

**Minutes of the Finance and Staff Committee of Aston Clinton Parish Council -
held on 27th July 2016 at 6.30pm
at Aston Clinton Parish Meeting Room**

Present:

Councillors: -

P Hughes (chairman)

L Tubb

L Ronson

Clerk: G Merry

No Members of the public

16.048 Apologies:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Osborn and Beaumont.

16.049 To Approve the Minutes of the last Meeting held on 25th May 2016

The minutes were agreed and signed.

16.50 Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest

16.051 Public Participation

There were no items

16.052 Governance – New Financial Regulations and Credit References

The obtaining of credit references for bank signatories is detailed in the new Financial Regulations. The clerk had spoken to BALC who had advised that Financial Regulations are 'Model' regulations and it is therefore possible to opt not to apply them all. BALC had also advised that because bankrupts are not permitted to become councillors anyway, that all payments have to be authorised by council and there is a monthly reconciliation check, this mitigates against any potential embezzlement etc. and that it is not commonplace for Parish Councils to obtain credit references. It was therefore decided not adopt that particular clause in the Regulations but instead carry out regular bankruptcy checks on members (e.g. annually).

16.053 Financial Situation Reports

- i The Clerk presented the month-end accounts using the new software. These showed a total income for the year to-date as £153,677 and the total expenditure as £57,084. This represented 32% spending for the year-to-date after 4 months of the financial year.
- ii Issues with annual return: The clerk reported that the Return had been sent back for amendment and it was proving to be a laborious process. Variances on the previous year's figures had to be quantified down to the nearest £10, with explanations, and this had needed several revisions as the asset register was showing significant variances but not necessarily why. Additionally, there had not been a minute reference in 2014 to show that the budget for 2015-16 had been agreed, although this would not be the case going forward. The auditor had also recommended that parish councils should show a reserve at the end of the financial year equivalent to 25% of their precept. This council's had been around 20%. Councillors requested that the clerk query this with the auditor to ascertain where this advice was coming from. The clerk asked whether the committee would like her to place

some funds in the tracker account and there was general agreement not to, particularly as the interest rate was currently negligible.

- iii Status of Budgets: The new software produced a percentage spend figure for every area of budget and this allowed for quick understanding of the status of spending. It was agreed that budgets were on target.
- iv Payments to be agreed: The Clerk had presented the list of outstanding invoices. Cllr Tubb queried whether a bill for legal services from Bucks Law Plus would be the final one in the matter of the Boundary Dispute. The clerk agreed to find out.

MOTION: It was agreed that all invoices were approved for payment, PROPOSED by Cllr Tubb SECONDED by Cllr Ronson and AGREED.

16.054 Insurance Requirements

Cllr Tubb reported that the annual insurance renewal would fall in October and it would be necessary to obtain quotes. Having reviewed the policy, she advised as follows:

- £250,000 for libel and slander is high and can be reduced to around £100,000
- There is a need to increase the cover for play equipment, as more provision leads to greater risk
- There is a need to add on the skate park and MUGA which are currently not insured for damage.

Cllr Tubb recommended that all items on the asset register be insured by the amounts detailed on the register. She offered to obtain suitable quotes.

16.055 Orders – development of order form and Terms & Conditions

Cllr Tubb presented a model contract document detailing council T's and C's, aimed largely at builders for large-scale capital projects. It would be a condition of tender that it is signed. This met with general approval and Cllr Tubb agreed to draw-up a simpler version for smaller scale projects. The clerk asked for advise in setting up a formal ordering system. She agreed to check whether the new Alpha system could do this and Cllr Tubb agreed to work on some wording/layout.

16.056 Staffing Sub-committee

The payroll company had requested taking their payments going forward, by direct debit. The clerk explained that the council must approve any direct debit arrangements. This arrangement was approved but the clerk was asked to check whether there needs to be full council approval. The amount taken would be £108 per quarter, taken quarterly.

MOTION: To approve the payroll company to take payments by direct debit, PROPOSED by Cllr Hughes, SECONDED by Cllr Tubb and AGREED.

16.57 Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 31st August 2016 at 6.30pm (tbc)

Signed Date