

Finance and Staffing Committee

Meeting held 7:30pm

Thursday 14th February 2019

Catshill Village Hall, Golden Cross Lane, Catshill

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| Members present | Cllrs – P Baker (Chairman), J Bate, B McEldowney, M Shepherd and O Sweeting |
| In attendance | Clerk - Rebekah Powell |
| 1. Apologies for Absence | Cllr T Gillespie |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | None were made |
| 3. To consider Members written requests for Dispensation | None received. |
| 4. Public Questions | No Members of the public were present |
| 5. Re-opening the meeting | The meeting re-opened to consider the points below |
| 6. Minutes of previous meeting | The minutes of the meeting held 15/11/18 were approved as an accurate record and signed. There were no matters arising.
It was noted that Cllr Baker and the Clerk had outstanding GDPR documents to create – Data breach policy, Document retention policy and Confidentiality agreement regarding the website |
| 7. Clerks report to include: | <p>7.1 Pockit Account update – introduction of monthly 99p charge for services
It was noted that from March 2019 Pockit would be introducing a 99p monthly membership fee to all accounts. This was to cover a service that included items that the Council did not benefit from, however the Clerk explained the benefits of having this card to make purchases rather than the Clerk claiming expenses.
It was agreed to pay the 99p per month charge and continue using the card.</p> <p>7.2 Unity Trust Change of address
Members noted the change of address of Unity Trust bank as provided by the Clerk
In addition, the Clerk outlined charges that were now being made for paying in cash to the account. It had been introduced in September 2018 and applied to all accounts unless the turnover is less than 100k per annum and you pay in less than £1500 cash or cheques per month. This would not normally affect the Council, apart from when paying in the Bonfire takings. This year the Council had banked £5084.65 worth of cash and therefore for the previous quarter, a charge of £25.50 would be made to the Parish Council's account as</p> |

the charge was 0.50p per £100 or part thereof.

Members discussed this and it was noted that a recent review of the Council's bank accounts had led to the decision that Unity provided the best service. It is a good account for Parish Councils.

7.3 CiLCA progress

The Clerk was progressing well with the qualification that was being funded by the Parish Council and had almost completed Unit 1 of 4. Some units would be harder and take longer than others but the Clerk had until October to complete it.

8. **To review the following policies and documents (documents circulated)**

8.1 Investment policy

It was agreed to endorse this policy as presented

8.2 Freedom of Information Policy

It was noted that the link to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) website in the policy had changed and should be amended accordingly. Similarly, that the contact details should all be checked.

It was agreed that the Clerk would check the definition of 'working days' with the ICO as to whether this was normal working days or the Clerk's part time hours.

It was agreed the Clerk would cross reference the document with guidance in relation to GDPR and the amount of days that are provided for response.

It was agreed to endorse the policy once these changes had been made.

8.3 Internet, Email, recording and Social Media policy

Minor amendments that were needed were noted.

It was agreed that the Clerk would look into the use of a cloud based system to send documents over 5MB

It was noted that the Parish Council needed to purchase a Dictaphone or recording device to enable recordings of meetings if needed.

It was agreed to endorse this policy following these changes.

8.4 Financial Regulations and Financial Controls

It was agreed to endorse this policy as presented

8.5 Publication Scheme

It was agreed to endorse this document as presented

9. **To agree and adopt the new model Standing Orders as issued by NALC**

Members reviewed the amendments and additions to the document

It was agreed that the Clerk would let Councillors know of their ability to provide a substitute to meetings if needed as per the document

It was agreed to adopt the Standing Orders as presented.

10. **To consider the recommendation for the Lengthsman role following selection process**

Members considered the representation made to them by Cllr Knight, Cllr Sweeting and the Clerk. A report had been circulated by the Clerk that detailed the information considered of the two applications received.

The applicant that was recommended had the relevant valid qualification, had been instrumental in setting up the Lengthsman Scheme originally, had years of prior experience and a sound working knowledge of the Parish. It was noted that the recommended Lengthsman contracted some services to his son.

It was agreed that the Committee would recommend Mr Allen Farnsworth as the successful candidate for the position of Lengthsman to the Full Parish Council.

11. **To discuss next steps following the achievement of Foundation Award in the Local Council Award Scheme** Members discussed this in detail.
It was agreed to publicise the achievements in the Parish Council Newsmagazine, including details of the work that has been carried out.
It was agreed to place an advert in the Advertiser and possibly with radio Hereford and Worcester at the same time, during the second week in March and prior to Purdah.
The Clerk would also advertise in the notice boards and online.
12. **To consider the Parish Council's position in relation to the future of Catshill Library and the possibility of providing funding from 2020** Cllr McEldowney reported on a meeting he had attended which had included 3 representatives from WCC. It was noted that the amount of money that County Council had to save had now been reduced. Libraries had been ranked from high to low using various criteria. The lowest ranked would be the most vulnerable of closure, which is where Catshill Library is positioned, being made more vulnerable due to its locality near Parkside. Cllr McEldowney had requested breakdown of footfall within the library and catchment area which had now been provided. It was noted that Catshill library cost £2000 to run and £12000 of staff salaries. It was requested if BDC could assist but this was not likely; there had been no commitment to do so. County Cllr Webb had offered funding towards the provision. It was an option that the library could be run by volunteers. Discussions had been made about relocation of the library but options were limited, also the cost implications meant there was a preference to remain in the current situation. The lack of signage, aesthetics of the building, lack of car parking were all discussed. It was noted that Catshill Middle School use the library.
It was agreed that a Member of the Committee would talk to current volunteers at the library for their opinions
It was agreed that a Member of the Committee would talk to the school about their involvement
It was agreed that an article about the library be added to the next News Magazine
It was agreed that the Committee would recommend to the Full Parish Council that partial funding be offered for a year on a trial basis and during this term, the Parish Council would assist with advertising the library.
13. **To agree funding for this years Fireworks display** It was noted that last year the display had cost £2750 and with a 10% increase this would now be £3025. Confirmation of pricing for this year was awaited.
It was agreed that a decision be deferred until a clarification could be made about provision for money and length of show.
14. **To agree a revised date for the Risk Assessment meeting** **It was agreed** to meet at 10:30am on Monday 4th March

15. **To resolve 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 to be transacted** **It was agreed** to close the meeting to the public
16. **To consider and agree the salaries in relation to the new NALC Pay scales 2019-20 and the new National Living Wage, both applicable from 1st April 2019** The new National Living Wage of £8.21 per hour and its effect was noted. **It was agreed** to continue to adhere to the NALC's Pay Scales 2019-20 and the revised spine points **It was agreed**, subject to a successful appraisal, that the Assistant Clerk be moved up a spine point from April 1st 2019, as per his contract It was noted that the Clerk would receive the cost of living increase from April 1st 2019 but would be unable to move up a spine point due to being at the top of the banding. **It was agreed** that a review of the Clerks role would be carried out to establish if the correct pay band was being applied

**The meeting ended
at 21:38pm**

Chairman, Finance and Staffing Committee
Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council