

Minutes of the Finance and Staff Committee of Aston Clinton Parish Council -
held on 25th May 2015 at 6.30pm
at Aston Clinton Parish Meeting Room

Present:

Councillors: -

P Hughes (Chairman)

M Osborn

L Tubb

S Beaumont

Clerk: G Merry

No Members of the public

16.029 Apologies:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mooney.

16.030 To Approve the Minutes of the last Meeting held on 30th March 2016

The minutes were agreed and signed.

16.031 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest

16.032 Public Participation

There were no items

16.033 Governance – election of chairman and membership of staffing sub-committee

- i Cllr Tubb PROPOSED Cllr Hughes as chairman, SECONDED by Cllr Beaumont and AGREED. Cllr Tubb PROPOSED Cllr Osborn as vice chair, SECONDED by Cllr Beaumont and AGREED. Cllr Beaumont announced her resignation as chair and intention to resign from the PC in the summer, due to a planned move away from the area.
Cllr Hughes took the chair.
- ii Adoption of New Financial Regulations: these had been distributed by NALC, read by all committee members and were duly adopted.
- iii Credit references: Financial regulations stated that credit references should have been taken up for any bank signatories. Cllr Tubb would advise the clerk of the appropriate report to obtain and Cllr Hughes offered to check the regulations. It was agreed that Cllr Beaumont would be removed as a signatory in due course and the mandate would be changed to add Cllr Hughes as a signatory.

16.034 Financial Situation Reports

- i The Clerk presented the month-end accounts using the new format although the new software package would be installed in late May. The café base rent figure was queried as it seemed high. The clerk explained that she was awaiting an explanation of how much it should be but was aware the café had been over-paying, so this would be adjusted once the turnover rent figure was known. The low figure for allotment rents was due to the majority coming in by March 31st and therefore going into last year's receipts. All rents had already been identified as needing a full review.
- ii Status of Budgets: The new budget monitoring document was easy to understand. The clerk had already adjusted-down the budget figure for the play park as the cost had been over-estimated. This had allowed the grounds maintenance budget to be increased to meet

the unexpected cost of devolved services. Further budget adjustments would be needed, e.g. grant income, which was almost reached already, with further grants expected.

- iii Payments to be agreed: The Clerk had presented the list of outstanding invoices but expressed disappointment at the standard of work from Buckland Landscapes in the installation of the picnic tables. The poor levelling had been identified early-on and the clerk had asked for it to be removed and re-installed. This had not happened and the method used to address the problem had not resulted in a satisfactory job. Cllrs decided to check this for themselves before challenging the invoice but it was felt that at the very least, a discount on the invoice should be requested. Cllr Osborn also queried an invoice for street lamp replacement as he felt sure the lamp on Beaconsfield Road had not in fact been fixed. The clerk offered to check this.

MOTION: It was agreed that the invoices can be presented to the full PC for payment, with the exception of the 2 invoices detailed above, which were subject to further investigation – PROPOSED by Cllr Hughes and AGREED.

- iv Arrears: The internal auditor had advised that the council should have had a formal minute stating they did not intend to pursue the former tenant of the Hub for rent arrears. The clerk advised that this course of action had been taken following advice from the solicitor at the time, as the cost of pursuing the arrears would outweigh what the former tenant was likely to pay. His solicitor had at the time disputed the figures and the previous PC had decided not to pursue this. The tenancy had been in the name of the former manager's son which complicated the matter as did the fact that he appeared to have been declared bankrupt.

MOTION: To agree not to pursue the former tenant/manager of The Hub (Aston Clinton) Ltd for rent arrears, PROPOSED by Cllr Hughes, SECONDED by Cllr Tubb and AGREED.

16.035 Annual Return

- i Review of Auditor's Report: The auditor had submitted detailed recommendations which had been circulated to committee members. It was agreed that these measures would be implemented over the course of the coming months.
- ii Review of the Annual Return: The auditor's figures had agreed with the Clerk's and had been entered into the return. The Governance statement was almost complete and just required approval of the revised risk register and asset register. All other entries were approved.
- iii Approval of the Risk and Asset Register: Cllr Tubb had revised these and had circulated them to members. The format for the asset register required streamlining but the content was as current as possible, as Cllr Tubb had worked with the clerk and Cllr Ronson to update new assets and remove obsolete ones. This would now feed into the insurance requirements which would need to be reviewed around August in time to look at quotes ahead of renewal in October. Cllr Tubb offered to do this. The risk register had been simplified to be more relevant to an organisation of this size and also updated to include current issues such as data protection risks involving CCTV etc. It was agreed that both are 'live' documents and should be reviewed regularly. Cllr Tubb agreed to manage this. Cllr Osborn queried whether we would be liable for claims from injury as a result of broken street lights. It was agreed this would not be the case as it is not binding for the PC to provide any lighting at all.
- iv The Direct debits on the account were presented by the clerk and reviewed. The clerk clarified how often the PWLB mortgage payments are made and that the BT bill is now consolidated into one payment.

v Salaries: It was agreed that the clerk may continue to pay salaries by BACS each month.

MOTION: The Annual Return was AGREED unanimously and recommended up to full council for approval.

16.036 Report into procurement of the MUGA

The clerk had investigated the events that had led to the procurement of the MUGA not complying with financial regulations, which had caused the internal audit to fail. She had produced a report which had been circulated to all councillors and would be included with the submission to the external auditor. The findings and recommendations were reviewed and agreed. Copies are available on request.

16.037 Staffing Sub-committee

NALC had circulated new pay scales for SLCC member clerks which should be backdated to April 1st. the clerk would now be on £11.302/hour and the assistant clerk on £10.632/hour. These were APPROVED for recommendation to full council

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 29th June 2016 at 6.30pm (tbc)

Signed Date