

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** held on 20th March 2017 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Mrs M P Bucknell, Chairman

Councillors B J Correll, R J Dykstra, D W England, Ms L A Gifford, P S Potts, Mrs J A Tavener, G C M Willis, Dr S C Withams and Mrs A R Wyatt.

APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Mrs M H Harlock.

10/16 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Dr Withams and seconded by Councillor Ms Backhouse, the Minutes of the meeting held on 15th November 2016 were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

11/16 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

12/16 MATTERS ARISING

The Committee noted there were no matters arising from its meeting held on 15th November 2016.

13/16 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.

In response to a question by Councillor Correll, the Clerk agreed to total each category in future so that it showed the full value of the Council's assets. The Clerk pointed out that the asset register circulated to Members showed the value of the assets for insurance purposes and that a separate register had to be held showing the original purchase price of assets for submission to the external auditors as part of the Annual Return in accordance

with the Practitioners' Guide on Governance and Accountability for Local Councils issued by NALC and SLCC.

14/16 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.

Arising from a suggestion by Members that the litter bins in the playgrounds should be emptied more regularly than once per week in winter, the Clerk advised that the Handymen used their judgement to decide whether this was necessary depending upon the prevailing weather conditions, the timing of Easter and the school holidays. A further suggestion was made that all of the litter bin emptying should be undertaken by both Handymen in view of the weight of some of the bags. However the Clerk pointed out that with two Handymen employed, this would not be possible in some weeks due to holiday arrangements.

As the entrance to the Parish Centre flooded in times of exceptionally heavy rainfall which made access difficult, Members requested that this be added to the risk register.

Arising from a question by the Chairman as to whether a light should be installed at the second floor of the Jubilee Clock Tower, the Clerk advised that he had raised the matter with the Clockwinder previously but would liaise with him again and respond after the meeting to the Chairman.

The Chairman mentioned that one of the uplighters at the Jubilee Clock Tower was not working again and the Clerk indicated that he would report the matter to the County Council.

As the road closure for the Feast Week funfair was included in the risk register, Members requested that the road closures for the Remembrance Sunday service and Christmas Lights switch-on also be included.

Members were informed that a request had been received from the Rector of the Parish Church for a further closure of the High Street between Church Road and Ramsey Road on a Friday evening in December for a carol service and hog roast. The Clerk reported that he had notified the Rector that the proposed closure would not be advisable as the length of highway involved might be too small to accommodate the number of people attending, that people might spill out onto the adjoining highway, that long vehicles might have difficulty negotiating the junction and that it would be hazardous to attempt to close the road at peak time after dark on a Friday evening. An alternative site had been proposed using the stretch of the High Street between the junctions with Mill Green and Statfold Green which was used for the Christmas Lights Switch-on.

With regard to the activities undertaken by the Handymen, it was proposed that the use of protective equipment should be included in the control measures for tree management and that daily checks made of the Council's van and the record logged. In addition it was suggested that investigations be undertaken into the Council's responsibilities for ensuring that the Handymen had the necessary inoculations for tetanus and other potential illnesses arising from the nature of their employment.

RESOLVED

that the content of the register be noted and the necessary adjustments made in accordance with the matters raised above..

15/16 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.

16/16 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.

17/16 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 a note requiring caution and the use of the side emergency exit doors for access purposes if the front entrance was flooded in times of exceptional rainfall.

18/16 SECTION 137 LIMIT

Members noted that the appropriate sum for the purposes of Section 137 expenditure in 2017/18 had been set by the Department for Communities and Local Government as £7.57 which gave an allowance for the Parish Council of £23,073.

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

Chairman