

Report of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to the Parish Council

The Committee met at 8.00 pm on Monday 12th January 2015 in Committee Room 1 at the Parish Hall in Great Baddow. Councillor Mrs C Shaw chaired the meeting.

Present: Councillors Mrs C Shaw, T Miller, Mrs V Sadowsky, Mrs S Young, A Sosin, Mrs J Sosin and Mrs M Miller

In Attendance: Assistant Clerk of the Council

565/14 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs G Jarvis, K Ronaldson and Mrs D Ronaldson

Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson had substituted Cllr Mrs M Miller.

566/14 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests or Registerable Non Pecuniary Interests.

567/14 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

568/14 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2014 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr A Sosin.

569/14 Clerk's Report

1. Bank Accounts

1. Arrangements are now in place for the income to be paid into the Unity Trust account through the local Post Office. The procedure requires cash and cheques to be paid in separately.
2. The Chairman and the Administrative Assistant have completed the necessary paperwork in order to be added as signatories on the Nat West Imprest account, and this should be operational in approximately two weeks. Cllr A Sosin reminded the meeting that prior to the arrangement being set up with the Post Office, the income was being paid into the Imprest Account and that a surplus remains in that account which should be moved to the Unity Trust. It was agreed that a cheque should be written as soon as possible to transfer the funds.
3. A general fixed rate deposit bond was opened on 1st May 2013 for the deposit of £90,000. This was a one year bond which expired on 19th May 2014 and the funds are now in the Unity Trust account. Cllr A Sosin proposed that the funds should be placed back on deposit and it was agreed that, as an interim measure, a reserve account should be set up with Unity Trust, whilst research is undertaken into a higher interest account. A further lump sum of £15,210 is currently in a Liquidity Manager account with Nat West and it was agreed that this account should be closed and the monies transferred to a higher rate account.

2. Staff Handbook

The staff handbook was discussed at the meeting of the Organisation Methods and Personnel Committee on 28th January 2013 where it was

agreed that the Clerk would incorporate further amendments, and consider the staff contracts, before submitting information to Northgate Arinso. The Assistant Clerk agreed to investigate whether any notes were available from that meeting.

3. Review of Risk Assessments and Internal Controls, including effectiveness of Internal Audit.

The review of business risk assessments and internal controls should now be carried out prior to the end of year. This will include a review of business risks, operational risks and data storage risks. It was agreed that the Risk Assessment Working Group should meet at 8pm on Monday 26th January, and submit a report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 9th February 2015.

4. Review of Insurance including fidelity guarantee

The current level of fidelity guarantee is £300,000 and at the interim internal audit of 10th November 2014 this was noted as falling within the recommended guidelines of year end balances plus 50% of the precept. The insurance policy is due for renewal on 1st June 2015.

5. Damaged Equipment in the Recreation Ground

The broken platform on the Proludic play equipment has now been replaced, and new bump stops have been installed, and glued in place, on two pieces of the outdoor gym equipment.

6. Replacement Dog Waste Bins

The Assistant Clerk had contacted Tim May at Chelmsford City Council with regard to the replacement of two dog waste bins but a reply had not yet been received. Cllr A Sosin will chase this up.

It was noted that there was no update to report on the following items from the last meeting:

1. Bell Centre downpipe
2. Caretaking
3. Verge Cutting in Maldon Road
4. Great Baddow Times advertising

570/14 Financial Transactions

1. The report detailing the amended income and expenditure for November 2014 will be presented to the next meeting of this committee for approval.
2. The income for December 2014 was **£8806.20** (£8689.27 Net) and the expenditure for December 2014 was **£31674.58** (£31006.15 Net). The complete income and expenditure for December 2014, and the expenditure for January 2015 was proposed for acceptance by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin. This was agreed.

The following cheques were issued to cover expenditure of over £500.

Date	Number	PAYEE	Amount	VAT	TOTAL
6/01/2015	300282	BT – Office phones	436.10	87.22	523.32
6/01/2015	300288	Glasdon UK Ltd – seat Plumtree Ave	428.71	85.74	514.45
6/01/2015	300289	Lambert Smith Hampton – Bell Centre lease	1073.75		1073.75
6/01/2015	300291	Newsquest – Great Baddow Times distribution	457.98	91.60	549.58
6/01/2015	300292	Play & Leisure Ltd – Toddler Play equipment	11424.00	2284.80	13708.80

6/01/2015	300293	Proludic Ltd – Replacement parts for play equipment	472.77	94.56	567.33
6/01/2015	300296	Vine HR Ltd – HR support	3960.00	792.00	4752.00

571/14 **Financial Review**

A comparison of the income and expenditure to the end of December 2014 was circulated and noted. The increasing costs of the annual electrical (PAT) testing were noted, and a query was raised as to whether this could be carried out in-house.

572/14 **Precept**

Cllr A Sosin informed the meeting that no change was currently required to the amount of the precept requested for 2015/16, although it is understood that a consultation is taking place on the possible capping of larger parish councils.

573/14 **Grounds Committee – New equipment**

The Assistant Clerk informed the meeting that a quotation of £625 (including VAT and delivery) had been obtained for the purchase of a small mower for the cemetery. It was agreed that the Grounds Manager should be asked to find out if the machine can be obtained for a trial period to assess its suitability, prior to a decision on any purchase. Cllr Mrs S Young agreed to meet the Grounds Manager to view the problems with the tennis court nets and discuss the appropriate course of action.

574/14 **Recreation Ground – Toddlers Play Area**

The Assistant Clerk circulated a photograph and short report from the Grounds Manager, in which concerns were raised about the slight incline that now leads up to the equipment, and the join between the old and new surfaces that could become a trip hazard in the longer term. The Assistant Clerk will write to Play and Leisure expressing satisfaction with the equipment, but raising concerns about the quality of the installation. Cllr Mrs S Young will complete the feedback form for Play and Leisure.

575/14 **Parish Hall**

The Assistant Clerk provided copies of three quotations prior to the meeting. It was agreed that one quotation was not suitable, and that the remaining two contractors should be asked to provide two references, and where applicable, further information on the cost of scaffolding.

576/14 **Matters for Information**

- Cllr Mrs J Sosin reminded the meeting about the surgery and pre-meet on Saturday 17th January 2015.
- Cllr Mrs S Young informed the meeting that she had been able to obtain the services of a Quantity Surveyor to view, and offer advice, on future projects, and in particular to assist with the proposals for the resurfacing of the All Weather Sports Courts. It was agreed that reference should be made to the long term plan for any other areas where advice would be welcome. Cllr Mrs S Young will request another councillor to attend a meeting with the surveyor once arrangements have been made.

It was resolved that the meeting would be closed to the public and press under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted in the following item

577/14 Staffing

Cllr Mrs J Sosin informed the meeting that the Clerk was receiving treatment and was not yet able to return from sick leave. A locum clerk has provided valuable assistance with the financial work in the office, and it was proposed by Cllr Mrs J Sosin and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young that the locum clerk should be employed for up to one day a week until further notice. This was agreed.

A home visit has taken place to a member of the grounds staff who has been on long term sick leave, and the Grounds Manager will consider a phased return on light duties.

The Assistant Clerk informed the meeting that it has not been possible to use annual leave over the past few months due to the staffing situation in the office. It was agreed that the maximum allowance of five days should be carried over to next year, and that recompense should be made for up to 10 days of unused annual leave. Proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin. Cllr Mrs S Young requested that the annual leave of the Administrative Assistant during 2014 should be placed on the agenda for the next Organisation Methods and Personnel Committee meeting on 2nd February 2015

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 10.00 pm.

Signed.....Chairman.....Date