

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD
PARISH COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY 24th April 2019 IN MATFIELD PAVILION AT 7.30pm**

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

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. Approval of the minutes of 12th November 2018

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 12th November 2018 were approved and duly signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.

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

None

4. Internal Audit Review

The interim Internal Audit findings and report from 19th November 2018 were discussed. This has already been reviewed by the Full Parish Council at its meeting in January with the following noted in the minutes:

The interim internal audit report and Audit Findings were circulated; these would be considered by the Finance Committee at its next meeting. It was agreed that Cllr. Mrs. Butler will review the PAYE process, and Cllr Grant will review the website pages.

The Clerk advised that Cllr. Mrs. Butler had completed the review and assessed the following processes:

- calculation of pro rata salary;
- checking processes for calculations of overtime, expenses and mileage;
- checking the pension percentages are correct using SMART Pension online;
- calculating the pension contributions for month 1 of the 2019-20 tax year;
- checking HMRC tax and NI calculation process; and
- checking that the figures are transposed to the Clerk's pay-sheet to ensure the net pay figure is correct.

5. Financial Regulations

Cllr. de Guingand had reviewed the document and made some observations:

para. 2.2 The Clerk does circulate the bank reconciliation but there is no sign-off of the bank statement.

It was agreed that, together with the detailed receipts and payments reconciliation, the Clerk would circulate the bank statement electronically, monthly, to the Finance Committee for cross-referencing. These would be signed by the Chairman at each meeting of the Finance Committee, which would provide a formal note for inspection. The Chairman duly signed the bank statement to 31 March 2019, having cross referenced this with the accounts bank reconciliation statement of the same date.

para. 2.11 Inspection of records.

Cllr. de Guingand advised that whilst the PC could charge a fee for this it has never actually happened and therefore no revision of the Financial Regulations is warranted.

RESOLVED to recommend to the Parish Council that the Financial Regulations be re-adopted without amendment.

6. Asset Register

The Committee discussed an extensive revision of the schedule, including photographs, that had been undertaken by Cllr. Stevenson. The Clerk advised that a cost for full replacement valuation of the War Memorials had been obtained from Burselms, but that this was prohibitively expensive at £675.

Cllr. Batty queried some inconsistencies in valuations of land and whether the revision of the Asset Register would impact on the Parish Council insurance policy. The Clerk advised that this document would be discussed with the internal auditor on 22nd May, when his advice would be sought.

7. Year-End Reconciliation

The Clerk advised that RBS will be running the year-end shut down remotely on 2nd May, and the Internal Audit would take place on 22nd May; however, all accounts were shown to be balanced to the end of March 2019, and the following documents were discussed:

- Trial Balance;
- Bank Reconciliation;
- Summary of Receipts and Payments;
- Detailed Receipts and Payments, by Budget heading; and
- the VAT return.

These documents were scrutinised. The detailed Receipts and Payments report revealed cost-centres where expenditure had significantly exceeded budget. The Clerk provided explanations for these items, which were accepted by the Committee.

It was noted that the Council's reserves at the end of the 2018-19 financial year were less than 50% of the budget for 2019-20, and the Clerk expressed a need to ensure this did not fall below 40%.

It was agreed that during budget-setting in November consideration would be given to establishing a sufficient earmarked sum to prevent a significant run on reserves, given the Council's responsiveness to unbudgeted items over the past two years.

8. Budget highlights review

The Committee discussed budget highlights, for reporting at the Annual Parish Meeting on 29th May, including the parking by Matfield Green and the Tree Survey, and noted that the budget for the current year had been on the website since January, for electors to scrutinise.

9. Priorities for 2019/20

Significant sums in the 2019-2020 Budget were discussed. The Clerk advised that the project on the Allotments, totalling £5k in budget, would be well-received and that it may have contributed to the site being fully tenanted for this year.

10. RFO Report

10.1. Unity Account

The Clerk advised that the Multipay credit card is now in operation and had been useful in avoiding late-payment charges for the electricity bill. This transaction on the Unity bank statement requires clarification as it merely shows "Direct Debit Lloyds Bank Plc"; the detail of the actual payments is obtained via the Lloyds Bank online statement.

10.2 Fees

The Clerk outlined the three fee structures that the Council should review annually: Matfield Pavilion Licensees, Matfield Pavilion Bookings, and Allotment Fees. The allotment fees have not been reviewed for many years.

It was agreed that all fees and charges would specifically reviewed at the November budget-setting meeting, to enable advance notice to be provided to those affected, and to inform invoicing which is carried out annually in March.

10.3 Significant unbudgeted items this year

The Clerk outlined a significant unbudgeted cost: Fencing at the Recreation Ground will be £964.10.

11. Date of next meeting – July 2019