

WARBOYS PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** held on 18th March 2019 at the Parish Centre, Warboys.

PRESENT

Councillor Dr S C Withams, Chairman

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

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S J Green, Mrs M H Harlock and Mrs S J Wilcox.

10/18 MINUTES

Upon being moved by Councillor Dykstra and seconded by Councillor Mrs Tavener, the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2018 were signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

11/18 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

12/18 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the Committee's meeting held on 7th November 2018.

13/18 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.

The Clerk pointed out that the asset register circulated to Members showed the value of the assets for replacement 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.

Arising from a question by a Member about a missing bollard at the Jubilee Clock Tower, the Clerk advised that it could be awaiting repairs to the base plate but that he would investigate the situation.

14/18 RISK MANAGEMENT

The Committee noted the Risk Management Register (copies of which had been circulated to all Members) that had been compiled of the Council's various activities which had been reviewed and updated as necessary. The Clerk referred to a more extensive assessment that he had undertaken for the road closures undertaken by the Council's employees in order to secure orders for the closures from the County Council.

The Chairman referred to an offer by Councillor Green to assist with a review of the risk register and asked the Clerk to liaise with him on its implementation.

Councillor Willis queried whether a certificate was required by the Handymen to operate the brushcutters and mowers which the Clerk undertook to investigate.

15/18 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.

16/18 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. The guidance required authorities to include information about their investment activity, including the use of performance indicators. The guidance was now mandatory for parish councils with reserves in excess of £100,000 but the Clerk pointed out that many of the requirements were not applicable in the case of Warboys.

Having regard to the nature and extent of the Council's investments, the Committee did not consider there to be a need for any additional capacity or skills in terms of either Members or the Clerk in managing the Council's assets.

RESOLVED

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

17/18 PARISH CENTRE – CONDITIONS OF HIRE

The Committee reviewed and confirmed the conditions of hire of the Parish Centre (copies of which had been circulated).

18/18 INSURANCE POLICY

Members reviewed a summary of the insurance policy held by the Council with Zurich Municipal through Community Action Suffolk as brokers (copies of which had been circulated). Members noted that this was the third year of a 5 year arrangement with the brokers under which a discounted premium applied.

19/18 SECTION 137 LIMIT

Members were advised by the Clerk that he had been unable to ascertain the appropriate sum set by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for the purposes of Section 137 expenditure by local authorities for 2019/20. The information would be reported to the Council when it became available.

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

Chairman