

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

The Committee met at 7.47 pm on **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015** in The Parish Hall in Great Baddow. Councillor Mrs C Shaw chaired the meeting.

Present: Councillors Mrs C Shaw, Mrs V Sadowsky, A Sosin, K Ronaldson, Mrs D Ronaldson, Mrs J Sosin, T Miller, Mrs S Young and G Jarvis

In Attendance: The Clerk of the Council

### **399/15 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence as all members of the committee were present.

### **400/15 Declaration of Interests**

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

### **401/15 Public Question Time**

There were no members of the public present.

### **402/15 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr A Sosin.

### **403/15 Clerk's Report**

#### **1. Computers**

The Clerk has drawn up a specification for the new IT and for the computer maintenance and support. This has been sent out to companies identified earlier in the year and quotes are awaited. Cllr A Sosin asked whether this covered the installation at the Grounds Office and the Clerk confirmed that it did. It was agreed to copy the specifications to all councillors.

#### **2. Great Baddow Times Delivery**

The Great Baddow Times was delivered by Delivering Success in September 2015 and the contract now needs to be reviewed. It was agreed that this will be on the agenda for the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes committee on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The Clerk will copy the list of roads that had been delivered to councillors.

#### **3. Parish Hall**

The Clerk still needs to contact the builder about the problem with the down pipe at the front entrance of the hall.

#### **4. Bad Debt**

The action agreed by the committee (a small claims action) still needs to be carried out. The advertiser has not been allowed to continue advertising in the magazine.

#### **5. Tree and Legionella Surveys**

The Clerk still needs to speak to Chelmsford City Council about the tree surveys in Noakes Place. Cllr A Sosin told the meeting that work was being carried out on the Horse Chestnut tree that had lost a branch on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

The Clerk has contacted Danbury Parish Council and has been given details of the contractor that they used for the Legionella Surveys. The contractor still needs to be contacted.

## 6. Buckleys Car Park

The Clerk has spoken to the Grounds Manager who has confirmed that the damaged Laurel bushes in Buckleys Car Park are as a result of the car fire in the car park earlier in the year.

### 404/15 Financial Transactions

1. The amended Expenditure for September 2015 was **£47549.16** (£45315.98 Net).
2. The Income for September 2015 was **£186675.45** (£186460.42 Net). The Clerk reported to the meeting that the precept had been transferred to the Unity Trust Deposit Account as per previous instructions, although the rate of interest is exactly the same as the Current Account.
3. The September/October Expenditure to be paid from the Unity Trust current account in October is **£36639.62** (£35792.52 Net).

The above items were proposed for acceptance by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin and were agreed.

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

Date	Number	PAYEE	Amount	VAT	TOTAL
12/10/2015	300653	Anglia Heating & Maintenance Eng. Ltd – Boiler Services and repairs	666.92	111.15	555.77
12/10/2015	300655	BT Payment Services – Telephone Charges	550.94	91.82	459.12
12/10/2015	300656	Chelmsford City Council – Trade Waste, PITP, NP Lease & Wasps Nest	2250.61	-	2250.61
12/10/2015	300661	Essex & Suffolk Water – VL and LC Water Rates	624.43	-	624.43
12/10/2015	300667	Taylormade Castings Ltd – Memorial Seat	1062.00	177.00	885.00
12/10/2015	300672	Miss A C Wood – Essential Car User Allowance	585.00	-	585.00

### 405/15 Financial Review

The Clerk circulated a copy of the summary income and expenditure to date. The Clerk told the meeting that some of the incomes for the Grounds Committee (Tennis, AWSC and Cemetery) are still quite low and this was noted.

Cllr Mrs C Shaw raised the matter of the Community Association's minutes, where it was suggested that they approach the Parish Council to pay for roof repairs. It was agreed that once the lease had been checked, a letter should be sent.

### 406/15 Budget Expenditure exceeding the amounts provided in the Revenue Budgets

The Clerk reported that some budget headings that were likely to be exceeded had been reported to the committees under the discussions

about the budget. The Clerk confirmed that none of these budgets would currently exceed the total committee budget and this was accepted.

#### **407/15 Fees and Charges**

It was confirmed by Cllr A Sosin that three cemetery fees had been amended following the July meeting. These were the topping up of cremated remains plots (from £27.00 to £28.00), a permit for work to a memorial (from £14.00 to £15.00) and the fee for digging a cremated remains plot (from £50.00 to £51.00).

It was also noted that the fee for the hire of CR2 at the Parish Hall should be amended and this was agreed at £2.30 per hour with a minimum charge of £4.60. This was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin.

#### **408/15 Energy and Utilities**

##### **1. Energy Efficiency Certificate**

The Clerk has made further enquiries about the Energy Efficiency certificate. It is the case that since the change in the law, the Parish Hall now needs to display such a certificate. This can only be given by a registered, qualified auditor who can be found via the government's website. The Clerk contacted a local contractor who is registered to carry out the audit for the certificate but to date has not received a reply. There are a couple of other companies reasonably close to Great Baddow and one of these will be contacted. The Clerk was also asked to check whether the Community Association hall will require a certificate

- ##### **2. Energy Management System for the Council's Utility bills**
- Further to a report considered by the committee in October 2014, a search of the company was carried out through Companies House. The company number of Utilitywise is 05849580 and was incorporated on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2006. It started out as Commercial Utility Brokers Ltd and changed its name to Utilitywise Ltd in June 2010. There was another change of name to Utilitywise Plc in May 2012. It is now a Public Limited Company and when the search was done, its accounts and returns were up to date. The service is paid for by a commission from the suppliers, so there is no fee payable by the Parish Council to Utilitywise. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky that Utilitywise should be approached to provide an energy management system for the Council.

#### **409/15 IT Systems**

##### **1. Quotations for IT Systems**

The Clerk has recently sent out specifications for both the installation of computer equipment and for the support and maintenance for the Council's IT systems. Unfortunately, these quotes will not be available for the meeting but once received will have to be factored into the budget.

##### **2. Mobile Telephones for Lone Working Staff**

Earlier in the year, some of the mobile telephones issued to the Grounds and Highways staff were replaced and new SIM cards were purchased. However, these were not the same PAYG ones that the Council has used in the past, in that they are contracts and a payment of a minimum sum of money is required each month for a "bundle". Whatever calls, texts etc. from the bundle are unused at the end of the month are lost. Further investigations were made and it was found that these are now the only types of SIM cards that are available and the old type PAYG cards are no longer available.

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young that the members of staff who require mobile telephones because they

lone work are paid an allowance of £60.00 per year to use their own phones while at work. The terms under which they are used would be the same as the current terms but it would also be made clear that the Council is not responsible for loss or damage to the handsets. It was also agreed that personal mobile telephone numbers will not be passed onto the public.

#### **410/15 Staffing Support**

##### **1. Payroll Services**

Further to a report on payroll services in 2014, the committee considered an updated report with a further quotation. The Council has expressed concerns about the performance of the current payroll provider and also a wish to change the service. The Clerk confirmed that the office is still experiencing problems with the service.

One of the main benefits of transferring to a new kind of service is that both providers can make the BACS transfers to staff directly from the Council's account and they will also pay HMRC directly. This would cut down on the amount of work that the office has to undertake. The Clerk told the meeting that J&M Payroll Services is used by a number of parish councils in Essex and they are very satisfied with the service.

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young that the quotation from J&M Payroll Services should be accepted because there are good references from other parish councils and because they have stated that there are no hidden costs. The change should take place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016.

##### **2. HR and Health & Safety Support Services**

The committee considered a report with three quotes for the HR and Health & Safety support services. After much discussion it was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young that the contract should be awarded for both services to Wirehouse. It was noted that the Clerk was in agreement with this decision.

#### **411/15 Committee Terms of Reference**

It was agreed that a separate meeting needs to be convened to discuss the Committee Terms of Reference. All members of the Finance and General Purposes committee should be invited and a date will be set by e.mail, as soon as possible.

#### **412/15 Budget**

##### **1. Review of Budget Spending for 2015/2016**

A report had been circulated before the meeting and contained figures for the first six months of the year. There are no concerns at present about most of the budget headings, with the exception of 2116 F&GP Office Equipment, which will probably be overspent. This is due to the fact that this budget has had to accommodate the leasing of a new photocopier and the additional costs, and a large increase in the End of Year Accounts Closedown, due to RBS no longer allowing the Council to share a date with another council, even though the closedown normally only takes about 3 hours. This was noted.

##### **2. Draft Budget for 2016/2017**

There was discussion about the salary, NIC and pension budgets, which will probably have to be changed. Also, two other figures would have to be changed to reflect decisions made earlier in the meeting about the provision of payroll services and HR and Health & Safety services. It was agreed that a budget to cover Health & Safety supplies should be established and it was also noted that no provision has yet been made for the IT support and maintenance.

It was agreed that the budget, with the addition of the projects outlined above, should be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

**413/15 Matters for Information**

- Cllr Mrs J Sosin reminded those present that the pre-meet will be on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2015.
- Cllr Mrs S Young reported that the new house that has been built next to 2 Dorset Avenue does not have a dropped kerb and vehicles are bouncing up and down the kerb. It was agreed that it will be checked with Chelmsford City Council whether or not a dropped kerb was part of the planning permission and if so, it will be reported.
- The Clerk raised the matter of links to the City Council agendas that are sent by e.mail. It was agreed that these will be forwarded to all councillors.
- Cllr K Ronaldson raised the matter of the use of .doc and .docx. The Clerk said that her computer is set up to default to .docx but that she would check that it is doing this.

**414/15 Private and Confidential**

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. Proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky.

**415/15 Job Evaluations**

Cllr Mrs S Young reported to the meeting that a report on the Job Evaluations has been received from Vine HR and that an initial meeting of herself, Cllr Mrs J Sosin, Cllr Mrs C Shaw and the Clerk had taken place. It was clear from that meeting that further information was required and this has been requested. The Clerk told the meeting that Liz Rymell from Vine HR is away until the end of week but that she will contact the Clerk on her return to discuss the information required. It is hoped that a full report will be placed before the Organisation, Methods & Personnel committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.50 pm.

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