

## **FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL**

**Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee  
Held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018, commencing at 7.30pm  
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

### **18.01 FGP OPEN SESSION**

The Chairman raised the issue of the Council's website after having received details of an outsourced website company from a recent meeting attendance. Although the Council had voted to move to the Hugo Fox hosted website, the Clerk had not, as yet, had the time to set the website up. The Clerk confirmed that although she was happy to maintain it, was struggling to find time to compile all the data and actually set the website up from scratch. It was agreed that, and taking into consideration email comments from Cllr Simon Thomas, Hugo Fox was still the preferred option and it was agreed that the Clerk should contact Cllr McCarthy to see if he would be able to assist with the initial set up with his IT knowledge. It was acknowledged that Cllr Thomas had the expertise, but due to work pressures and the huge amount he already does in his role as a Parish Councillor, it was agreed that another Councillor should be approached to assist in this instance.

The Chairman also raised the content of an email received from HALC with reference to the Independent Commission on Freedom of Information report and that the Government has agreed to update the Code of Practice issued under Section 45 of the Freedom of Information Act. There is an opportunity to respond to the consultation (deadline 2<sup>nd</sup> February) and it was agreed to approach HALC to see if they are considering a response, as they were perhaps better placed to respond with their breadth of knowledge, and find out if there was any benefit to the Council responding separately.

**There were no further issues raised during the Open Session, the meeting commenced at 19.54pm. Standing Orders were applied.**

### **18.02 FGP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

A belated apology for absence was received from Cllr Thomas, who had been unavoidably detained.

### **18.03 FGP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **18.04 FGP MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

- The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were proposed as accurate by Cllr Davis, seconded by Cllr Tomlinson, and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising:
  - The Clerk raised the issue of the replacement of the safety surfacing in the children's play area, and reported that one of the companies who had quoted, had offered a further 5% reduction in their quoted prices, if they were given the job to carry out the work this month. It was agreed that, as it had already been agreed to use developers' contributions to carry out the work, and that the work needed to be done before the next RoSPA inspection, to give the go ahead. After detailed discussion it was decided to stick with the grass matting option, as opposed to changing to Rhino Mulch, and on

the immediate surrounding area only, using the grass as the additional safety surface area.

- Hi Viz vests ordered but not received, Clerk to chase. Appraisals to be discussed later in meeting.
- Alton Sports Centre; the Clerk reported that although no response had ever been received to our letter, an invitation to join the sports board had been received, and the Chairman was attending the meeting the following evening.
- GDPR. The Clerk confirmed she was attending an initial advisory briefing tomorrow, and was also being discussed at the EHAPTC meetings, to consider a district wide Data Protection Officer.
- Parish Office location. Following the Village Hall Committee's decision not to hire the Committee Room for the Parish Council office, and having had looked at other options, it was decided that the office should stay at Lymington Barns for the foreseeable future. The only concern is access, and it was suggested by Cllr Tomlinson that a downstairs bell system be installed so that those that were unable to access office due to restrictive disabilities, they could ring and the Clerk could come down and assist them at ground level.

#### **18.05 FGP TO AGREE SIGNATORIES AND DIVIDEND PAYMENT OPTIONS FOR NEW DEPOSIT FUND**

The Clerk advised that she was in the process of completing for the forms to move the funds from the Deposit account and invest the money in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund, but needed clarification on the following points:

- It was RESOLVED to reinvest the dividend (interest payment) received rather than pay out to another bank account.
- It was RESOLVED that the Clerk will be the main contact on the account. It was also RESOLVED that as three further signatories are required on the account, it was agreed that Cllrs Foster, Tomlinson and Thomas should be the designated Councillors, Cllr Davis was excluded as he is the representative Councillor who checks the accounts as per Financial Regulations. Once the signatories had completed the relevant paperwork, all documents would be sent to the CCLA.

#### **18.06 FGP NOTIFICATION OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR APPOINTMENTS FOR THE 2017-2018 FINANCIAL YEAR**

The Clerk referred to the email dated 20 November 2017 advising the PC of the external auditor appointments from the SAAA, circulated, also circulated at the meeting was a copy of the new Annual Return, now known as the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2017/18, for information.

#### **18.07 FGP STAFF APPRAISALS**

It was agreed that, providing it was suitable for Paul Bridges to attend an evening appraisal, to organise both Appraisals for the same evening, ideally in the first two weeks of February. The Clerk agreed to arrange.

#### **18.08 FGP TO APPROVE SUMMARY REPORT OF LOCAL COUNCIL RISK SYSTEM (LCRS)**

The Clerk circulated a summary copy of a report for consideration and confirmation prior to approval at Full Council. The main document, being over 100 pages long, was not circulated but was available for inspection at the meeting. The Clerk agreed to circulate the summary document prior to the Full Council meeting.

#### **18.09 FGP BUDGET APPROVAL AND PRECEPT PROPOSAL**

It was agreed to make the following amendments to the draft budget, prepared at the previous meeting:

- Add an income amount for entry fees of £1000.

- Remove the income amount for the Council Tax support grant as no longer applicable.
- Village Hall Hire, increase to £500 due to increase of use and charges.
- Sundry expenses changed to event expenses, and increase budget to £700 for this year's event.
- Office rent, provisional increase proposed of £1500 reduced to £150, due to agreement to stay at Lymington Barns, with new measures in place as agreed, see matters arising.
- Slight increase in community building fund reserve from the proposed £6300 to £7380 to round up net income over expenditure figure.

Following the changes as above, and following discussion and agreement, the proposal would be for Full Council approval to request a precept of £109,000, a £4,000 increase from 2017/2018's figure of £105,000, which would be a 3.8% increase. It should be noted however, Cllr Davis's reticence with the proposal expressing a preference for the lower figure of £108,000 being a 2.8% increase, mindful of the other services proposing increases, and the likely overall increase in Council Tax and that this should be a consideration.

It was not possible at this stage to calculate the actual increase that would be shown on the Council tax bill as not having up to date house number information.

#### **18.10 FGP NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 7.30pm, venue to be confirmed.

#### **18.11 FGP The Chairman closed the meeting at 21.08pm.**

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Chairman