

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

The Committee met at 8.03 pm on **Monday 4th April 2016** 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, G Jarvis and Mrs S Young

In Attendance: The Clerk of the Council

9/16 Apologies for Absence

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

10/16 Declaration of Interests

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

11/16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2016 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr A Sosin.

12/16 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

13/16 Clerk's Report

1. Computers

The computer in the Recreation Ground office has now been re-located to the main office to act as a server. The NAS drive storage which was being used was inappropriate for storing the dynamic RBS files and needed replacing before these files can be shared by all members of staff. As this was a matter of urgency and the computer at the Recreation Ground was not currently being used, it was installed at the main office on 12th March 2016. As a result of this, the SyncToy back-up software which was being used for the off-site back-ups has been disabled. When this was used to restore the files, the Sync-Toy proved not to be as good as had been expected and so new software will be investigated. The Council has also been advised that the main back-up external drive is failing and will need to be replaced very shortly. It has been completely re-formatted and is currently working but it could fail at any time. The computer at the Recreation Ground office will be replaced as soon as funds can be identified from the new financial year budget.

2. Recreation Ground Keys

It was recently found that the keys in the main office that were supposed to be master keys for the Recreation Ground, were in fact not. It was hoped that additional keys could be cut from the existing keys but they are extremely worn. However, Mr Denton requires some additional keys and he is going to take the worn keys and try and get some new ones cut.

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 but due to the additional workload created by the current staffing difficulties this has not been actioned yet. There have been no further problems reported with the damp.

4. **Bad Debt**
It was agreed that this action will not be progressed and will be taken off the update list. The Clerk said that this and two other amounts will now be presented to the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes committee on 3rd May 2016 for consideration for writing off.
5. **Tree Survey**
The Clerk has spoken to Chelmsford City Council about the tree survey in Noakes Place and is still awaiting a reply. This will be followed up.
6. **Legionella Survey**
The contractor for the Legionella Surveys still needs to be contacted and this will be followed up.
7. **Energy Efficiency Certificate**
The Clerk has searched for further details of registered auditors and there seem to be more contacts than there were previously. Some of the more local ones will be contacted. The Clerk will also speak to the Community Association about the Millennium Hall.
8. **Mobile Telephones**
The Clerk is drawing up an agreement for the use of their personal mobile telephones for the staff to sign and in the meantime the informal agreement is still in place.
9. **Committee Terms of Reference**
A date for a meeting to discuss the Terms of Reference still needs to be fixed.
10. **Recreation Ground Barriers**
A quote has been requested from the City Council for new barriers at the Rothmans Place entrance to the Recreation Ground but has not yet been received. This will be followed up.
11. **Highways and Amenities**
The Clerk has e.mailed Chelmsford City Council about the cost of emptying the dog waste bins but no reply has been received. This will be followed up.
12. **Procurement Regulations**
The Clerk told the meeting that a draft policy will be presented as soon as possible. The current staffing difficulties will hopefully be resolved soon and this will make time available to draft the policy.
13. **Sutherland Lodge**
It was noted that a recent article in the Essex Chronicle reported that the Sutherland Lodge doctor's surgery building has been put up for sale.
14. **Electoral Rolls**
This matter has not yet been followed up but the Clerk will contact the Electoral Office.
15. **Great Baddow Times**
The delivery of the Great Baddow Times was made on the Saturday after the last meeting.

14/16 **Financial Transactions**

1. The amended Expenditure for March 2016 was **£40014.30** (£38834.15 Net).
2. The Income for March 2016 was **£13548.98** (£13399.83 Net).
3. The March/April 2016 Expenditure to be paid from the Unity Trust current account in April is **£31317.73** (£31191.52 Net).

The Clerk told the meeting that the number of trade waste bins at the Parish Hall has been reduced from three to two. The third bin has not been required for some time and the cancellation will save about

£200.00 a year. If it is found that the bin is necessary, it can be reinstated.

The Clerk told the meeting that the Valuation Office Agency (an executive agency of HMRC) is in the process of updating the rateable values of all business properties. This is known as a revaluation. Business rates bills will be calculated using the new rateable values from 1st April 2017. The draft rateable value will be available from October 2016, which can be checked online. The information held about the Council's properties can be checked and this will be reported to the committee at the appropriate time.

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

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

| Date | Number | PAYEE | Amount | VAT | TOTAL |
|----------|--------|--|---------|-----|---------|
| 4/4/2016 | 300802 | Chelmsford City Council – Trade Waste | 1431.82 | - | 1431.82 |
| 4/4/2016 | 300803 | Chelmsford City Council – Business Rates | 2806.40 | - | 2806.40 |

8.44pm – Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson left the meeting

15/16 Financial Review

The Clerk circulated a copy of the summary income and expenditure to 31st March 2016. It was noted that the accounts are still to be prepared and that the paperwork presented is based on a simple receipts and payments basis and not on the income and expenditure basis that the Council has to report at the year end.

8.48pm – Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson entered the meeting

On this basis, the expenditure for the year from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 stands at 97.9% of budget and the income for the same period stands at 100%. The income figure has been slightly skewed by the fact that the Bowling Club has made a prepayment of the first half of the next season's fees and so when the accounts have been prepared, this figure will be slightly lower at approximately 99.5%.

16/16 Imprest Account and Autopay

The Clerk circulated a report about the Imprest Account and the Autopay. The Clerk had spoken spoke to J&M Payroll in March 2016. As agreed previously by the Council, they will be taking over the payroll service in the new financial year 2016/2017. They suggested that the easiest method of making salary and on-cost payments would be to retain the current Imprest Account and Autopay. The Council is not currently charged for the use of the Autopay facility.

In November 2013, the Clerk had expressed concerns about the method of payment for salaries that would have to be used when the new bank account was opened with Unity Trust Bank, as the bank does not provide an Autopay system. At the time it was expected that all the accounts with NatWest would be closed. In the event, the Petty Cash Account

was kept open and the Autopay has continued to be used for the payment of salaries because the Unity Trust Bank could not provide a second current account.

Recently, the Clerk has received information that the Unity Trust Bank is making changes to its Terms & Conditions and this detailed information will be circulated to all councillors in the next few days. The main points are that from 4th June 2016 there will no longer be interest paid on the current account and charges will be levied. These will be a £6 a month maintenance fee and 15p each for all credit and debit items.

The Clerk's recommendation is that the NatWest Petty Cash Imprest Account should be kept open and that the Autopay should continue to be used for the payment of salaries and on-costs. This should be reviewed in October 2016. The matter of raising the Imprest Account limit will be referred to the next meeting on 3rd May 2016. It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young that the recommendation be accepted.

17/16 Ring Fenced and Available Monies

The Clerk circulated a draft report about the ring fencing and earmarking of monies from the budget. It was noted that the title of the S106 monies should now include CIL payments. It was also suggested that the amount for the litter/dog waste bins from 2015/2016 should be ring fenced but the other items put forward should not.

The report was noted and will be presented to the committee for agreement on 3rd May 2016, when the accounts have been completed and any necessary amendments made.

18/16 Matters for Information

- Cllr Mrs S Young told the meeting that she had noticed organised cricket practice taking place on part of the football pitch. The Clerk was asked to make enquiries about this. The Clerk told the meeting that due to staff not being available, the Cricket Club will not be able to play until the weekend of 7th/8th May 2016 and this has been communicated to them.
- Cllr Mrs J Sosin reminded those present about the surgery and pre-meet on Saturday 9th April 2016 and the Village Conference on Thursday 14th April 2016. Cllr Mrs C Shaw asked about the report for this year's conference and the Clerk said that it was nearing completion and would be circulated very shortly.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.15pm.

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