

ARLESEY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSE COMMITTEE**, Arlesey Town Council held in the Village Hall, Arlesey on **Tuesday 10 January 2017**.

PRESENT:

Cllrs: C Ferris (Chairman)	C Livermore (Agenda Item. 7 onwards)
M Gould	J Randall
S Stanbury	A Ward

In attendance: Ms S Foulkes (Town Clerk), Cllr S Sarll, Cllr J Auburn, Cllr C Gravett and 2 members of public.

16/30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Livermore had advised the Town Clerk of his intended late arrival.

16/31 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

16/32 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

16/33 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

To consider and approve the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 8 November 2016.

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 8 November 2016 be approved as true record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

16/34 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

16/35 DRAFT BUDGET 2017/18

Prior to the meeting members were provided with a summary of the revised draft budget for 2017/18. Cllr Ferris advised members that a £20,000 replenishment of the General Reserve, as resolved by Town Council on 20th December, was included within the draft budget. The Town Clerk advised of a minor increase to budgeted income in relation to football pitch hire.

The draft 2017/18 budget detailed a precept of **£222,264**, representing an increase to Band D household of £17.25 over the previous year.

RESOLVED

Committee Recommendation: that the Council approve this budget on 17th January 2017, for submission of precept of £222,264 to Central Bedfordshire Council by 20th January 2017.

16/36 ATC HISTORICAL ARCHIVE SUB-COMMITEE

Prior to the meeting members were provided with draft Terms of Reference for the ATC Historical Archive Sub-Committee, together with a copy of minutes from the original

meeting held in February 2005. Members considered the draft Terms of Reference under the guidance of Cllr Randall.

Cllr Livermore arrived.

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Archive Sub-committee would now be subject to the same regulations as the Council's committees, in terms of due notice for meetings to be held, meeting practices, venues and minutes recorded. The sub-committee needed to ensure that decisions were not reached during informal Working Party meetings.

RESOLVED

Committee Recommendation: that the draft Historical Archive Sub-Committee Terms of Reference be amended to read 'Meetings will take place at least twice in a year during April and October' and be adopted by the Council as appended to these minutes.

16/37 ATC 'CODE OF CONDUCT' REVIEW

Members reviewed the adopted 'Code of Conduct' and considered the Council's procedure for both disclosable pecuniary interests (DPI) and non-pecuniary interests. The Town Clerk referred members to the area of the Code which required the disclosure of both DPI's and non-pecuniary interests to CBC's Monitoring Officer, and the Council's local procedure of declaring interests at meetings, which was deemed good practice.

The Town Clerk also referred members to the Council's adopted Standing Orders, amended in 2015, which omitted a previously observed procedure of members withdrawing from the chamber once they had declared a pecuniary interest. The Town Clerk stressed the importance that members must have no influence in matters once they had declared a DPI, and questioned whether this could be effectively achieved if they remained present during the debate. In matters where non-pecuniary interests had been declared, members were asked to consider the achievement of an appropriate level of withdrawal.

RESOLVED

Committee Recommendation: that the Council approve the reintroduction of a procedure to ensure members withdraw from the council chamber once a DPI is declared, by way of an amendment to Standing Orders. Committee to consider a procedure for members to follow in relation non-pecuniary interests being declared. Town Clerk to research other council's procedures and good practice for consideration at next meeting.

16/38 CITIZEN AWARD

Cllr Ferris provided members with a report detailing his research into a Citizen Award Scheme for Arlesey. Details of schemes run by other local councils were provided. It was noted that none of these schemes provided monetary awards. Discussion followed, after which it was agreed that Cllr Ferris draft a scheme for Arlesey for consideration by members at the next committee meeting.

16/39 TOWN COUNCIL VEHICLE REPLACEMENT

Cllr Ward provided members with a brief update on vehicle procurement. As a result of the current vehicle being underutilised in recent months, the urgency for replacement had been lessened. Suitable 4x4 vehicles had been researched however an appropriate method of achieving the financial transaction was still to be confirmed. The Town Clerk confirmed that she was progressing an application to Unity Trust Bank for a Corporate Card which would allow spending of up to £20k, to be paid off in full by the end each month. Financial Regulation 6.20 permits the use of a 'credit card' to be issued to Clerk and it was suggested that this be used to pay a deposit to a Trade supplier, with the balance being paid by bank transfer.

16/40 REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SYSTEMS OF INTERNAL CONTROL & RISK ASSESSMENT 2016/17

Members considered methods of achieving:

- (i) a review of effectiveness of the systems of internal control – 2015/16 review provided.
- (ii) risk assessments – 2015/16 risk assessment provided.

RESOLVED

Committee Recommendation: that Cllr Livermore lead the review of effectiveness of systems of internal control, supported by Cllr Randall, and Cllr Stanbury work with the Town Clerk to complete the Annual Risk Assessments. Both documents to be considered at the next committee meeting for adoption by Council in March 2017.

16/41 REVIEW OF ATC FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Members reviewed Financial Regulations adopted 31st March 2016 to consider whether any amendments were deemed necessary. It was noted that the current Financial Regulations had been reviewed in detail during the previous financial year.

Discussion took place on:

- regulation 6.11. in relation to the recording/storage of PIN numbers or passwords to access computer records. Members agreed that the process of providing the information to the Chairman of the Council was less than satisfactory and that a process for recording the procedure for recovering PIN numbers/passwords would be more effective going forward.
- regulation 5.5.(c) in relation to authority for the Clerk to transfer funds between the Council's accounts being limited to £10k. Members noted that this amount appeared arbitrary, as no limit on frequency was stated. The Clerk used the facility to transfer funds from the Council's Tracker Account to the Current Account on a regular basis. No fund transfers outside of the council's accounts were permitted without the triple signatory mandate being achieved.

RESOLVED

Committee Recommendation: that regulation 6.11. be amended to read:

~~"Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, **a process for resetting the PIN/password must be documented and retained within the Council's 'Key Functions' file.** note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.~~

and that regulation 5.5 (c) be deleted entirely, on the basis that it serves no purpose. Committee to review suggested amendments and any others deemed appropriate at next meeting, for Council's approval in March 2017.

16/42 EXTERNAL AUDIT ARRANGEMENTS 2017/18 – NALC Media Release.

Members acknowledged communication from Beds Association of Town & Parish Councils advising of SAAA Ltd's award of contracts for the coming five year programme and fee rates being maintained in accordance with 2014/15 financial year. The Town Clerk advised that a further communication advised that Mazars LLP had been awarded the Bedfordshire council's contract for the period 2017-22.

16/43 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON ITEMS ARISING FROM THIS EVENING'S MEETING

Cllr Sarll suggested that Cllr Ferris make contact with Nicola King of Aragon Housing, who may be able to assist with the setting up of a Citizen Award Scheme.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm

CHAIRMAN

Date