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| Members present | Cllrs – P Baker (Chairman), T Gillespie (Vice Chair), J Bate, M Shephard |
| In attendance | Clerk - Rebekah Powell |
| 1. Apologies for Absence | Cllr B McEldowney, Cllr O Sweeting |
| 2. Declarations of Interest | None |
| 3. To consider Members written requests for Dispensation | None received |
| 4. Public Questions | No questions were received |
| 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 11/05/17 were approved as an accurate record and signed. There were no matters arising. |
| 7. Clerks Report to include: | <p>7.1 Letter sent to Co-operative Bank and progress with savings account
A letter had been sent to the Co-op Bank signed by all the signatories to instruct the addition of the Clerks name for administration of the Business Account. This would then allow the Clerk to move the money that had been allocated for saving to the main Unity Trust account before opening the Beverly Building Society Account as previously agreed.</p> <p>7.2 Suggested course of action regarding the Council Bank Account
The Clerk had looked further into the account that had been agreed as the new main Parish Council banking account, Natwest Community Bank, and had established that it was not compatible with the needs of the Council. The Clerk suggested that although Unity Trust had introduced a quarterly service charge and withdrawn the Alto Card, it was an excellent bank for the Council's needs. The Clerk's recommendation was that the Council remain with Unity Trust Bank for their main banking needs
It was agreed that the Council would remain with Unity Trust Bank.</p> <p>7.3 Information regarding the new Data Protection Policy May 2018
The Clerk had intended to provide a report on the changes the new act would make and the impact it would have on the Council. However, there was currently further information being received from CALC and NALC on a weekly basis, so it was recommended this be deferred until changes were confirmed.</p> |

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)

The Clerk summarised the progress and approach for each of these documents.

8. **To discuss and agree the use of an account with Pockit.com to allow the Clerk to make purchases on behalf of the Parish Council (document circulated)**

Since the withdrawal of the Alto Card from Unity Trust bank, any purchases that could not be invoiced were being made by the Clerk and claimed back via expenses.

The Clerk had provided a report in relation to an account called Pockit.com which for the cost of 99p allowed the Council to obtain a card that could be preloaded with a specified amount from the main bank account, via transfer. Members considered the document and looked into the company who hold the money known as Wirecard Card Solutions Ltd. They considered that there are no additional charges for the card but also that it is not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, although it is monitored by the Financial Conduct Authority. It was noted that as a responsible emoney issuer, Wirecard Card Solutions Limited ensures that once it has received funds they are deposited in a secure account, specifically for the purpose of redeeming transactions made through Pockit and these funds are protected against claims from creditors. It was noted that some websites would not accept the card for transactions.

It was agreed that the Clerk should open an account with Pockit.com. The Clerk would bring the information back to the Committee if it was not working for the Council.
9. **To begin the budget process for 2018/19 – draft budget preparation document circulated**

Members reviewed the document provided by the Clerk, which presently suggested an overall increase in the Precept of just £1820 for the year 2018/19. This included increases in staff costs due to the employment of an Assistant Clerk, provisions for the new audit regime that would be applied next year, an increase in environmental costs largely down to the addition of new dog bag bins in the Parish and Capital Projects that were likely to be in place over the next 12 months. Most of the latter was being funded by money already in reserves.

It was noted that the increase suggested seemed reasonable.

It was agreed that Members would consider the document more fully before the next meeting and raise any questions or suggestions they felt necessary. The document would be reviewed at the next meeting.
10. **To discuss and agree a contribution towards the Christmas Lights for Golden Cross Lane**

Members reviewed the quote that had been received from Blachere Illumination. Bromsgrove District Council had selected this company to be used for Christmas lights using their Financial Processes. The quote had been obtained via District Councillor, Shirley Webb and was for 8 lights at a cost of £1888 before VAT. In addition, 8 connection boxes at a cost of £165 each would also need to be purchased. Councillor Webb had offered to contribute £2000 to the provision of the lights.

It was agreed to fund the remainder of the cost of the lights, approximately £1585.

11. **To discuss the possibility of having the bed at the Ivy Cottage stripped and replanted with winter bedding**
- Cllr Shephard reported that the Council had not carried out Winter planting for some time. It was very expensive and hardly ever produced a good show and therefore did not provide value for money. It was his advice not to proceed with this but instead, leave the existing planting in place at present until the first frost affects them. It was then suggested that the current gardener be asked to provide a quote for stripping the bed.
- It was agreed** not to proceed with the planting of the Ivy Cottage Bed with Winter bedding and that Meadowfields Ground Maintenance Ltd would be approached regarding a quote for stripping the bed.
12. **To review the following policies and documents (documents circulated):**
- 12.1 Employee Appraisal Policy – to review following an amendment which has been used for a recent appraisal.**
- It was noted that the process for appraisal had been simplified and, following two uses, it appeared to work well as the sections were flexible enough to fit all information in. The policy now needed to be updated to reflect this and Cllr Baker would bring this to the next meeting for review.
- 12.2 Internet, Email and Social Media Policy – to review following request for further information in relation to the recording of meetings**
- The Clerk had circulated the document with a suggested addition relating to the Parish Council exercising the right to record meetings alongside any similar request from a Member of the public. In addition, a change was made that requested a week's notice from any Member of the public wishing to record a meeting.
- It was agreed** to accept the additions to the policy.
- 12.3 Freedom of Information Policy**
- Members reviewed the policy and did not feel any changes were needed at present.
- It was agreed** to maintain the current policy at present and revisit the review when looking into the new Data Protection Act and Policy.
- 12.4 Data Protection Policy - Members may wish to defer this due to the new act coming into force in 2018**
- It was agreed** to review this policy when more information was known in relation to the new Data Protection Act.
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 discuss employee salaries**
- It was agreed** to provide an incremental rise in salary for the Assistant Clerk following a successful end of probation review, as per the Assistant Clerk's contract. This would be backdated to July, being 6 months from the Assistant Clerk's start date.

**This meeting ended at
20.23 hours**

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Chairman, Finance Committee
Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council

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