

Minutes of Cherry Willingham Parish Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee, held on Monday 19th July 2021, at 10am.

Present: Cllr Jenny Robinson (Chairman), Cllr Trahearn (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Andy Burge, Cllr Brylewski, Cllr Bridgwood and Cllr Barry Robinson. Christine Hodgson (RFO) and Gill Shaw (Parish Clerk)

No Members of the Public were in Attendance

Meeting started at 10.00am

1. Welcome and to resolve to receive apologies and accept reasons for absence.

Cllr Fleetwood had not sent any reason for his absence.

It was RESOLVED to note his absence.

2. Member's declarations of interest, gifts and hospitality

None.

3. To receive the Notes of the meeting held on 9th April 2021 and agree for them to be signed as a true record.

It was RESOLVED to accept the notes and they were duly signed as a true record.

4. Financial Matters - RFO.

a) Review of first quarter Income/Expenditure against Budget.

Details were made available prior to the meeting (see attached). The variations discussed were salaries which would be over budget, user contributions were under budget and £500 would be saved as an alternative had been found for grave markers.

b) Review of the Bank Reconciliation at the end of June 2021.

Details were made available prior to the meeting (see attached). The money on deposit at the Nationwide was earning very little interest. Earmarked funds could be held in a notice account.

ACTION: RFO to research alternative accounts and bring recommendations to the next meeting.

5. Review of Financial Regulations:

a) To consider increasing the bank payment single item limit from £1200 to £2000 and the total daily limit from £1200 to £2500 and make the necessary changes to Financial Regulations Items 6.3 & 6.4. Subject to Full Council approval

Very few cheques were now issued and payments usually made by bank transfer. At present there was a single payment/daily limit of £1,200 which was not practical as the payment of larger invoices had to be done over two days.

It was RESOLVED to recommend the amendment to the Full Council.

- b) To resolve to approve the use of variable direct debits as set out in 6.7 of Financial Regulations (approval required every 2 years)

There were only 3 variable direct debits: EON, Go Cardless and Public Loans. All were ongoing payments.

It was RESOLVED to approve the use of variable direct debits.

- c) Conduct the annual review of the Risk Management document (item 15.1 of Financial Regulations)

It was RESOLVED to amend the document to include the play equipment at Cherry Fields.

ACTION:

- The Village Improvement Committee to check on the bus shelters and seats.
- Clerk to put onto the next VIC agenda.

- d) Conduct a review of the Council's Banking arrangements (Item 5.1 of Financial Regulations) including updating the Mandate for cheque signatories-subject to Full Council approval.

The present signatories still included the previous RFO who needed to be removed. Cllr Trahearn as Vice-Chairman of the Council was to be added to the signatories.

It was suggested that Item 5.1 of the Financial Regulations be amended to read 'signatories/authorising councillors' and 'cheques/bank payments to facilitate the present banking method of bank transfers as well as cheques.

It was RESOLVED to amend the Mandate and to add Cllr Trahearn as a signatory subject to Full Council approval.

ACTION: RFO to amend as necessary and to arrange to add Cllr Trahearn whilst removing the previous RFO.

6. To consider the annual appointment of an Internal Auditor

An internal audit was essential to check on the financial procedures of the council. The RFO suggested a meeting with the present Internal Auditor was necessary and requested that at least one Councillor be present. It was suggested that an Internal Auditor may query some aspects of the current systems:

- The RFO was asked to, in future, get whoever authorised a payment to initial the monthly bank statement.
- It was noted that the RFO had a visa card to make purchases with a limit of £1,000.

It was RESOLVED to agree to re-appoint the existing Internal Auditor and request a meeting at The Millennium Hall subject to Full Council Approval.

ACTION: RFO to arrange a meeting.

7. To consider grant applications received from village organisations.

Two grant applications had been received.

The Bowls Club had applied for a grant of £250 towards new flooring in their new kitchen. This was discussed in relation to the criteria for Grants which stated that grants were available for an 'additional activity'.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to reject this application as it did not constitute an ‘additional activity’ and it was noted that they had sufficient funds having recently received a large government grant.

The football club had applied for a grant of £500 toward the refurbishment of the showers in the club house.

It was RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to reject this application as it did not constitute an ‘additional activity’ and also the application was over £250. However, further applications would be considered from the football club and the cricket club for £250 each provided the clubs supplied audited accounts, a recent bank statement and quotations for the work and a justification that the criteria of ‘additional activity’ could be met.

ACTION: To look at the grant criteria and application form at the next meeting and notify the clubs if the criteria is changed.

8. Items for report, or for inclusion in the next agenda.

- Review Grant criteria/procedures.
- Review recommendations by RFO of bank accounts.
- Report on the meeting with the Internal Auditor.
- Discuss a budget for specialist advice on large planning applications.

9. Date of next meeting to be agreed.

Friday 8th October at 10am in The Millennium Hall

Signed.....
Chairman of the Committee

Date.....