

FOUR MARKS PARISH COUNCIL

**Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
Held on Wednesday 8th November 2017, commencing at 7.30pm
Unit 32, Lymington Barns, Medstead**

Members Present: Cllr Janet Foster (Chair), Cllrs John Davis, Simon Thomas and Anne Tomlinson
Attending: S Goudie (Clerk)
Apologies: None

17.31 FGP OPEN SESSION

The Chairman raised a company who had been exhibiting at the HALC AGM the previous weekend who were promoting Parish Council websites and had been quite impressed. Although agreement had been reached for the Council to change over to a Hugo Fox run site, the Clerk due to other more pressing work issues has not yet had the opportunity to build the new website, and it was agreed to investigate the company further.

There were no further issues raised during the Open Session, the meeting commenced at 7.35pm. Standing Orders were applied.

17.32 FGP APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

17.33 FGP DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

17.34 FGP MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- The minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 26th July 2017 were proposed as accurate by Cllr Tomlinson, seconded by Cllr Davis, and were duly signed by the Chairman.
- Matters arising:
 - Staff Update, the concerns raised at Open Space Committee had been addressed, and it was agreed to raise any further issues at the appraisal stage, to be held January/February. It was also agreed that additional Four Marks Hi Viz vests should be ordered, in larger sizes, to promote the Council's presence in Council areas. The Clerk confirmed that she was happy at this stage that a replacement deputy was not required.
 - Developers' contributions, the Clerk advised that following the Chairmans intervention, the outstanding amount, except for one item, had been paid today. The Clerk to advise EHDC of the missing payment.
 - Risk Assessment; the Risk Assessment had been updated at the July meeting, however the Clerk confirmed that the risk assessment software still needed to be uploaded and confirmed that this would be done by the end of 2017.
 - Alton Sports Centre; the Chairman raised concerns over missing resolutions and recommendation contained within the EHDC Cabinets minutes, relating to the Sports Centre, over the radius of parishes contributing to the project. The £220,000 contribution contained with the S106 Agreement for the Alton Sports Project was showing on the EHDC spreadsheet as £110,000, however the S106

clearly says £220,000. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to Sean Herdman-Grant, the Alton Sports Centre project manager, asking if the developers contributions had been spent, and if so, on what. How many other parishes have so far had S106 monies committed to the project, and if so, how much. The residents of Four Marks were still without their youth sports/community facility, and the Parish Council need to ensure they are fully informed as to where the money is being spent/allocated.

- Benians Accounts; Cllr Davis had spoken to the Treasurer of the Committee, as requested, and she had explained that she was in a difficult position when preparing the accounts as she was not in possession of all the information. It was agreed that the question had been raised and they were now aware that the Parish Council had registered a concern.
- Cllr Thomas asked if, following the request at the last meeting, if an Excel spreadsheet on the Council's accounts had been prepared, Cllr Davis circulated a hard copy at the meeting and confirmed he would send out an electronic copy to Cllr Thomas.

17.35 FGP NEW POLICY DOCUMENTS FOR DISCUSSION

Employers Discretion Policy

The Clerk advised Councillors that a compulsory discretion, the waiving of actuarial reductions, was missing from the current Employers Discretion Policy and that it needed to be amended to include the missing policy section. The Committee members discussed and agreed the policy decision for approval by Full Council. Once the document is formally approved by the Parish Council it will be sent to Hampshire Pension Fund for agreement. The document will be on display to all LGPS employees for 30 days, before final approval by the Hampshire Pension Fund.

17.36 FGP INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Clerk circulated the amended audit report and the Chairman thanked the Clerk for her hard work in achieving a successful interim audit.

The recommendations under Assessment and Management of Risk had been addressed at the Open Spaces Committee and it had been agreed that; the Parish Council had assessed their current procedures for maintenance checks of equipment, and were of the opinion that they were adequate for the Parish Council's requirements. The equipment at the Recreation Ground was checked by a Council representative who had undertaken the appropriate training, at least on a monthly basis, and within 24 hours of a report of damage. The Council representative would keep the inspection records, and would let the Clerk have them for the audit check, and archive filing, when appropriate. The Parish Council would continue to have the formal annual RoSPA safety check. The procedures as detailed above would be contained within the newly compiled Recreation Ground Rules of Use document, awaiting formal approval at Full Council. It was agreed that both R1 and R2 were satisfactorily addressed.

17.37 FGP DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

- Deposit account – Transfer of funds. Following discussion it was agreed that it would make financial sense to invest the deposit account funds in the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund, and remove the risk of having over the threshold of held funds at the same bank. However the Clerk was asked to investigate the management fees to check that there would be a positive or at least a neutral yield, and that the management fees did not exceed the interest paid. Members were agreed that this fund offered very little risk and therefore it was

RESOLVED to transfer the deposit account funds to CCLA upon clarification of the aforementioned query.

- Current account. It was agreed that the Current Account needed to be changed to enable internet banking, and it was agreed to stay with TSB, and try and work out a way of adding a new account without having to submit all the personal details of signatories again. Clerk to investigate and action as soon as possible.

17.38 FGP GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION/DATA PROTECTION BILL 2018

Cllr Thomas advised members of the situation with reference to the above two items, the Clerk confirming that GDPR comes into effect on 25th May 2018, although the Bill was still to be approved. The Data Protection Act 1998 would be repealed. To understand the duties and control measures that will be required, the Clerk had booked a place on a specific HALC course on 11th January 2018, to see how both the GDPR and new Data Protection Bill would affect Parish Councils, and whether the Clerk was able to be appointed the Data Protection Officer. It was also agreed that, following her attendance on the training course, the Clerk should prepare a report to be circulated to all Councillors and Four Marks sports clubs and Benians Association members to ensure that they will also be compliant once the GDPR come into force.

17.39 FGP INITIAL BUDGET PREPARATION

Items noted for consideration during the budget process:

- Swelling Hill Pond, potential future maintenance costs
- Kingswood Copse, ring fenced funds would be very low at the end of this financial year and should be added to now.
- Allotments, additional replacement fencing
- Badger Close, adequate ring fenced funds this year, look at adding to reserves possibly in the next financial year.
- Parish office relocation costs
- Lymington Bottom Green, additional maintenance
- General tree and hedge maintenance, parish wide
- Community buildings fund
- Increase in community donations
- Staff salary increases and associated costs.
- Replacing safety surfaces in children's play area – *agreed use of Developers contributions*

Cllr Davis had prepared an Excel spreadsheet with budget headings which was distributed for discussion at the meeting. After reviewing the current financial position he confirmed that there were adequate reserves in place. He also questioned some of the headings and was there a requirement for some of them? The Clerk agreed to look at streamlining some headings and maybe combining general and open space labour and materials in the next financial year.

The committee looked at each budget heading, projected spend and potential next financial year spend, and any proposed increases, and then asked the Clerk to then prepare a forecast for circulation, and taking into consideration potential income, calculate a provisional amount for next year's precept request. General advice is to prepare for future increase in services that the Parish Council will need to provide and a small increase would be advisable.

17.40 FGP NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 10th January 2018, 7.30pm, venue to be confirmed.

17.41 FGP The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.35 pm.

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Chairman