

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON 27TH OCTOBER 2021 IN THE PARISH ROOM

PRESENT: Mr L Burrows (Chairman), Mr M Irwin (Committee), Mr M I O'Brien Baker (Committee), Mr M Williamson (ex officio).

There were no members of the public.

In attendance: Mrs S Robertson (Finance Officer)

1. Apologies: Mr D Boswell, Ms R Jones.

2. Interests

2.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI):

Mr O'Brien Baker declared his interest in item 6 Grant Applications as a supplier for Martlesham in Bloom.

2.2 Local non-pecuniary interests (LNPI):

Messrs Burrows & Irwin declared their interests in item 6 Grant Applications as members of Martlesham in Bloom.

3. Actions from last Meeting

Completed.

4. PUBLIC FORUM

4.1 To allow members of the public to address business on the agenda

There were no issues raised.

4.2 Any issues raised by the public

There were no issues raised.

5. Financial Matters

5.1 Cheques signed between meetings CP circulated via email

DECISION F2021/10a: To ratify payment of cheques signed between meetings (report filed in the office together with minutes). **Agreed.**

5.2 Any pending expenditure transactions

DECISION F2021/10b: To pay all pending expenditure transactions (report filed in the office together with minutes). **Agreed.**

The Chairman and the Finance Officer signed the pending expenditure transaction report.

5.3 October Admin Income & Expenditure Report CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes. Noted.

5.4 Rialtas Business Solutions (RBS) Fees and Charges FOR1 Consider 3-year term agreement for the Year End Loyalty Scheme

DECISION F2021/10c: To sign up to the RBS Year End Loyalty Scheme, a 3-year term agreement which includes:

- Preferential Year End closedown date – ability to provide RBS with 5 dates, over 3 weeks (we are usually just given a date)
- 7% discount on the 2022 fee, i.e., £558 instead of £600.

Agreed.

5.5 Mandate change form/internet banking

The Finance Officer apologised that this was still ongoing.

5.6 Bank reconciliation verification Sept 2021

Mrs Hall checked the bank reconciliations against the bank statements for September and confirmed that the figures were correct.

5.7 Came & Co Local Council Insurance rebranded to Gallagher FOR2 Noted.

Finance Officer to obtain insurance quotes well in advance of the current insurance expiring on 30 September 2022.

5.8 Insurance & Funding for Martlesham Repair Hub FOR3 & CP

A report by Mr Irwin was circulated in advance of the meeting. Discussion took place. Noted that our own insurers declined to provide cover but recommended Export & General Insurance Services Ltd, a specialist provider for Men's Sheds which covers Repair Cafés & Advice Hubs.

A quote had been provided through Martlesham Climate Action. The committee was satisfied that it covered the necessary Employer's, Public and Product liabilities. Product guarantee is not covered but waivers and disclaimers would be in place so that any substantial risks are covered as far as possible. The £250 excess was noted.

Noted that insurance cover could be invalidated if a repairer is deemed to have acted unreasonably. As a protection, the Council to ask for a register of experience and qualifications of repairers to demonstrate due diligence and to make it harder to prove they would act unreasonably - **Finance Officer to action.**

Noted that the organisers of the Repair Hub are well organised and have already confirmed that PAT testing would take place for electrical goods. It is recommended that this takes place before as well as after work is carried out - **Finance Officer** to check.

The insurance would also cover the Advice Hub as long as no fee is charged - Repair & Advice Hubs to both be covered by the Men's Shed insurance.

Finance Officer to check that Legal Expenses are covered.

Personal Accident has been excluded but is available. PC volunteers are covered by the PC's personal accident insurance whilst working for the PC but, to avoid any overlaps with insurance and to ensure that the hub volunteers have this benefit, the committee agreed that Personal accident cover should be included in the package. The quote received was £225.68 - it was expected that this additional cover should not increase the cost significantly.

DECISION F2021/10d: To proceed with insurance cover for the Repair & Advice Hubs provided by Export & General Insurance Services Ltd, a specialist insurer, as per quote of £225.68 but asking for additional Personal Accident cover, noting there will be an increase in cost. **Agreed.**

5.9 Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) Membership FOR4

DECISION F2021/10e: To pay for annual membership of SLCC for the Clerk, Finance Officer and Council Officer. **Agreed.**

6. Grant Applications

6.1 Grant Applications for 2022/23 CPs (grant applications with summary & Grant Policy for reference) FOR5

Mr O'Brien Baker declared his pecuniary interest and did not participate.

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10a: That the Parish Council approves all 6 grant applications received for 2022/23 as follows: Disability Advice Service (East Suffolk) £500.00; Greenways Countryside Project £1,000.00; Martlesham Conservation Group £138.32; Martlesham in Bloom £190.00; Suffolk Accident Rescue Service (SARS) £350.00; The Saplings Pre-School £638.56. **Total: £2,816.88. Agreed.**

Under item 2 of the Grant Policy, the Council could agree to spend up to £3,970.00 (rounded) on 2022/23 grants. In recent years, any remaining sum (£1,153.00 in this instance) has been retained in the budget for requests for emergency funding. The possibility of awarding small grants of £250 to assist suitable ecological or environmental projects was raised but this might be difficult to manage & assess. **Mr Williamson** to email Martlesham Climate Action to ask if they would be interested in running a scheme & to request a response to the Finance Officer following their meeting on 15 November 2021.

7. Finance Officer's Report

7.1 Meetings Calendar 2022 & venues for meetings CP & FOR6

It has been confirmed that all scheduled meetings from January – March can be held in St Michael's Church Centre, except for the F&GPC meeting on 23 February. Noted that Mr Thompson had confirmed that meeting dates did not need to be rearranged for him. DETC meetings scheduled for August & December only need to take place if necessary. This obviates the need to call extraordinary DETC meetings in these months if important planning issues arise. Ongoing concerns regarding coronavirus were discussed.

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10b: That from January 2022 all Council meetings continue to be held in St Michael's Church Centre to allow for social distancing, except for the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting on 23 February 2022, which shall be held in the Parish Room. This arrangement will be subject to ongoing review. That the draft calendar (filed with these minutes) is approved.

Agreed.

7.2 Fitness training on Kronji's Piece – renewal of agreement FOR7 & CP

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10c: That the Parish Council renews the agreement with Mr Tester for fitness training on Kronji's Piece including the request for a contribution of £80 towards the maintenance of Kronji's Piece. **Agreed.**

7.3 Cycle to Work Scheme FOR8

Noted that more information is needed and that the Clerk & Council Officer are interested in the Scheme. **Council Officer** to prepare a recommendation with costings for the December F&GPC meeting.

8. Administration Budget & Earmarked Reserves

8.1 Setting the Administration Budget: Projected Expenditure to financial year end CPs: table & notes

Noted the Finance Officer's estimate that £108,440 of the F&GPC's £112,790 budget would be spent by the end of the financial year, i.e. approx. 96.14%, so the committee is on target to be within its aim of 5% over/under-spend.

8.2 Setting the Administration Budget 2022/2023 CPs: table & notes (filed in the office together with the minutes) To set a draft budget for review in December before recommendation to full PC in January 2022

The draft budget & Finance Officer's notes were considered in detail. The following amendments were made to the draft budget:

- Increase the Subscriptions budget (4022) to take account of the additional SLCC subscription.
- Increase the estimate on projected expenditure for Misc Expenses (4999) to £800 to take account of cost of room bookings until 31 March 2021. Noted no need to set up a separate code for room bookings. Budget £800 in 2022/23.
- Salaries: new staff will need to be recruited in 2022/23 and there is likely to be some overlap with retiring staff so increase the budget to £100k overall.
- Grants (4110): Include the limit for grants of £3,970.
- Climate Action (4122): Increase by £300 to cover cost of insurance for the Repair & Advice Hubs.

The revised estimate for expenditure by the end of the year was therefore £108,576.

The revised draft F&GPC budget 2022/23 was therefore agreed as **£123,790** but this will be subject to review at the December meeting before recommendation to full Council in January 2022.

8.3 Setting F&GPC earmarked reserves 2022/2023 CPs: table & notes filed in the office together with the minutes.

The Finance Officer's reports were noted, and draft F&GPC earmarked reserves of £94,511 agreed. The Finance Officer reported that notification of a CIL payment in October had only just been received and this would need to be factored in. The earmarked reserves will be reviewed at the December meeting before recommendation to full PC in January.

8.4 DETC Earmarked Reserve recommendation of £1k for 2022/23 Noted.

9. Annual Review

9.1 Annual Review Programme (amendments shown in bold) CP (updated by Finance Officer)
DECISION F2021/10f: To approve the Annual Review Programme as updated by the Finance Officer (filed in the office together with the minutes). **Agreed.**

Noted that **the Chairman** will review the CCTV Operational Procedure at the February F&GPC meeting, and this may then be moved on the programme.

Mr Irwin offered to review the Training Programme for councillors for the December F&GPC meeting.

9.2 Review of Financial Management

Meeting between PC and F&GPC Chairmen and Finance Officer to be arranged for January 2022.

9.3 Review of the system of internal audit CP

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10d: To approve the Review of System of Internal Audit. **Agreed.**

9.4 Review of Risk Management, including Fire Risk Assessment CPs

Finance Officer to ask Martlesham Climate Action for a risk assessment for the Repair Hub.

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10e: That the Parish Council approves the Risk Management with the following addition:

Repair Hub liabilities – defective repairs	2	1	2	Specialist insurance in place, disclaimers, maintaining a register of competences and qualifications of repairers, using local experience in running Repair Cafes.
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and the Fire Risk Assessment is attached as an appendix. **Agreed.**

9.5 Review of Investments and Investment Policy CP Recommend to full Council?

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10f: To approve the Investment Policy without change. **Agreed.**

9.6 Review of Standing Orders CP

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10g: To approve the Standing Orders without change. **Agreed.**

DECISION F2021/10g: To suspend Standing Order 3w to complete all business on the agenda. **Agreed.**

9.7 Review of Financial Regulations: amend item 1.8 CP & FOR9

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10h: To approve the Financial Regulations with the following amendment to item 1.8: change “The Clerk has been appointed as RFO for this council” to “This Council has appointed a Clerk as Proper Officer and an RFO” **Agreed.**

9.8 Review of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies CPs

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10i: To approve the following General Data Protection Regulation policies without change: Data Protection Policy, Document Retention and Disposal Policy, Subject Access Request Policy & Procedure, Personal Data Breach Notification Procedure, General Privacy Notice and Privacy Notice for staff and councillors. **Agreed.**

9.9 Review of Public Participation in Council meetings Protocol CP

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10j: To approve the Public Participation in Council meetings Protocol without change. **Agreed.**

9.10 Review ‘Attending Meetings on Behalf of the Council’ CP

RECOMMENDATION F2021/10k: To approve Attending Meetings on Behalf of the Council without change. **Agreed.**

10. Any items for the next agenda

Budgets & precept for 2022/23, Cycle to Work Scheme.

11. Martlesham Newsletters/Website/Facebook

11.1 Contributions/what has this meeting achieved?

Agreed a draft F&GPC budget, made recommendations on how the Council is run, made recommendations on grants and facilitated the setting up of a Repair Hub.

The following item was not taken in camera as no new information had been received about staff pay.

12. Staff Matters

12.1 Staff pay

Results of negotiations still awaited.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 09.38pm.

M. Williamson

Chairman, 03 November 2021