

**MINUTES A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD
PARISH COUNCIL ON TUESDAY 22nd OCTOBER 2019 IN MATFIELD PAVILION AT 7.30pm**

Present: Cllr. Woodley (Chairman) presided, R. Wickham, A. de Guingand, Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk)

1. To accept apologies for absence

The Committee accepted apologies from Cllr. Batty.

2. Approval of the minutes of 24 April 2019

The minutes of the meeting of 24th April 2019 were approved as an accurate record and were duly signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman also signed the bank reconciliation report to the 30 September 2019, which the Clerk had circulated together with the bank statement.

3. To record declarations of interest on any item on the Agenda

None.

4. Year end 31 March 2019 Internal audit report

The Committee reviewed the internal audit report and findings. The Clerk raised the issue of inclusion of Payroll in the Council's Risk Assessment. As the Council is in the process of recruiting a separate RFO (which would provide a check to the Clerk's role using the HMRC and Smart Pension tools) the Finance Committee agreed that the addition of this as a risk would be considered at its next review.

The Clerk raised the issue identified regarding Councillors email addresses – this should be added to the requirements of the new Council and the soon to be recruited RFO shall have the email address RFO@brenchleyandmatfield.co.uk.

Risk Assessments were still outstanding although the group arranging the Christmas events had been advised that this would be necessary, and a pro forma had been provided.

Regarding the Asset Register – the figures had been restated back to original figures on the AGAR.

The Clerk confirmed that the interim Internal Audit has been booked for 12th November.

5. Fees and Licences

5.1 Allotment fees

The Clerk advised that £5k shall be spent on the Allotment site this year – including internal hedge-trimming and the creation of 6 new plots – and there was a discussion on the level of rent for these plots as well as the existing ones.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the tenancy fee for each of the six new allotment plots be set at £25 per annum.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the tenancy fee for the current allotment plots remain unchanged.

5.2 Pavilion licence holder fees

Pavilion Licence holder Fees/Contribution to Utilities were last reviewed in March 2018 and remained the same for the 2019/2020 financial year as follows:

Cricketers £220
Guides £330
Connection £100

The Clerk advised that the Guides had reduced their usage of the Pavilion and that, whilst the payment had been made for the year, Connection had not used the facilities.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the Matfield Pavilion licence holder fees for 2020-21 be set at:

**Matfield Green Cricket Club £250
Guides £330 for two packs or £250 for one pack
Connection £100**

5.3 Pavilion Booking Fees

The Clerk advised that these were last reviewed in March 2018 and remain £10ph or any part thereof. Use of the Pavilion (and therefore its income) has increased significantly in the last year by regular clubs (non-licence holders) including Table Tennis, gym, yoga and croquet.

It was agreed that the Pavilion should not be in competition with BMH or MVH and the £10 ph fee is not overly competitive, partly for this reason. The Pavilion is also in need of some refurbishment and, given that this is more likely to be in the next financial year, it was agreed that any change to the booking fee should be considered in the light of any improvements at that time.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the booking fee for Matfield Pavilion for 2020-21 remain at £10 ph or any part thereof.

5.4 Pavilion discretionary free use

The continued discretionary free-use the Pavilion was discussed, the Clerk would continue to authorise occasional free use for charity events.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the following organisations be granted free use of Matfield Pavilion:

**Matfield Women's Institute
Love Matfield Society
Tunbridge Wells Area Committee of KALC
Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre.**

6. Risk Management – to review the Finance and Governance Risk Register

The issue of payroll, discussed under item 4 above, would be addressed at the register's next review.

The item concerning the Asset Register would be amended to demonstrate that this document had been finalised.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the Finance and Governance Risk Register be adopted as amended.

7. Budget Monitoring – to review current year spending

The Clerk had circulated a nominal ledger to 15th October 2019 together with a report detailing the Annual budget by cost centre showing actual spending against budget to date.

The Clerk drew the Committee's attention to the following items:

Playground is overspent – unforeseen further safety requirements and extra stock fencing;
and Matfield Pond is overspent – unforeseen drainage work

All other centres are as expected for this time of year, a number are considerably underspent and may result in a saving to the general reserve at year end (e.g. Specialist planning consultant/NDP).

8. Draft Budget and Precept 2020-2021 – to consider draft

A draft budget and precept calculation, compiled by Cllr. de Guingand and the Clerk, together with the year-end 31 March 2019 ledger and current budget by cost centre report were discussed.

The Clerk advised that in drafting the budget it was deemed reasonable to provide significant protection of reserves, given that a new Council may wish to undertake extensive projects. It is also reiterated that a reserve of 50% of operating costs is considered prudent as a minimum.

A specific request for funding had been received from Brenchley Archive and from the Horticultural Society and was agreed for a three year term in both cases.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the 2020-2021 budget of £117,380 and precept requirement £106,107, as endorsed by the Committee, be approved.

9. RFO role

The Clerk had circulated the following draft documents which had been reviewed by the Chairman, Cllr. Butler (Employment Panel), Lisa Roberts - SLCC HR adviser and KALC.

1. Amended Clerk's Job Description
2. RFO Job Description
3. RFO role detail
4. RFO contract
5. Advertisement

The Clerk outlined the calculation for determining the cost implications to the Council of the lowest and highest payscales advertised, including on costs

@ payscale 10 (£20,751) = **TOTAL ANNUAL COST of £6396**

@ payscale 15 (£22,911) = **TOTAL ANNUAL COST of £7056**

The following timeline was agreed:

5th November: To be advertised on Facebook, the Website, KALC, Noticeboards and the Kent Courier.

29th November: Closing date for applications

w/c 2nd December: Cllr. Woodley, Cllr de Guingand and the Clerk meet to agree shortlist

w/c 9th December: Interviews

7th January 2020: Interview Panel recommendation of successful candidate to the Full Council

January/February 2020: RFO commences employment with the Council.

RESOLVED to recommend that the arrangements for recruiting a Responsible Financial Officer, as endorsed by the Committee, be approved by the Council.

10. Bank Accounts

10.1 John Downer

The Clerk advised that the account currently stands at: £516.00, and that a meeting of the Trustees will be held in December.

10.2 Unity Bank Authorisation Process

Councillors should have received notification of changes to the secondary authorisation security process; Cllr. Woodley undertook to ensure that Councillors had attended to the requirements, so that there would be no difficulties with the monthly accounts payable.

11. Date of next meeting – Early 2020