

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

The Committee met at 8.05 pm on **Monday 4th July 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 S Young, Mrs J Sosin, T Miller and G Jarvis

In Attendance: The Clerk of the Council

205/16 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Mrs D Ronaldson.

206/16 Declaration of Interests

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

207/16 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2016 were signed as a true record. Proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr A Sosin.

208/16 Public Question Time

There were no members of the public present.

209/16 Clerk's Report

1. Recreation Ground Keys

Currently the two sets of keys handed back to the office have proved to be sufficient for operational requirements. In addition, another set of changing rooms keys have been found and these have proved to be useful and will be kept in the office as a master set. Once the current difficulties are resolved, enquiries will be made about having additional keys cut.

There have been some problems with Lancaster Toyota Chelmsford regarding the van key but this is now on order and is expected very shortly.

2. 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.

3. Tree Survey

The Clerk has been told by Chelmsford City Council that a survey was carried out on the trees in Noakes Place in 2015 and that all the recommended works have been carried out.

4. Energy Efficiency Certificate

The Clerk contacted a company that is registered on the government's website only to find out that they no longer offer the service. The Clerk is now in contact with Utilitywise and is awaiting a reply.

5. Mobile Telephones

The Clerk is drawing up an agreement for the use of the personal mobile telephones for the staff to sign and the informal agreement is still in place. Members of staff are regularly phoning in to the office when lone working.

6. Committee Terms of Reference

A meeting to discuss the Terms of Reference will be fixed as soon as possible.

7. **Procurement Regulations**

A draft policy will be presented as soon as possible. The current staffing difficulties will hopefully be resolved shortly, although work has already started on the drafting of a policy.

8. **Electoral Rolls**

The Clerk contacted Chelmsford City Council and a reply has not yet been received. It has not been possible to chase this matter but this will be done as soon as possible.

9. **Parish Hall Redecoration**

Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky asked if a date had been set for the redecoration of the Parish Hall. The Clerk said that the redecoration of the main Hall and Committee Room 1 will start on 31st October 2016 and will take 5-7 days. The railings and the outside wall will be done in early October 2016.

10. **Car Park Adjacent to the Community Association**

Cllr A Sosin noted that the repairs to the car park adjacent to the Community Association had been carried out on 29th June 2016 and that they had been done very well.

11. **Legionella Surveys**

Cllr Mrs J Sosin asked about the Legionella Surveys. The Clerk said that the surveys were carried out on 17th June 2016, although the water tanks at the Bell Centre and the Changing Rooms had proved to be difficult to access. The normal turnaround time for the reports is two weeks but the Clerk had been told that there could be a slight delay due to staff holidays.

210/16 Financial Transactions

1. The amended Expenditure for June 2016 is **£34331.72** (£32873.41 Net).
2. The Income for June 2016 is **£8971.07** (£8927.96 Net).
3. The June/July 2016 Expenditure to be paid from the Unity Trust current account in July is **£35466.89** (£33475.63 Net).

The Clerk told the meeting about the following items:

British Gas. The invoices are for the heating at the Parish Hall and Bell Centre and will be the final bills before the move to Total Gas and Power.

Invoice from LD Services. The invoice is for further gardening work done by Mr Dixon and also for repairing a broken tap. The groundsman had discovered that a tap at the Cemetery was leaking and Mr Dixon went and repaired it straight away, so that the metered water flow would be stopped and not incur too much in charges.

Invoice from CMUK Visual Safety Ltd. This invoice is for the replacement of all the first aid kits across the Parish Council, which unfortunately all ran out of date this year. The invoice also includes a number of eyewash stations.

Invoice from EALC. The invoice is for the examination that Mrs Dixon took, following her attendance at a Playground Inspection course. The Clerk told the meeting that she had been informed by EALC that Mrs Dixon had passed the exam and this now meant that the Council has a qualified person to undertake playground inspections. Congratulations were given to Mrs Dixon.

8.38pm – Cllr Mrs J Sosin left the meeting

Invoice from P H Coote Ltd. The Clerk told the meeting that the invoices are for remedial works at the Parish Hall and the Recreation Ground and the installation of the light on the steps at the Parish Hall. There will be other invoices for work at the Bell Centre and the Parish Hall, now that further work has been completed. This includes replacement of 10 emergency lights at the Parish Hall.

Invoice from SD Grounds Care Ltd. The Clerk said that this was the monthly invoice from Mr Denton but it also included an invoice for the repair of the marker/sprayer, which had been damaged. Mr Denton undertook the repair of the item himself, having obtained the necessary parts.

Returned Deposit Cheque for Parish Hall Booking. The Clerk told the meeting that no reason had been given for the cancellation of the booking and confirmed that deposits are returned to the hirer providing that more than 7 days' notice is given of the cancellation.

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

8.44pm – Cllr Mrs J Sosin re-entered the meeting.

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

Date	Number	PAYEE	Amount	VAT	TOTAL
4/7/2016	300878	Ashe Green Civil Eng. Ltd – CA Car Park repairs	780.00	156.00	936.00
4/7/2016	300879	Baker Ross Ltd – Playscheme Supplies	448.24	87.40	535.64
4/7/2016	300880	Barham & Moore Ltd – GBT Advertising	1254.00	-	1254.00
4/7/2016	300881	British Gas – PH and BC Heating	1324.39	160.84	1485.23
4/7/2016	300882	British Telecoms Plc – Telephones/Fax/Internet	518.20	103.64	621.84
4/7/2016	300883	G Burley & Sons Ltd – LC strimming/spraying	1024.00	204.80	1228.80
4/7/2016	300884	Came & Co. – Vehicle Insurance	1057.77	-	1057.77
4/7/2016	300894	P H Coote Ltd – Electrical work at PH and RG	866.23	173.25	1039.48
4/7/2016	300896	SD Groundscare Ltd – GC Contract Services	3971.34	794.27	4765.61

211/16 Financial Review

The Clerk circulated a copy of the summary income and expenditure to 30th June 2016. The expenditure to date stands at 23% of budget and the income at 46.1%. The Clerk told the meeting that the income from the cemetery, the Parish Hall and Bell Centre were all very good. The report was noted.

212/16 Fees and Charges

Cllr A Sosin had prepared a draft list of increases in fees for the Parish Hall, Bell Centre, Allotments and Great Baddow Times advertising. He had circulated the table of fees with proposed increases for December 2016 (Cemetery) and April 2017 (Parish Hall, Bell Centre, Allotments, Great Baddow Times advertising), prior to the meeting. Thanks were given to Cllr A Sosin for the report and to the Clerk, for additional information.

Cemetery Fees - The Clerk told the meeting that she had spoken to the Manager at Chelmsford Crematorium & Cemetery and had been told that some of their fees have increased by a higher percentage, following a survey that was undertaken. This had shown that Chelmsford City Council's cemetery fees were much lower than other authorities in Essex, Suffolk, Hertfordshire and East London and that residents of other authorities had been coming to Chelmsford to take advantage of the low prices. The City Council only has 8 years of full grave spaces left and there is a wish to maintain enough space for residents of the City Council's area.

The Clerk also told the meeting that she has concerns about the proposed increase in the transfer of the EROB fee and suggested that if the increase was agreed, that the fee should not be doubled for non-parishioners but be a set fee for all deed holders. After discussion, the committee agreed that this should be the case. It was also agreed that fees should be set for Saturday interments, exhumations and benches but that these fees will not be published, although the information will be available on request.

Cllr K Ronaldson asked about the Cemetery Regulations and the fact that they are dated 2013 and asked whether they had been reviewed recently. The Clerk said that the Regulations had been reviewed in 2015, when the Council decided that no changes were necessary. The Regulations were not reprinted to show the review date because to do so would be extremely expensive and the Council currently has a fairly high stock of printed items.

After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs J Sosin that the proposed increase in the fees for the cemetery should be accepted. The vote was unanimous.

Parish Hall and Bell Centre Charges - The Clerk told the meeting that there are concerns about the relatively low usage of the halls by community groups and the higher usage by commercial enterprises. The Clerk is also concerned about the year on year increase of costs other than staffing costs, associated with the running of the halls. It was agreed that a full review of the hall hiring costs will take place in June 2017.

After discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky and seconded by Cllr G Jarvis that the proposed increase of 2% in the charges for the hall hires should be accepted. The vote was unanimous.

Allotments - It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs S Young that the allotment fees should be increased by £1.00. This was agreed unanimously.

Great Baddow Times Advertising - It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr K Ronaldson that there should be no increase in the charges for advertising in the Great Baddow Times.

213/16 Local Government Transparency Code 2015

The above consultation was considered. The main aspects of the consultation concerns proposed changes to the method of recording and publishing details of council land and property assets, contract procurement and delivery of services and the addition of other categories of reporting.

It was proposed by Cllr Mrs C Shaw and seconded by Cllr Mrs V Sadowsky that the Parish Council agrees with NALC in that the current aspects of reporting and publishing under the Transparency Code 2015 are working and providing the information required by residents to hold their Local Councils to account. Also, that the Council considers that the proposals in the consultation to change the current rules about the way in which data is published and presented and to include new requirements are not appropriate for larger Local Councils.

214/16 Matters for Information

- Cllr A Sosin reported that there were a lot of spare copies of the Great Baddow Times and that the print run should be reduced from 7300 to 6900. This was agreed and the Clerk said that she would inform the editor, John Emery.
- Cllr A Sosin noted that the Clerk had forwarded an invitation from Chelmsford City Council to attend the Regulatory Committee meeting on 7th July 2016, where the matter of parking at the City Council's parks would be discussed. It was agreed that there was no-one available to attend, although the Clerk said that she had been assured by the City Council that permits will be issued to the Parish Council and so attendance was not absolutely necessary.
- Cllr Mrs J Sosin reminded those present about the surgery and pre-meet on Saturday 9th July 2016.
- The Clerk reported that she had had a meeting with the City Council relating to the maintenance agreement for Noakes Place and that it had been very positive. The City Council will be drafting a maintenance schedule that will not be any more onerous than the one that existed between 2000 and 2010. The City Council had also offered some help to the Parish Council later in the year in cutting back the trees and bushes around the car parking area at Buckleys.
- Cllr Mrs J Sosin raised the matter of an e.mail that she had received just before the meeting about the rubbish in the ponds in Noakes Place. The Clerk said that she had been copied into the e.mail as well but that it had been sent to the City Council, who is responsible for the ponds.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 9.52pm.

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