

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 27th July 2016, commencing at 7.30pm
At the Unit 32, Lymington Barns, Medstead**

Members Present: Cllr Janet Foster (Chair), Cllrs John Davis and Anne Tomlinson
Attending: S Goudie (Clerk)
Apologies: Cllr Simon Thomas

16.17 FGP OPEN SESSION

- The Clerk asked if the Parish Council would be prepared to support her attaining the Clerks CiLCA (Certificate of Local Council Administration), the cost would be £500 for the courses and portfolio and with the qualification it would be a step for the Parish Council to attain Quality Status. The Committee agreed in principle, and this would be formalised at Full Council, however the Clerk needed confirmation prior to registration in September, hence raising this in this forum.
- Hampshire County Council have now launched their Devolution options consultation from 27th July to 20th September, which misses the next Full Council by one day, and the Clerk suggested that the Planning Committee invite all Councillors to attend to discuss the Parish Council submission at the meeting on 7th September, this was agreed.
- The Clerk asked Cllr Tomlinson if her daughter would like to carry out a Parish wide photo shoot for the new website. Cllr Tomlinson agreed to ask her, and asked for a list of areas required.

The Open Session concluded at 7.45pm, Standing Orders were applied.

16.18 FGP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There was an apology for absence by Cllr Simon Thomas.

16.19 FGP MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 23rd March 2016 were proposed as accurate by Cllr Tomlinson, seconded by Cllr Foster, and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising:
 - The Clerk advised the members that Archiving of all documents would be the next job on the action list following the Burial Ground checks and would be done by digital camera. Cllr Tomlinson suggested that there should be a comprehensive index list so that documents were easily traceable, together with box numbers and destruction dates (if applicable). The Clerk agreed to put a suitable system in place.

16.20 FGP REVIEW OF ALL GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTATION

- **STANDING ORDERS.**
The only change of the Standing Orders was 18(f) Financial Controls and Procurement, and the figure specified as the OGC threshold. The figure would be removed and left as 'the threshold' with no figure specified.
- **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**
There were three amendments to apply, as follows:

- Regulation 1.6 has been amended to provide for the possibility of disciplinary action in the event of breach of the Regulations, rather than a definitive statement as to gross misconduct
- Regulation 6.4 has been re-written to apply more generally than merely in respect of disclosable interests.
- Regulation 11 has been changed to incorporate the specific requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

- **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Risk Assessment had been reviewed and adopted in May 2016 so would not now be reviewed again until July 2017. However, action was now being carried out to decrease the risk of having in excess of £75,000 in one bank. See Minute

The Clerk also advised members that a Fire Risk Assessment had not been carried out at the Pavilion since 2006. Medstead PC were appointing a company to do one for their pavilion and it was agreed that the Clerk would liaise with them to see if this was a viable option or whether the Clerk could prepare something similar using their template.

For information. Cllr Thomas, prior to knowing of his absence, wished to raise the importance of circulating documents in PDF format for security reasons, and the Clerk has agreed that, where possible, this will be common practice.

- **PUBLICATION SCHEME**

The only changes proposed were to add the Neighbourhood Plan and Village Design Statement to the Parish Plan as available documents on the District and Parish Websites.

The Clerk also advised of notification of an update of Future EU changes to Data Protection for Councils, which the Clerk would keep with the Publication Scheme and await further guidance.

- **TERMS OF REFERENCE.**

The Planning and Open Space Committees Terms of Reference had already been updated. The Terms of Reference for the Finance & General Purposes Committee were changed to reflect the change in meeting frequency to 'quarterly or ad hoc as necessary', and agreed.

- **FIXED AND LAND ASSETS.**

These were now being updated regularly, with photos now added, by the Clerk's assistant, an updated copy would be available upon request, however due to the size of the document, it would not be easy to circulate, and will be used to negotiate the insurance policy renewal next month.

- **PROCEDURAL DOCUMENT**

Now completed, no further updates.

- **CEMETERY REGULATIONS.**

A booklet for distribution to the local undertakers has now been prepared in draft, and will be completed following confirmation of some final detail, but there are no amendments to the Regulations at this time.

- **GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY FOR LOCAL COUNCILS 'A PRACTITIONERS GUIDE (Updated March 2016)**

Section 5 has now been received, the full document is available in hard copy if required in the Parish Office.

16.21 FGP EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The external audit report had now been carried out and the following issues had been raised:

- The Fixed Assets were showing a decrease with no explanation, and the Clerk had replied advising that the reduction was due to the removal of the old skate park equipment. This would increase again next year due to the provision of all the new equipment and an accompanying note would be added to avoid the same query next time.
- The increase in Staff Costs, which were due to the clerk changing from part time to full time, and once again an accompanying note had not been provided, but this had now been addressed.
- The fact that the Risk Assessment had been reviewed but this had not been formally Minuted, which would have resulted in loss of Quality Parish Status for one year had this been applicable.
- All points raised in the Internal Audit have now been carried out and addressed as appropriate.

16.22 FGP BENIAN'S PAVILION – FUTURE FEE STRUCTURE

- The out of date fire risk assessment was covered above in Minute 16.21.
- Extension options. Three options have been sent to the Parish Council for comment prior to the Benians Committee moving forward. These will be looked at in more detail at the Open Space Committee the following week and comments will be forwarded on. It was agreed that as the building is owned by the Parish Council, even though the Benians Committee are financing the improvements, that they will still need to be under the same procurement regulations as the Parish Council have to adhere to and permission given by Sport England.
- Fee structure. It has been of concern that the Pavilion currently runs at a loss each year and the Clerk had contacted other Parishes for comparison costs and potential new options of running the Pavilion to try and make it cost effective. It was agreed that the current arrangement of an annual fee for the clubs who regularly use the facility was still the best option at this point in time, but should be reviewed in the future.
The proposal discussed would be to increase fees proportionately to usage, and the following would be put forward for approval at the next Parish Council meeting giving each club at least six months' notice to accommodate the proposed increases,:
 - o Football Club – from £600 to £1000
 - o Archery Club – from £120 to £300
 - o Sports & Social Club – from £120 to £300
 - o Those who use the Pavilion once a month, now paying £120 increase to £140 (ie. Putting/Sailing/WI)
 - o Those who are just associate members and pay sports affiliation fee of £5 per month ie. £60 per annum (Bowls/Anglers/Gospel Youth Club)
 - o Scouts – currently pay ground rent for hut and affiliation fee for Explorers, this year they paid a total of £85, so an increase to £100 would seem appropriate.

- Ad hoc hirings. All pay £5 per hour, proposed increase to £7.50 per hour (includes Art Club and Diddi Dance)
- Despite a third email being sent to the Archers, no-one had responded to the request for a meeting with the Parish Council. It was agreed, therefore, to put a proposal together with details of the proposed price increase in a letter format, non-negotiable.

16.23 FGP BANK CURRENT AND DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS

The Clerk reported that following attempting to set up Internet Banking with TSB that she was informed that as the current account was so old it was not possible to take this further and the only option was to open a completely new account. It was agreed that as there are so few current Standing Orders and Direct Debits and that if we were to continue with TSB that this should be a relatively easy process, and it was agreed that the Clerk should move forward with this Option.

It was also agreed that, as currently, the Parish Council has funds in excess of £75,000 with the TSB, to reduce the financial risk the funds in the deposit account should be moved to a different source. The clerk had been sent details with a recommended Nationwide account (currently 0.8%) and it was agreed to look in more detail at this, and any other potentially good accounts with a good interest rate for transferral.

16.24 FGP MATTERS ARISING FROM FULL COUNCIL

- Following a request to the Parish Council from Cllr Seaton, and its subsequent deferral, to release up to £2,000 for the Communities Facilities project for professional fees, a detailed discussion took place. Concern was raised over the potential pitfalls of going forward too quickly and it was considered that this course of action was too premature, and that at this stage hand drawn concepts would be adequate to move forward with. It was also proposed that the working party should endeavor to contact as many bodies as possible to find out what funds were available and put together a portfolio of grants and possible options of funding, to get an idea of budget before getting professionals involved. The Committee agreed to review this at the budget meeting in October following further progress from the working party. It was also noted that the Parish Council will need to carefully follow the procurement process as detailed in the Governance and Accountability regulations.
- The Clerk confirmed that the temporary employment of an assistant was working well and that there was strong evidence that a position for a part time assistant was necessary. It was agreed to put together an appraisal of tasks carried out and a potential job description based on that report to justify the proposal and detail benefits of a second member of staff, including holiday cover and potentially splitting the role.

16.25 FGP NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 26th October 2016, which would be the budget meeting, 7.30pm at the Parish Office.

16.26 FGP The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.50 pm.

.....

Chairman