

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** held on 21st March 2016 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs M P Bucknell, Chairman

Councillors Mrs J M Cole, Ms L A Gifford, Mrs M H Harlock, P S Potts, G C M Willis, Dr S C Withams and Mrs A R Wyatt.

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors D W England, J A Parker, J C Price and Mrs J E Tavener and Mr G Hansell.

10/15 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Mrs Harlock and seconded by Councillor Dr Withams, the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2015 were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

11/15 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No Members declared interests in respect of the items appearing on the agenda for the meeting.

12/15 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted the following matters arising from its meeting held on 21st November 2015:-

(a) Timebanking

Further to Minute No. 05/15(a), the Clerk reported that he would be advertising shortly for the appointment of a Timebank Co-ordinator.

(b) Budget 2016/17

Further to Minute No. 09/15, the Clerk reminded Members that the Council had accepted the Committee's recommendation to include sums of £1,500 and £1,200 respectively for improvements to the roadway and the installation of a storage container at Hallgate Allotments.

At their meeting held on 15th March, the Allotments Committee had accepted a quotation of £1,850 from a roadway company for the laying of a hard surface and the Clerk reported that he had subsequently obtained three quotations for the

supply of a storage container. As the lowest of the quotations was £1,200, the combined cost was £350 higher than the provision made in the budget. As a small surplus had been forecast to be brought forward in the allotments budget at the end of the current year, it was suggested that the balance be met from this source.

RESOLVED

that a storage container be obtained in the sum of £1,200, the balance of the cost to be met from the allotments budget.

13/15 ASSET REGISTER

The Clerk circulated copies of the Council's current asset register sub-divided into categories for land, play equipment, miscellaneous equipment and property. Members were informed that the register was kept up to date to include new equipment, disposals and items that had been scrapped and that an inventory check would be arranged shortly involving the Chairman, Clerk, Internal Auditor and Senior Handyman to ensure that all of the equipment on the register could be accounted for.

Because of space limitations and the age of the equipment, the Clerk requested authority to scrap the previous computer and printer that had been purchased in 2008 and replaced in 2014, together with the Canon copier that had been replaced earlier in the year.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the register be noted and the equipment listed by the Clerk scrapped.

14/15 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Clerk circulated copies of the Risk Management Register that had been compiled of the Council's various activities which had been reviewed and updated as necessary.

RESOLVED

that the content of the register be noted.

15/15 INTERNAL CONTROL

Members' attention was drawn to the requirement in the Accounts and Audit Regulations for the Council to review the effectiveness of its systems of internal control and internal audit as set out in the Practitioners' Guide to Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales published by NALC and SLCC.

The Clerk submitted a checklist, a copy of which had been circulated to all Members, summarising the controls that should be in place and explained the measures that were undertaken by the Council. Under the circumstances, the Committee expressed its satisfaction as to the effectiveness of the existing controls.

The Clerk also drew attention to changes to the Annual Return and Annual Governance Statement in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Members were informed that the relevant documentation had been received from the external auditors, PKF Littlejohn, in recent days and that further changes to the Practitioners' Guide were due before the end of the month.

16/15 INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Clerk submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) on the need for the Council to review its Investment Strategy annually to comply with guidance issued by the Secretary of State under the Local Government Act 2003.

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to approve the Investment Strategy appended to the report now submitted.

17/15 PARISH CENTRE – CONDITIONS OF HIRE

The Committee reviewed and confirmed the conditions of hire of the Parish Centre (copies of which had been circulated), subject to the addition of information for the hirer to check the emergency exit doors at the commencement of any use.

Arising from a question by a Member, the Clerk reported that the coloured lights in the main hall had not been working in recent weeks. A similar problem had occurred in the past, although the lights had then functioned correctly after a few weeks. If the problem persisted, the Clerk advised that he would try to arrange for them to be repaired.

18/15 SECTION 137 LIMIT

Members noted that the appropriate sum for the purposes of Section 137 expenditure in 2016/17 had been set by the Department for Communities and Local Government as £7.42 which gave an allowance for the Parish Council of £22,178.

19/15 THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY BEACON LIGHTING

Because of the imminence of the beacon lighting event, the Chairman agreed to the consideration of the following item at the meeting.

Members were reminded that, at the Council meeting held on 8th February, it had been agreed that a beacon would be lit on 21st April as part of the national chain of beacons to celebrate the 90th birthday of Her Majesty The Queen. A meeting of those Members who had volunteered to assist in the arrangements had been held in the previous week and an assessment made of the necessary equipment and supplies required. It was reported that safety barriers would be necessary to prevent public access to the beacon when it was lit and costs would be incurred in refreshments and other miscellaneous items. The costs in addition to the purchase of the beacon were estimated at between £500 and £700.

Under the circumstances, the Committee

RESOLVED

that additional expenditure of up to £700 be authorised to ensure the success of the beacon lighting event.

There being no further business, the meeting was declared closed.

Chairman