been received to this point.
- 9.2 Review of Financial Regulations Policy in line with the updated version received by CALC/NALC**
- Members had been provided with a document by the Clerk outlining the suggested changes to the Financial Regulations according to NALC's model. Members discussed the changes.
- It was agreed** the reference to the Clerk countersigning cheques should be removed as an option
- It was agreed** to incorporate the suggestions into the Council's Financial Regulations
- 9.3 Investigations regarding the Motoring Insurance element of the Council's Insurance Policy**
- The Clerk informed the Committee that following the advice received it had been suggested that not all companies would cover for 'Business use' although the Clerk had changed her car insurance to this option. The Council could make the decision to not include the clause relating to

Motoring Insurance in the policy with the Insurance Company but it had been recommended that the clause remain in the Council's policy for review each year to show that there is an ongoing assessment of risk. The Clerk also informed the Committee that Zurich had stated that they can provide an extension to the policy to cover No Claims Bonus. This would allow cover for Council Members to drive around on company business in their own cars and have a crash and the line would protect their personal no claims; it would not however, cover volunteers. The additional premium for no claims discount protection cover for 16 people is £214.82 inclusive of tax. This works out at approximately £13.43 per person. Members discussed the option at length and the implications of using a car for business use.

It was agreed that Cllr O Sweeting would seek clarification as to the definition of using a car for 'business use' in relation to the Parish Council meetings.

It was agreed that if employees did not currently have this cover in relation to their car then the Council would provide it. If they already had this cover in place, then the Council would not provide it.

It was agreed that the Clerk would ask each of the employees. The Clerk noted that she would not be claiming this via the Council.

It was agreed that once investigations had been made by Cllr Sweeting as above, Cllrs would be informed of the option of this cover via the Council. It was suggested that Cllrs could pay £14.00 to cover the cost should they wish to take advantage of the offer.

9.4 Lone worker System in relation to currently employed staff

The Clerk informed the Committee that the Litter Picker did not wish to be part of the Lone Worker system but that the Assistant Clerk would like to join. Following the purchase of a mobile for the Assistant Clerk to be actioned by the Clerk, the company who provide the Lone Worker support had informed the Clerk it would be a £2-3 rise in payment per week resulting in an increase from £132.92 to £289.12 per year.

10. **Review of the Policy Review Calendar and list of policies, to include discussions relating to management of policies, how policies are reviewed and dates for review.**

A list of policies and a review Calendar had been circulated. Members engaged in discussion regarding the process of reviewing policies.

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate all policies for review prior to a meeting and Members would provide any comments at this time. The process in the meeting would then be quicker as Members will agree any suggestions.

It was agreed that the Clerk would make the decision if more in-depth review was needed and therefore the policies would be printed and discussed during the meeting.

Members to also consider during this discussion further action in relation to:

10.1 Consideration of changing the title of the Press and Media policy and including further information regarding Communications within the document

The Clerk informed the Committee that there is opportunity to add to the policy the procedure the Council go through when parishioners make contact, but also how the Council will deal with any unsatisfactory communications should they arise ie: abuse.

It was agreed that this item would be deferred to the next meeting and that Cllr P Baker and the Clerk produce a section for consideration.

10.2 The creation of a 'Council Terms of Reference' Policy

The Clerk informed the Committee that a document such as this would provide a succinct overview of the Council. Some Members felt that the Standing Orders could be sufficient.

It was agreed to defer discussion of this item until the next meeting.

It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate if other Council's had Council Terms of Reference and would also review the Standing Orders in relation to this.

10.3 Corporate Strategy; Community Engagement – Further collaboration and research needed to complete the document.

The Clerk informed the Council that there was a document relating to this that had been drafted by Cllr P Baker some years ago and that therefore needed review, updating and adoption if this was thought necessary. This was a suggested requirement for larger Council's but could also be adopted for smaller ones.

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

It was agreed that the Clerk would investigate if other Parish Councils had these policies and provide examples to Members

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the current draft for consideration by the Committee

11. To establish clarification within the Balances and Reserves Policy in relation to headings and breakdown of monies

The Clerk informed Members that she felt the document was confusing following her completion of the Annual Audit and Annual Return documentation. The Clerk's opinion was that the headings needed revising and the content of especially the 'Exceptional Expenditure Reserve' section needed reviewing.

Members discussed the headings and the reasoning behind them.

It was agreed that the heading of 'Exceptional Expenditure Reserves' should be altered to read 'Emergency Reserves' and that the content be altered to reflect the norm for the fund as 50% of the precept, currently around £20,000.

Members discussed ways of deciding projects to spend reserves on.

It was agreed to add it as an item in the next newsletter for Parishioner input

It was agreed to ask other Council Members for ideas by way of the Full Parish Council

The Clerk requested some support in reviewing the Finances in relation to the Policy.

It was agreed that Cllr O Sweeting would provide this support

12. Items to note:

12.1 The end of year Accounts and Annual Return Information as submitted to Grant Thornton

Members reviewed the document. It was noted that there was a typing error on the first page in relation to the unrepresented cheques.

It was agreed that the Clerk would inform Grant Thornton of the error.

12.2 Completed Risk Review Log

This had been updated by the Clerk on 3rd May and as it was a working document some of the items had already been completed. It was noted that there was no reference to cover for the Clerk should the role be subject to prolonged sick leave or holiday. Previously this had been dealt with by the Clerk organising cover using another Bromsgrove based Clerk. It was also suggested if there was a long term issue the assistance would

be requested from CALC. The Clerk noted the suggestion that had been made previously of creating a pool of Clerk's who could provide cover. It was also noted that the Assistant Clerk would eventually be in a position to cover if necessary.

It was agreed that this was a risk that needed adding to either this or the risk management document.

12.3 Precept comparison for 2016

It was noted that the Council are still the lowest band D precept and 9 out of the 19 Councils have a higher overall precept than Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council. It was also noted that although the precept had been raised, the amount of band D properties had increased which had lowered the impact.

13. **To consider a more in-depth review of risk management procedures surrounding the bonfire event**
- The Clerk informed the Committee that following the Audit she felt that a more in-depth review of the whole process of the Bonfire Event was needed, both generally and financially. Although the Parish Council assist the Scouts with the Event, there is still a need to ensure that the Council are aware that all risks are covered. The Members noted that this was now a very busy event. It was noted that Cllr B McEldowney was already named as Lead Councillor on the event but that more assistance would be needed. **It was agreed** that this would be added as an Agenda Item at the next FPC to appoint further Councillors to take the lead. **It was agreed** that a joint review should be carried out with all involved including the NWWA and the Scouts. **It was agreed** that the Clerk would review the current Insurance to ensure they were aware of the event/appropriate cover was in place.
14. **To appoint two Councillors who are non-signatories to become Members of the Internal Audit Working Party and carry out the quarterly account scrutiny**
- It was agreed** that Cllrs T Gillespie and P Callaway would take on this role.
15. **Confidential Business**
- It was resolved** to close the meeting to the public in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 s1(2), due to the confidential nature of the business transacted.
16. **To note the new pay scales for 2016-17 to be implemented immediately and back dated to 1st April**
- The back dated pay increase was noted and in addition, the fact that the salaries would continue to remain within budget despite this.

17. **To discuss Clerk overtime** It was agreed to pay the Clerk's overtime and that a review of contracted hours should be carried out in October with the appraisal
18. **Date and time of next meeting** Currently scheduled as 13/10/16 at 7:30pm, however, the Clerk will liaise with the Chairman of the Council and the Chair of the Finance and Staffing Committee in relation to the scheduling of a meeting prior to this time. This will include extensive policy review and any relevant document relating to the Village Hall.

**This meeting ended at
22.04 hrs**

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Chairman, Finance Committee
Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council

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