

## Finance and Staffing Committee

Meeting held 7:30pm

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Catshill Village Hall, Golden Cross Lane, Catshill

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| <b>Members present</b>  | Cllrs – P Baker (Chairman), T Gillespie (Vice Chair), J Bate, M Shephard, O Sweeting  |
| <b>In attendance</b>  | Clerk - Rebekah Powell  |
| 1. <b>Apologies for Absence</b>                                 | Cllr B McEldowney   |
| 2. <b>Declarations of Interest</b>                              | None  |
| 3. <b>To consider Members written requests for Dispensation</b> | None received   |
| 4. <b>Public Questions</b>                                      | No questions were received  |
| 5. <b>Re-opening the meeting</b>                                | The meeting re-opened to consider the points below  |
| 6. <b>Minutes of previous meeting</b>                           | The minutes of the meeting held 12/01/17 were approved as an accurate record and signed. There were no matters arising.   |
| 7. <b>Clerks Report to include:</b>                             | <p><b>7.1 Agreed sharing of office hours between Clerk and Assistant Clerk</b><br/>The Clerk and Assistant Clerk had engaged in discussion regarding the working space and opening times of the office. The Clerk would now man the office on a Monday and the Assistant Clerk on a Tuesday. When needed, they would meet on a Tuesday for any training or to go through any issues. In addition the Assistant Clerk would man the office on a Monday and Tuesday throughout the school holidays to allow more flexibility for the Clerk in relation to childcare during this time. This had been agreed by Cllrs O Sweeting and P Baker.</p> <p><b>7.2 Investigations into the need for PAT testing of Parish Council equipment</b><br/>The Clerk had been advised that PAT testing is not needed for items of equipment solely for the use of the Parish Council. However, for those items that could potentially be used by Members of the Public or come into contact with them then it is advisable eg: Christmas Lights, projector<br/><b>It was agreed</b> that the PAT testing needed would be included the next time the Village Hall's was carried out and that the cost would be shared.</p> <p><b>7.3 Further Pension Update</b><br/>The Clerk had received confirmation that the LGPS can be used for automatic enrolment. In addition, the Clerk was in possession of the most recent new starter forms should anyone wish to partake of this. The information needed</p> |

to be able to complete the declaration of compliance had been received and this document must be completed by August this year or as soon as possible.

#### **7.4 To note the completion of the updated policy folder**

The Clerk had spent time that month reviewing and updating all policies where needed ensuring they were all in line with when they had been reviewed by the Council. The documents were now in a specific folder on the hard drive but also printed in hard copy form and available in a folder in the office. The plan was to keep this up to date as each policy was reviewed. It was requested that the Clerk create an amendment log in addition to noting it on the policies.

**Items carried forward:** Research regarding Corporate Strategy: Community Engagement document; Addition of Item to Media Policy (Communications Policy) in relation to procedure following possible unsatisfactory contact from Parishioners (Clerk and Cllr Baker); creation of a Document Retention policy (Clerk and Cllr Baker); Insurance Company Investigations

8. **To appoint a Councillor to the Internal Audit Working Party to assist Cllr Gillespie with the quarterly account scrutiny.**

It was noted that as per the Financial Regulations (2.2) and Financial Controls (14) this may not be the Chairman or a cheque signatory.  
**It was agreed** to appoint Cllr J Bate to the role.
9. **To agree to amend the Balances and Reserves Policy to reflect a higher percentage of Precept to be kept as Emergency Reserve due to consideration of potential asset gains**

Members discussed the policy and the two charities within the Parish that it was deemed could be in need of assistance in the near future from the Parish Council.  
**It was agreed** to alter the Balances and Reserves policy to reflect the Emergency Reserve as 75% of the current precept.
10. **To receive an end of year Finance report for 2016/17 and review all documentation prepared by the RFO for submission to Grant Thornton for Audit, including discussion and agreement in relation to the division of reserves for recommendation to Full Parish Council**

The Clerk discussed the document that had been produced and circulated to Members, in particular the breakdown of reserves of both a Specific and Emergency nature.  
**It was agreed** to accept the document and its contents as presented and this could now be sent to Grant Thornton.  
Cllr Baker thanked the Clerk for the hard work involved in the report which had been a complex matter.

11. **To review the following policies and documents:**
- 11.1 Employee Appraisal Policy (amended version as provided for review by Cllr Baker as per Finance and Staffing Committee 17/01-10.1)**  
 This item was deferred to the next meeting with an apology for it taking time to produce.
- 11.2 Grievance Policy**  
 It was noted that any reference to Personnel Committee should actually be Finance and Staffing Committee. Other than a few minor alterations to the word 'should' in section 3.2 and a few capital letters, no further change was needed.  
**It was agreed** to accept this policy subject to these alterations.
- 11.3 Internet, Email, Recording and Social Media Policy**  
 Members discussed this policy, in particular in relation to the recording of meetings. It was suggested that the Council add a line to the policy similar to '4.2 The Council requests that the person recording the meeting provides details of where the media will be stored'. Members were also concerned about the extent of recordings and for what reason. It was noted that evidence such as this could now be easily altered to reflect badly and that, once online, these things could not easily be removed.  
**It was agreed** that due to these concerns approval should be deferred and that more information as to the extent of the origin and content of the policy should be presented at the next meeting.
- 11.4 Code of Conduct**  
 It was agreed to endorse this policy as it stands
- 11.5 Risk Review Log**  
 Members had a query about the level of indemnity available to Councillors but once the Clerk had answered this **it was agreed** to endorse the policy as it stands.
12. **To receive a report from Cllr P Baker regarding relevant Savings Account options for the deposit of the Emergency Fund for the Parish Council, as currently held by the Co-op Bank as per Full Parish Council 17/04-13.4**
- Documents had been circulated to Members for review prior to the meeting. Following research, Cllr Baker recommended that the Parish Council invest with the Beverly Building Society at an interest rate of 0.25% for balances over £1000 and easy access to money within the account without penalties.  
**It was agreed** to invest with the Beverly Building Society  
**It was agreed** to access the online account for this purpose  
**It was agreed** that £31,760 be invested as per the newly amended Balances and Reserves policy, showing the Emergency Reserve at 75% of the current precept to be this amount.

13. **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 resolved to close the meeting to the public at this point.
14. **To note investigations into the impact of the rise in the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage for the Parish Council** The Clerk reported that as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 the National Minimum Wage and National Living Wage were £7.50. It was noted that this had no impact on the Parish Council and their current wage bill.
15. **To discuss employee salaries** **It was agreed** to provide an incremental rise in salary for the Clerk following a successful appraisal, as per the Clerk's contract. The Assistant Clerk would be due this following a successful probation review in July. It was noted that both the Clerk and Assistant Clerk had also received a small inter spinal column rise as per the NALC and SLCC Salary Scales 2016-2018. This would be back dated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017.
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- This meeting ended at 20.54 hours** Chairman, Finance Committee  
Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council