

Minutes of the meeting of the Belbroughton Parish Council Finance Committee held in the Meeting Room Belbroughton on Monday 23rd May 2011

Present: Cllrs J Bradley, K Green, C Hine, T Jones, J Kitson (Chair), S MacDonald, D Roberts, P Shotton and C Scurrrell.

In attendance: Mrs C Limm, Clerk.

161/11 Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Finance Committee

Cllr Kitson was elected to chair the Committee. Cllr Scurrrell was elected as Vice Chairman.

162/1 Apologies

No apologies were received.

163/11 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared on this occasion.

164/11 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting on 18th April were agreed and the Minute book signed by the Chairman.

165/11 Bank reconciliations

The bank reconciliations for the Council's two accounts were noted by the Committee and signed by the Chairman.

166/11 Accounts for Payment

The Clerk circulated a schedule of accounts for payment. The payments were approved by the Committee.

167/11 Insurance

The Clerk had circulated a note comparing the cover offered by two insurance providers- the Council's current insurer, Allianz, and Aviva. The Committee agreed that the Council's insurance for 2011/12 should be taken out with Aviva and that the Council should sign up to the offer of a three year contract with 16 months for the cost of 12 in the first year. This would shift the insurance renewal date to October.

168/11 2010/11 Accounts

Cllr Kitson highlighted the key points from the Council's balance sheet for 31 March 2011 and the final income and expenditure figures from 2010/11 Accounts. The 'profit' of just over £10,000 was noted, but this was reduced to about £4,500 when outstanding commitments (grants to parish bodies and new equipment at Fairfield Rec.) were taken into account. Cllr Bradley made the point that a profit on 'Other' income and spending was necessary if the Council wanted to maintain the real value of its capital fund.

The Committee noted that the Council had continued to pay for annual safety inspections of the play equipment at Belbroughton Recreation Ground. It was agreed that it would be preferable for the responsibility for the inspections to lie with the Rec. Committee in line with responsibility for ensuring the safety of the equipment. The Clerk was asked to write to the Rec. Committee accordingly.

In relation to the Balance Sheet, it was agreed that the entry for 'Ram Alley' should be changed to 'Dark Lane'. The Committee also noted that it would be important to ensure that the asset register reflected insurance values for Parish Council property since the new insurance policy with Aviva would rely on the asset register for confirmation of values.

The Clerk reported on the main areas covered by the internal auditor in his recent year-end audit. One issue identified was that Central Networks owed the Council several years' worth of Wayleaves payments. The clerk would be pursuing this. Two low value bad debts dating back several years had also been identified totalling £91.00. The Committee agreed that these should be written off.

169/11 Grants for 2011/12

The Committee agreed to set up a working group as in previous years to review grant applications for the current year and to report to the June Finance Committee meeting. Cllrs Kitson, Bradley, Green and Scurrrell were nominated to join the group. A meeting was arranged for Monday 13th June at 7.30 pm in the meeting room.

170/11 Maintenance work

The Clerk suggested that the Council should consider employing a part time gardener for Parish Council green spaces. Attempts to have green spaces looked after by volunteers had not generally worked very well. Work tended to be done intermittently and the result was general untidiness and the need for expensive one-off payments to have areas cleared. The Committee endorsed this proposal in principle and suggested that a contract for 6 and 4 hours per month in Belbroughton and Fairfield respectively from spring to October would be appropriate. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries about potential gardeners and their charges.

Cllr Kitson mentioned an overhanging hedge and overgrown footpath in Holy Cross Lane. The Council's standard letter could be given to the adjoining landowner re the hedge; it was agreed that the lengthsman should be asked to clear the footpath after the resurfacing work had been done by the County Council.

Cllr MacDonald mentioned that a useful meeting had been held with the County liaison engineer about the planned road works in Belbroughton. Some items discussed might require funding from the Parish Council. A full report would be made to the June Council meeting.

171/11 PACT Meeting

The Committee agreed to fund the village hall hire costs for a PACT meeting in Fairfield

172/11 Any other Finance business

Items for future discussion were suggested as follows:

Cllr MacDonald - the value of working out an inflation rate for Parish Council spending to inform decisions about the precept and investments; the adoption of a 'stop-loss' provision for the Gartmore investment; the Council's policy re hiring the meeting room during the Scarecrow weekend.

Cllr Scurrrell - the purchase of a new Christmas tree for Fairfield village hall.

The Clerk reported on the drafting of the new lease with Fairfield Villa Football Club. She would keep the Council informed.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.

Signed.....Chairman