

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**HELD ON 16<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022 IN ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH CENTRE**

**PRESENT:** Mr L Burrows (Chairman), Mr D Boswell (Committee), Mr M Irwin (Committee), Mr M I O'Brien Baker (Committee).

One member of the public: Mr Ian Read, Chairman of Martlesham Community Hall Management Committee.

**In attendance:** Mrs S Robertson (Finance Officer)

**1. Apologies:** Mr M Williamson (ex officio)

**2. Interests**

2.1 Disclosable Pecuniary Interest (DPI): None declared.

2.2 Local non-pecuniary interests (LNPI): None declared.

**3. Actions from last Meeting:** Ongoing or on the agenda.

**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. Green Energy Audit**

5.1 Green Energy Audit Report CP & FOR1

The Chairman welcomed Mr Read to the meeting & invited him to participate in the discussions on the report, recognising that the Community Hall Committee and the Parish Council will have to work together on implementation of any changes resulting from the energy audit. The report and associated comments from Martlesham Climate Action (MCA) members were considered and discussed in depth:

Loft insulation

The current 150 -200mm of insulation in the Richards/Parish Rooms can be improved. Noted that this can be done by volunteers, but it might be preferable to use a contractor. Mr Read reported that the Community Hall is unlikely to need extra loft insulation as it has already been installed.

Lighting

The Richards Room has already been upgraded to LEDs, but the lobby area and toilets still have old lighting, as does the Parish Room and office. The Hall Committee will investigate changes to the lobby/toilet areas. Improvements to car park lighting have already been made as it is no longer illuminated all night, saving 5-6 hours of electricity. At the same time issues of anti-social behaviour were addressed.

Wall and windows

Mr Read was unsure whether the walls have cavities. He offered to investigate whether they can be filled.

It was considered that the windows are acceptable and there is no great benefit to be gained from replacing them. Mr Read offered to check them for draughts, possibly borrowing a thermal imaging camera from Mr Green of MCA.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2a:** The Parish Council takes the following action to reduce carbon emissions in the Richards/Parish Rooms:

1. Existing loft insulation is topped up to the recommended depth of 250 – 270mm.
2. **Clerk** obtains a quote from Doyle Electrical Services to upgrade the Parish Room & office fluorescent bulbs to LED versions.
3. Cavity wall insulation is investigated. **Agreed.**

Mr Read indicated that he was happy to obtain quotes for loft and cavity wall insulation.

The improvements above were considered financially viable short-term gains. Due to the significantly higher costs of solar panels & heat pumps, more research is needed as part of longer-term improvements. It was noted that the current heating system is already powered by electricity and solar panels should be considered first as the next phase in carbon reduction. Due to the way in which the building is used, battery storage should be investigated so electricity generated is available for heating and lighting in the evenings.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2b:** That, as part of a long-term goal, Martlesham Climate Action builds a financial business/green case for installing solar panels on the Richards/Parish Rooms and Community Hall, which will include life costs & how to dispose of the panels safely at the end of their lifespan. **Agreed.**

Once estimates are received, funding sources can be investigated, and discussion can take place between the Parish Council and the Community Hall Committee on respective contributions.

## **6. Financial Matters**

6.1 Cheques signed between meetings CP circulated via email

**DECISION F2022/2a:** To ratify payment of cheques signed between meetings (report filed in the office together with minutes). **Agreed.**

6.2 Any pending expenditure transactions CP circulated via email

**DECISION F2022/2b:** 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.

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

6.4 Financial Review: meeting held on 02.02.22 CPs Consider the Financial Review & Recommendation 1

The notes of the Financial Review were accepted. It was noted that concern had been expressed about general reserves reducing; the Council is guaranteed income from the precept which will cover ongoing staff and running costs but not large new projects.

In accordance with regulations, the Council will be required to publish all expenditure over £500 on its website as expenditure will exceed £200k this financial year. The **Financial Officer** to ensure that the Council is compliant.

Recommendation 1 in the notes was considered. It was noted that our current financial processes and checks cover the requirements of the Model Internal Control Statement, and financial reports are minuted throughout the year. The Council also approves the Annual Governance Statement which is a further review of processes. It was agreed that the checklist in the Internal Control Report was too onerous for an individual councillor to undertake & much of it is covered by the Council's regular reviews, as well as our internal auditor's thorough audit. It was therefore considered unnecessary to appoint a councillor to conduct a review of the system of internal control. It was agreed that there would be merit in signing off a formal Internal Control Statement, tailored to our Council, at the April full Council meeting looking back over the previous financial year.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2c:** That the full Council approves and adopts an Internal Control Statement at its April meeting, noting that regular reviews of its internal controls and financial systems & procedures are carried out throughout the year and minuted. **Agreed.**

6.5 Scope of internal audit: instructions to the internal auditor CP Consider Financial Review Recommendation 2

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2d:** That the internal auditor follows the approach for testing as set out in Appendix 9 of Governance & Accountability for Local Councils 2014. **Agreed.**

6.6 Suffolk Pension Fund Annual LGPS Return 2021/22: Clerk to return data by 21.04.22  
Noted.

6.7 Suffolk Pension Fund: Annual Employers' Meeting 19.01.22 FOR2  
Noted.

6.8 Bank reconciliation verification December 2021 FOR3 Minute verification by Mrs J Hall/Consider whether a policy for writing off cheques is needed?

Mrs Hall confirmed the following on 09/02/22:

*"I have read the Parish Council's Bank Reconciliation Statements for the Barclays Current Account, the Barclays Base Rate Reward Account and the Barclays Active Saver Account. I have also read the bank statements for these three accounts. I can confirm that these documents reconcile:-*

*As at 31 December 2021 for the Barclays Current Account*

*As at 13 January 2022 for the Barclays Base Rate Reward Account*

*As at 13 January 2022 for the Barclays Active Saver Account."*

Two cheques remain unrepresented after 6 months. It was agreed that the £50 cheque to Martlesham Heath Pavilion is held as a deposit until after the Village Fete therefore it is still a liability and cannot be written off. It will be returned if the deposit is not required. If there is an issue, it is likely that the Council will have to write that cheque off and produce another one at the time.

The cheque to Suffolk Police for £24 will have to be recorded as an unrepresented cheque at the end of the financial year.

It was agreed that a policy for cancelling cheques was unnecessary due to differing circumstances.

6.9 Allocation of funds for legal fees for transfer of runway car park FOR4

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2e:** That legal fees, as necessary, for the transfer of the runway car park from McCarthy Stone to the Parish Council are funded from code 9000 EMR Legal & Professional.

**Agreed.**

6.10 Local Government Pay Claim 2021/22 – update FOR5  
Noted.

6.11 Council Insurance Cover update FOR6  
Noted.

## **7. Finance Officer's Report**

7.1 Meeting quorums FOR7

**DECISION F2022/2c:** That no change is made to Standing Orders 3u and 4dviii regarding meeting quorums. **Agreed.**

Noted that, as the total number of councillors is currently 11, the quorum for a full Council meeting is 4, i.e. one-third. The quorum for a committee meeting is no less than 3.

## **8. Annual Review**

8.1 Annual Review Programme CP

**DECISION F2022/2d:** To approve the Annual Review Programme (filed in the office together with the minutes). **Agreed.**

8.2 Five Year Plan CP  
Noted.

8.3 Assets Register (changes in red on full register) CPs – full & summary circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2f:** To agree the Assets Register 2021/22, dated 16/02/22. **Agreed.**

8.4 Employment law, policies, pay

Nothing new to report.

8.5 Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2g:** To agree the Local Government Pension Scheme Discretions Policy. **Agreed.**

8.6 Facilities e.g. Parish Room (see 5-Year Plan) Anything new to consider, especially in light of the pandemic?

Nothing new to consider.

8.7 Freedom of Information Publication Scheme CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2h:** To agree the Freedom of Information Publication Scheme with an amendment on page 6 to clarify that charges are per **A4** sheet. **Agreed.**

8.8 Safeguarding Policy CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes. It was noted that, as part of its risk assessment, the Village Fete Working Group has special plans in place for safeguarding, which is carried out by a local organisation with qualified staff who have been DBS checked.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2i:** To agree the Safeguarding Policy. **Agreed.**

8.9 E-mail Protocol Policy CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2j:** To agree the E-mail Protocol Policy. **Agreed.**

8.10 Filming & Recording at Council Meetings Protocol CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2k:** To agree the Filming & Recording at Council Meetings Protocol. **Agreed.**

8.11 Draft Social Media and Electronic Communication Policy CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2l:** To adopt the Social Media & Electronic Communication Policy. **Agreed.**

8.12 CCTV Operational Procedure CPs circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2m:** To agree the CCTV Operational Procedure with the following two amendments:

1. Include a statement saying that MPC has overall responsibility for the CCTV.
2. Amend sentence "Authorised staff are the Parish Council Clerk, the Deputy Clerk and the Administrative Assistant" to "Authorised staff are the Parish Council Clerk and any other officers authorised by the Parish Council".

**Agreed.**

8.13 Review of System of Internal Audit CP & see Financial Review (6.4) CP circulated via email and filed in the office together with these minutes.

There was discussion with reference to the notes of the Financial Review.

**RECOMMENDATION F2022/2n:** To agree the Review of System of Internal Audit with an amendment in box 4 under Notes: add the word "may" after Councillors so that the sentence reads "Councillors may receive training on responsibilities through SALC". **Agreed.**

**9. Any items for the next agenda**

Annual reviews. A reminder to complete Registers of Interests at the May Parish Council meeting was noted.

**10. Martlesham Newsletters/Website/Facebook**

10.1 Contributions/what has this meeting achieved?

Advertise April Annual Parish Meeting.

The F&GPC considered the Green Energy Audit and has made recommendations to full Council. It reviewed and amended policies as necessary. It checked the Assets Register.

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

**11. Staff Matters**

11.1 Staff pay

Results of negotiations still awaited.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.30pm.

*M Williamson*

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Chairman, 02 March 2022