

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

The Committee met at 8.00 pm on Monday 9th February 2015 in Committee Room 1 at the Parish Hall in Great Baddow. Councillor Mrs C Shaw chaired the meeting.

Present: Councillors Mrs C Shaw, Mrs V Sadowsky, Mrs S Young, Mrs J Sosin, K Ronaldson, Mrs D Ronaldson, Mrs M Miller and Cllr T Miller from 9.45pm

In Attendance: Assistant Clerk of the Council

626/14 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllrs G Jarvis, T Miller and A Sosin. Cllr T Miller had substituted Cllr Mrs M Miller.

627/14 Declaration of Interests

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

628/14 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

629/14 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2015 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky, with the following amendment: Item 575/14, first line, the words 'for exterior decoration' to be added after the word 'quotations'.

The minutes of the Organisation Methods and Personnel Committee will be reported to the Council meeting on 16th February 2015.

630/14 Clerk's Report

1. Bank Accounts

1. The Chairman and the Administrative Assistant have now been added as signatories on the Nat West Imprest account.
2. An application has been made to Unity Trust for a reserve account to be set up to run alongside the current account. Additional security information has been requested and this has been sent.

2. Dog Waste Bins

The replacement dog waste bins have now been installed in the footpath by the Church and at Readers Corner.

3. Staff Training

1. The Assistant Clerk attended the Election Briefing for Parish Council Clerks at Chelmsford City Council last week which was very informative. Full details of the election timetable, and copies of all the required paperwork can be found on the City Council website.
2. The EALC are organising a Cemetery Sexton training course, which will be delivered by the ICCM. This covers legal aspects relating to cemeteries, but also customer care considerations, and is aimed at managers, administrative staff and staff working in the cemeteries that meet and assist with the burials. This is a half day course at a cost of £47 per person. It was

agreed that the grounds staff and office staff should attend this course.

3. Chelmsford City Council are organising a one day Level 2 course in Food Safety in Catering. The Assistant Clerk already holds this qualification and it was agreed that the Administrative Assistant should attend the course as the office are now involved in a number of catered events. The cost will be £59.

4. **Delivery of Great Baddow Times**

The Administrative Assistant and Cllr A Sosin are undertaking an analysis of the current delivery rounds being used by Newsquest, and the areas that are not included. Once this has been completed the matter will be reviewed, and consideration given as to whether quotations should be obtained from an alternative distributor.

631/14 **Lawn Cemetery – Cancellation of Plot Reservation**

The Assistant Clerk informed the meeting of the request, from a deed holder, to cancel a plot reservation in the Lawn Cemetery. In line with existing practice, it was agreed that the plot should revert to the ownership of the Parish Council, for reallocation, and that a refund of 50% of the fee paid at the time of reservation, should be made. Cllr Mrs S Young enquired whether this matter was included in the current Cemetery Regulations and proposed that if it was not, the matter should be referred to the Grounds Meeting on 30th March 2015 to consider an amendment to the regulations.

632/14 **Community Celebration**

A breakdown of the costs for the Community Celebration had been circulated prior to the meeting. There was some discussion of the arrangements and the costs, and it was agreed that an advance should be given to the Assistant Clerk to facilitate the purchase of items for the event. A sum of £447.82 was agreed. Proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin.

633/14 **Financial Transactions**

1. The reports detailing the amended income and expenditure for October and November 2014 were noted.
2. The income for January 2015 was **£12072.08** (£11969.97 Net) and the expenditure for January 2015 was **£48807.72** (£45142.07 Net). February expenditure (for January invoices being paid this month) is **£32511.87** (£31576.68 Net).

The complete income and expenditure for January 2015 and the expenditure for February 2015 was proposed for acceptance by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young. This was agreed.

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

Date	Number	PAYEE	Amount	VAT	TOTAL
9/02/2015	300304	Taylormade Castings – Memorial Bench	885.00	177.00	1062.00
9/02/2015	300305	PRS – Music Licence	931.48	186.30	1117.78

The increasing cost of the PRS music licence was noted, and it was agreed that consideration should be given to increasing the Parish Hall function fee to take account of this additional expenditure. This will be placed on the agenda for the July meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

It was agreed that the floor mat inside the bar should be added to the list of mats that are changed on a regular basis by Cannon Hygiene. This will assist with the maintenance of the new floor covering due to be installed in the next few months.

634/14 Financial Review

A comparison of the income and expenditure to the end of January 2015 was circulated and noted. There were no major concerns but it was noted that the income from both the sports courts and the cemetery remains low.

635/14 Report from the Business Continuity and Risk Management Working Group

It was agreed that the Risk Register and Action Plan for the Business Risk Assessments and Internal Controls, and the Review of the Effectiveness of the Internal Audit should be accepted, as recommended by the Working Group.

Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson left the meeting at 9.03pm.

The following items were noted for future consideration:

1. To establish whether a training policy is in place and whether any updating is required
2. To confirm whether any risk assessments have been provided by the Community Association
3. To facilitate a review of lone working with Line Managers

Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson returned to the meeting at 9.07pm.

It was agreed that a review of progress on the Action Plan would be considered at the Finance and General Purposes Committee in September 2015.

636/14 Play in the Park 2015

The Assistant Clerk informed the meeting that the budget for the Play in the Park sessions this year would be sufficient to meet the costs of the eight sessions that have been requested, but there were no funds remaining for additional items. It was agreed that it would not be possible to provide any extras this year.

637/14 Grounds Staff Mobile Phones

Cllr Mrs C Shaw informed the meeting that the Business Continuity and Risk Assessment Working Group had identified the urgent need for the groundstaff to be provided with new mobile phones, as a number of the existing phones are faulty or not working at all. The Assistant Clerk replied that an order had been placed for SIM free phones, to enable the staff to maintain their current phone numbers, and these will be given to the staff as soon as possible.

638/14 Recreation Ground Expenditure

1. **Tennis Courts** - Cllr Mrs S Young informed the meeting that in addition to the problem with the tennis post sockets, it has now been noticed that the surface is breaking up at the back of the courts. This may be due to tree roots, and advice will be required on treatment and resurfacing. There is also an increasing amount of moss on the courts that requires treatment and power washing. These problems have resulted in two courts being currently

unusable. DOE Sports will be asked to revise their quotation for the tennis post sockets as it includes the provision of posts and nets which will not be required. These matters will be referred to the next meeting of the Grounds Committee on 30th March 2015.

2. **Cemetery Mower** - The Grounds Manager has been unable to obtain a loan of the small mower that is required for the cremated remains section of the cemetery. It was agreed that, due to the inability to obtain a mower of the correct size elsewhere, an order should be placed with P Tuckwell Ltd at a cost of £520.84 plus VAT, to be met from the budget for Noakes Place maintenance, which has not been required this year.
3. **Bollards** – Cllr Mrs S Young explained to the meeting the proposed location for the bollards, which are aimed at reducing the number of vehicles driving on to the grass in the Recreation Ground and Noakes Place. It was agreed to investigate the funds available for this work in the Projects budget, and to request a contribution from the Community Association. The matter will be referred to the Council meeting on 16th February 2015.

639/14 **Matters for Information**

- Cllr Mrs J Sosin reminded the meeting about the surgery and pre-meet on Saturday 14th February 2015, and Cllrs Mrs V Sadowsky and Mrs C Shaw gave their apologies. The Assistant Clerk reminded the meeting that she will be on annual leave on 19th February and the Administrative Assistant will be on leave on 20th February.

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

640/14 **Bell Centre**

Cllr K Ronaldson updated the meeting on the progress of the feasibility study, and the information that had been received from Hurley Porte & Duell regarding the proposed environmental investigations. It was agreed that Phase 1 of the investigations, the paper study, should be authorised, at a cost of approximately £1095 plus VAT but Phase 2, the excavation work, should not proceed at this time, as it is an outline budgetary cost for the project that is required at this stage. It is understood that further costs may be incurred, in addition to the final figure from the feasibility study, as a result of this decision not to proceed with Phase 2. Proposed by Cllr K Ronaldson and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young.

Cllr T Miller entered the meeting at 9.45pm.

641/14 **Office Staffing**

1. The Assistant Clerk outlined the problems that had arisen with the salary payments to two staff members. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs S Young and seconded by Cllr Mrs C Shaw that arrangements should be made to resolve the problem, in a way suitable to the employees, once confirmation of the situation has been received in writing from Acumen Wages Service.

The Assistant Clerk left the meeting at 9.50pm

2. Cllr J Sosin updated the Committee on the long term absences and, following a recommendation from OM&P Committee it was confirmed that the cost of additional professional advice would be

£85 per hour, and an additional cost of up to 3 hours was agreed, to come from reserves if necessary.

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

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