

Minutes of the Finance & Staff Committee of Aston Clinton Parish Council - held on 27th May 2015 at 7.15pm at Aston Clinton Parish Meeting Room

Present:

N Savigar
A Mooney

J Savigar

Clerk: G Merry

1 member of the public

Mr Plowman, the former Chair of the F&S Committee outlined what management structures should be considered for effective financial and budgetary control and what improvements can be made to current practise. NOTES AVAILABLE.

15.025 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Cllr N Savigar PROPOSED Cllr Beaumont for the role of chair, SECONDED by Cllr Mooney and AGREED. Cllr J Savigar PROPOSED Cllr N Savigar as vice chair, SECONDED by Cllr Mooney and AGREED. Cllr N Savigar took the chair and then PROPOSED as follows:

15.026 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Beaumont.

15.027 Minutes

The minutes were approved and signed by the vice Chairman.

15.028 Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

15.029 Public Participation

i. It was asked that the new committee keep a close reign on expenditure.

15.030 Financial Situation Reports

- i. Year-End Report on 2014 -2015 Financial Year: These had been presented and agreed by both the former F&S committee and by the new council at the May meeting.
- ii. Month-End Report May 2015: The Clerk asked if councillors wanted any changes made to the way figures are presented each month. It was agreed to move towards budgets that differentiated between running (fixed) costs and programme costs and to incorporate figures for projected-spend for the year. The Clerk agreed to use version control on spreadsheets.
- iii. Status of Individual Budgets: Mr Plowman advised that each programme manager run their own budget for each area and then report to the Clerk. It was agreed to keep reporting as it is for now and work on the new structure over the next few months.
- iv. Payments to be Agreed: It was discussed moving towards presenting a list of bills to pay and a list of liabilities i.e. expected invoices/payments and that figure should be deducted from what is left to spend in each budget. The Clerk agreed to enquire again whether there could be a reduction in the business rates expected by AVDC for the currently empty Pavilion.

15.031 Regulatory Matters

- i. Review of direct debits: The Clerk presented a list of current DDs on the account. It was agreed that more detail was needed. It was agreed to retain the current list of DDs subject to fine-tuning and

these should be budgeted as running costs. The Clerk would ask PWLB for a statement on the mortgage.

- ii. Review of budget sub-heads: The review of this as detailed above will be taken up by a working party.
- iii. Review of bank mandate requirements: It was PROPOSED as follows:
MOTION: to change the bank mandate to have Cllrs N Savigar, Beaumont and the Clerk as signatories, PROPOSED by Cllr N Savigar, SECONDED by Cllr Mooney and AGREED.
- iv. Review of petty cash processes: It was agreed to have an independent check per month as written in Financial Regulations.
- v. Review of contingency planning: It was agreed that the Clerk would supply the Council Chairman with a duplicate key to her office, the computer password and access to the debit card with accompanying security numbers/PIN etc., all to be enclosed in a signed and sealed envelope.
- vi. Review of Clerk's emergency cash limit: This is currently set at £500 which the Clerk is satisfied with and it was agreed to retain.
- vii. Cllr N Savigar reported that he had been updating the Asset Register and this was in-progress but only back to where records were available (2008). He reported that the tables and chairs for the Anthony Hall had been paid for by the Parish Council but there appeared to be no resolution to accompany this decision. Similarly, the Tennis Lighting could not be considered a P.C. asset even though the P.C. had paid for it as it had been gifted to the tennis club.
- viii. Monthly Controls: It was felt that this matter had been dealt with under 15.030. Mr Plowman raised the matter of approval for the Clerk's salary each month and it was agreed that the Clerk would forward her payslip to the Chairman, Vice Chairman and Chairman of F&S Committee and action following approval by 2 out of the 3.

15.032 Audit and Annual Return

Mr Plowman outlined the inaccuracies with last year's figures which were subsequently picked up by Mazars. BAS associates have since offered a full refund. An independent auditor IAC has been chosen this year who will check processes as well as figures. Cllr N Savigar circulated documents from Mazars training slides re. what information they will require.

Motion: The dates for E.M.s to agree the annual return were PROPOSED by Cllr N Savigar, SECONDED BY Cllr J Savigar and AGREED as follows:-

Tuesday 16th June – Finance and Staff E.M. to review and agree the figures

Wednesday 17th June – Full Council E.M. to agree the return.

15.033 Bank Situation

The Clerk reported that on Tuesday 7th April, Barclays Bank introduced a new level of security into their online banking which resulted in her being unable to access the account for approximately 6 weeks. This had followed Barclay's failure to implement mandate change on 2 previous occasions, including the second time to put the Clerk on the mandate. This resulted in her being unable to clear security. The bank then took an unacceptable length of time to deal with the matter resulting in a formal complaint by the Clerk and Barclay's eventual admission of error. Although £500 compensation had been received, the Clerk felt this level of service was unacceptable and asked permission to investigate business banking opportunities with other banks. There was general agreement for the Clerk to pursue this.

15.034 Staffing Sub-Committee

- i. Appointments to Staffing Sub-committee: The Clerk was happy with the way this sub-committee has been working and suggested that meeting every other month would now be sufficient. Cllr N Savigar PROPOSED Cllr J Savigar for this committee, SECONDED By Cllr Mooney and AGREED. Cllr Mooney PROPOSED Cllr Birch for the committee, SECONDED by Cllr N Savigar and AGREED.
- ii. Staffing Matters - Recruitment of Assistant Clerk: It was discussed and agreed that there was a need for more man-hours to cope with the workload and as assistant Clerk should be actively recruited. The case for this would be brought to the full meeting on 3/6/15.
Motion: To agree to prepare a case for the engagement of assistant Clerk PROPOSED By Cllr J Savigar, SECONDED by Cllr Mooney and AGREED.

15.035 Income Generation

Cllr N Savigar presented a table of funding sources which is currently a work-in-progress and stated that the P.C. has a role in disseminating information and offering assistance to other groups, as well as applying for its own funding. Mr Plowman suggested networking with other P.C.s to see what other sources were available. The matter of Devolution of services had not been well-handled and there was a need to look at a better model, possibly a community enterprise model. Cllr N Savigar suggested preparing a briefing for 2-3 months' time.

Motion: For the Committee to agree the representation at the Local Area Forum meeting on 18 June. It was PROPOSED that Cllr N Savigar would attend, SECONDED By Cllr Mooney and AGREED.

15.036 Planning

The benefits of financial planning and investment had been discussed adequately elsewhere.

15.037 Any Other Business

The Clerk asked how much should be saved in the Tracker account and Cllr N Savigar suggested leaving 2-3 months running costs in the current a/c and the remainder in the Tracker. The Clerk agreed to check what triggers are on the account to ensure it never goes in the red.

15.038 Date and time of next meeting

This will be on Wednesday 24th June at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

..... Chairman Date