

LEICESTER FORET EAST PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Policies and LiFE Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 29th October 2019 in the Reg Neal Committee Room, Parish Hall, Kings Drive, Leicester Forest East, commencing at 7.00pm

Present: C. Lawrence – Chairman P. Linnett – Vice Chairman P. Fox
P. Kitchen R. Darlison L. Dracup

Mrs H Mann – Clerk to the Council

Fin 19.21 To receive apologies for absence

Councillors Deacon and Di Palma sent their apologies which the Committee duly accepted.

Fin 19.22 To receive Disclosures of Interest in accordance with the Code of Conduct

None.

Fin 19.23 To adjourn the meeting to receive Questions from the Public

None.

Fin 19.24 To confirm the Minutes of the Finance, Policies and LiFE Committee Meetings held on Wednesday 31st July 2019 and 8th January 2019 as true records

Councillor Linnett proposed accepting the minutes from 31st July, Councillor Darlison seconded. Carried. The minutes of 8th January had previously been proposed erroneously. Therefore, they were re-proposed by Councillor Linnett and seconded by Councillor Darlison. Carried.

Fin 19.25 To discuss matters arising from those minutes:

(a) Autumn Edition of LiFE magazine

The LiFE magazine is due to be published and distributed within the next two weeks. Councillor Linnett asked whether the Committee felt he should leave the part in his Chairman's report regarding the Clerk (interviewed by Leicester Forest East Parish Council) who had now been imprisoned for embezzlement. The Committee unanimously agreed to leave this part in the article.

(b) Pension refund form LCC Pensions

An overpayment of £333.24 had been made to Leicestershire County Council pensions in the previous financial year. The Clerk stated that after consulting LCC pensions, the Council can simply deduct that figure from next month's pension payment.

(c) Accountancy Package

Councillor Lawrence explained that the training for the new accountancy package will take place next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (4th, 5th and 6th of November). The following Monday and Tuesday (11th and 12th of November), the

bookings package will be installed. During these 5 days access to the office computer will be limited and, therefore, the parish office may need to close.

The Clerk explained that she is currently awaiting a quote for getting the laptop (provided as part of the MVAS package) up and running with emails, word etc in order that, in future, there is a spare parish computer for instances such as this. It would also allow the Clerk to work from home when necessary.

Additionally, the Clerk also warned the Committee that not all action points from the previous Planning and Parks Committees will have been actioned in advance of the next meetings. This is due to the above-mentioned training.

(d) Bank Update

The Committee asked the Clerk to complete a new HSBC mandate to ensure all Councillors are on the account as signatories. Councillor Fox asked the Clerk to contact him once the mandate has been completed. He will then contact HSBC to seek clarification on how to change the Clerk's details at the bank. *Clerk to action.*

Fin 19.26 To review the Management Accounts

The Income and Expenditure account was reviewed. Councillor Lawrence explained that one regular hirer hadn't paid for hire of the hall for the previous 7 months, explaining the majority of the variance between predicted and actual receipts re hall hire. She also explained that the new accounts package will enable the Clerk to run debtors reports quickly and easily. The Chairman of the Council expressed a wish for the Council to have a procedure for collecting overdue amounts. Councillor Linnett who is familiar with the 'chart of accounts' for the new accounting package commented that the hall hire will be split between regular and occasional hirers once the new system is used for reporting which will be helpful for budgeting.

Councillor Darlison asked about the amount listed for decorating the Parish Hall. The Clerk confirmed that it was the foyer area which is due to be re-decorated this year and that she is in the process of obtaining quotes for the re-decoration. *Clerk to action.*

Fin 19.27 To review Payroll Bureau Services

Councillor Linnett asked if the Council would be getting a refund from the payroll bureau as they are not paying the Clerk and premises officers salaries into their bank accounts via BACS as per the quote. Councillor Lawrence explained that when the quote had been obtained there had been some confusion with the bureau as to our requirements, as for other Parish Councils, they receive a lump sum each month and then pay the employees via BACS. However, Leicester Forest East Parish Council had wanted the bureau to have a BACS licence to take the money direct from the Parish Councils' bank account and pay the employees via BACS.

Councillor Dracup stated that she felt that having an outside body to work out the payroll figures for employees was enough of a safeguard. The Committee unanimously agreed. *Clerk to ensure that the payroll bureau charge the Parish*

Council at the lower rate (i.e. exclusive of BACS) when the quarterly invoice is received.

To discuss audit matters

(a) External, and

Councillor Lawrence explained that the Parish Council had a qualification on the external audit stating that it had failed to show evidence of annual consideration of risk management (discussed later).

(b) Internal

The Committee unanimously agreed to ask the internal auditor to come in after the new accounts system has been installed, in December. There are four items which the Parish Council need to action from the internal auditor's report:

1. Reserves Policy (which has now been addressed at a previous Council meeting)
2. HSBC – new Clerk needs to be recognised as the Parish Council's contact
3. Fixed Asset Register - see below.
4. Clerks Mileage (this has been addressed as the Clerk will now complete a P11d yearly for this and the telephone allowances).

The Committee also asked the Clerk to add 'review internal audit function' to the Annual Action List. *Clerk to action.*

Fin 19.28 To discuss the Fixed Asset Register

The fixed asset register is currently being completed. However, several years of invoices cannot currently be located. Councillor Lawrence explained that fixed asset registers for Parish Councils record the purchase price of each asset still held, as far as can be ascertained; depreciation is not applicable. The Committee unanimously agreed, if the invoices could not be located, to write to the previous Clerk, explaining that the auditor's report has stated a need for a fixed asset register, and, asking if she knew where the invoices were. *Clerk to action.*

Fin 19.29 To review Risk Management

There was a qualification in the external audit report which stated that the Parish Council had failed to evidence consideration of risk management. This was likely to have been highlighted in a more in-depth audit query which 5% of Parish Councils are subject to, according to the internal auditor. It was agreed that the Clerk review other Parish Council's risk management policies and ask LRALC if there was a template. *Councillor Lawrence and the Clerk to draft a suitable policy. Also, Clerk to add this item to a full Council Meeting.*

Fin 19.30 To discuss s. 106 proposals for spending and 'wish list'

The Committee unanimously decided not to produce a 'wish list'.

Fin 19.31 To discuss the Budget Process

Councillors Dracup and Linnett explained that each Committee discusses the budget, prior to January budget setting, and makes recommendations to full Council. The Committee unanimously agreed that Councillor Lawrence and the Clerk discuss the budget prior to the January meeting and to have a first draft budget with their estimated figures available to discuss at this meeting. *Clerk to action.*

Fin 19.32 To decide if the Council wish to apply for a credit card with Unity Bank
Councillor Darlison stated that a credit card would provide the Clerk with the ability to purchase items online and give the opportunity to shop around for the best deals. Councillor Fox stated that it would make certain purchases far easier, for instance the purchase of poppies and a wreath for Remembrance Day as the Royal British Legion no longer invoice has stopped invoicing poppies and the Parish Council have struggled to obtain poppies.

Councillor Kitchen proposed applying for the card and Councillor Dracup seconded. Carried. *Clerk to action.*

Fin 19.33 To review:
(a) the Equal Opportunities (Equality) Policy
Clerk to add the missing word 'to' and add this to the next full Council agenda to adopt.

(b) Financial Regulations
The Committee went through the model Financial Regulations and made any necessary amendments to ensure it was applicable to Leicester Forest East Parish Council. *Clerk to ask Braunstone Town Council's advice on paragraph 6.17 and then add this item along with the new updated Regulations for adoption to the next full Council meeting agenda.*

(c) Financial Risk Assessment
Clerk to add to next full council agenda.

Fin 19.34 To consider implementing a Grants Policy
Councillor Fox explained that he had contacted Blaby District Council to ask for a copy of their Grants Policy and application form. He is also going to ask other Parish and Town Councils for examples of their Grants Policies and Application forms which he will bring to the next full Council meeting. The Committee unanimously decided to have a Grants Policy. *Clerk to add this to the next full Council Meeting.*

Fin 19.35 To discuss Regular Hall Hirers
The Clerk explained that one regular hirer of the hall had not paid their bill for the last seven months. However, half of the money owed had been paid on the day prior to the meeting. The Committee asked the Clerk to chase the regular hirer for payment each month in future. *Clerk to action.*

Fin 19.36 Date of next meeting – tba
Tuesday 7th January at 7.00pm. This will be the annual budget meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm.