

LANCING PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 9 May 2018 at 7.00pm

Cllrs Present:- Geoff Patmore (Chair); Carol Albury, Douglas Bradley (from Minute 71), Clive Burghard, Lee Cowen (Minutes 64 to 71), Gina Scotting and Jean Turner.

Ex-officio:- Cllrs Gloria Eveleigh.

Officer:- Helen Plant, Clerk

Public:- None.

64. Apologies

None.

65. Declaration of Substitute Members

None.

66. Declarations of Interest

None.

67. Public Forum/Questions

None.

68. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 21 March 2018

Resolved – That the Minutes of the previous meeting be approved.

69. Accounts for payment

69.1 March's Expenditure

Committee **RESOLVED** that the following amounts be paid:-

- i. March's Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £44,562.00
- ii. March's Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £5.50

69.2 April's Expenditure

Committee **RESOLVED** that the following amounts be paid:-

- i. April's Current A/C expenditure in the sum of £38,410.91
- ii. April's Clerks Payment A/C expenditure in the sum of £12,422.27

70. Cash Balances & Investments

70.1 Approval of Cash Balances & Investments

It was **RESOLVED** that the cash balances and investments of the Council totalling **£616,864.47** as at 30 April 2018 was a true record.

70.2 Investment Options

Pursuant to Committee Minute 61.2(b)/Mar/18, it was confirmed that if a parish council agreed to do so, it had the power to purchase property or land in or outside its area. The land might be acquired for any statutory function or simply for the benefit, improvement or development of the area. If the property or land were to be subsequently sold, receipts of less than £10,000

profit could be treated as general income, but any income in excess of £10k, must be set aside in a capital fund.

Whilst a parish council had a general power to invest its funds for any purpose relevant to its functions and for the prudent management of its financial affairs, but depending on the anticipated level of investment, further regulations applied.

Discussion ensued as to whether a parish council was able to borrow money and for what purposes.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted.
(b) That information in respect of parish council loans be provided at the next meeting.

71. Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading

Resolved – That the information be noted.

72. Clerk's Report

72.1 Review of Council Policies and Procedures

A review was currently being carried out on some of the Council's Policies and Procedures as a matter of course, to be brought in line with current legislation or had been newly created.

Resolved – That the Employee Discretionary Pension Policy and Lancing Parish Hall CCTV Policy, as submitted, be approved.

72.2 Precept Error by Adur District Council

Pursuant to Committee Minute 63.4/Mar/18, it was confirmed that a further response requesting a public apology to Lancing residents via a press release had been put to Adur District Council, but no reply had been received.

However, an associated article had been included in the Council's latest newsletter delivered to residents and the same article would be issued to the local press.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

72.3 Bank Reconciliations

In accordance with Financial Regulation 2.2, it was confirmed that the Chairman of this Committee, Cllr Patmore, had verified the bank reconciliations to the end of March 2018.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

72.4 Annual Audit Report 2017/18

Members were advised that the Council's Internal Auditor, Mulberry & Co, had carried out the annual internal audit on 26 April 2018, in anticipation of the Council's Annual Audit Report 2017/18 being submitted to the external auditor, Moore Stephens, once it had been approved by full Council at the meeting on 23 May. The subsequent report had been previously circulated for Member's information.

The Auditor had made some recommendations, including that internet banking arrangements needed to be tightened up, the payment of Councillor allowances needed amending and the

insurance fidelity guarantee needed reviewing. It was confirmed that the recommendations would endeavoured to be addressed prior to the next Committee meeting.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

72.5 Councillor Allowances

It was noted that the Council had agreed many years ago for members, both elected and co-opted, to be paid a basic allowance each year to cover the expenses associated with the basic duties of being a local councillor, as well as travelling expenses and a carers allowance to adhere with The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances)(England)(Amendments) Regulations 2004. The Council also paid a Chairman's Allowance in accordance with section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972.

However, the Internal Auditor had highlighted that the way in which Councillor allowances were paid needed amending. The basic allowance paid to councillors counted as earnings of an office and was therefore taxable (and subject to National Insurance contributions, although the level of allowance was unlikely to be high enough to give rise to a liability). The Chairman's Allowance was not taxable as it was reimbursed as actual deductible expenditure.

This meant that a parish councillor in receipt of a basic allowance must be added to the council's PAYE scheme and payroll system for the allowance to be paid.

Consequently, a Members' Allowances and Expenses Policy had been put together and was submitted for Committee approval. The Member Allowances and Contact Details form had been subsequently amended and would be issued to all Members shortly.

Some Members were vexed by this change but acknowledged regulations had to be followed. The Clerk advised that the office would support Members to help with any subsequent tax queries should they arise.

Resolved – (a) That the information be noted.

(b) That the Members' Allowances and Expenses Policy, as submitted, be approved.

72.6 Community Cinema

The Community Cinema Working met on 8 May to choose the film titles for the remainder of the year, determined when the cinema equipment could be hired out to other users of the hall and agreed to install Bluetooth technology for the sound system to do away with trailing cables. It was noted that unfortunately, delivery of the new chairs had been further delayed.

As the cinema was now well established, group members considered whether the group itself needed to continue. It was agreed that the group only needed to meet as and when and that updates would be provided to the Finance and General Purposes Committee (as that Committee oversaw the running of the Parish Hall).

Resolved – That the information be noted.

72.7 Beach Green Bank Holiday Market – Licence clause dispute

Members were reminded that one of the Council's income streams derived from a Market operator holding four Beach Green Bank Holiday markets every year. One of the clauses in the Licence Agreement stated that the operator must still pay for each bank holiday market even if

the event had to be cancelled due to bad weather or the ground conditions not being suitable. However, the clause went on to state that the market could take place on an alternative date.

It was reported that on the Easter Monday Bank Holiday market this year, the current market operator took the decision not to hold the market as the ground was totally unacceptable due to it being water logged. This was the right decision to take. However, alternative dates had never proved practicable for the operator due to other commitments and the operator was refusing to pay. He added that he had had a previous understanding that he didn't pay as it doesn't happen very often and was ensuring the Parish Council's land was being safeguarded and therefore he believed a precedent had been set.

Whilst Members sympathised with the operator for events having to be cancelled because of weather conditions, the alternative date option was there to use, whether it was convenient or not. Furthermore, Members pointed out that other clauses in the licence agreement were being broken, including traders setting up the day before the bank holiday Monday and staying overnight, sufficient portable toilets were never provided, and it was also understood that the authorised area of use was being disregarded.

Resolved – That the Market Operator must adhere to all the clauses in the existing Licence Agreement or relinquish it.

72.8 Outgoing Parish Hall Bar Licensee – Outstanding Payment

It was reported that the outgoing Bar licensee, Mr Stephen Vickers, (agreement ended on 31 March 2018), had an outstanding payment amount of £590.00. The Committee were requested to consider a relevant course of action for repayment.

Resolved – That the outgoing licensee, Mr Stephen Vickers, be requested to enter into a repayment scheme with the Council to repay the outstanding debt of £590.00. Should such an agreement fail, then Mr Vickers will be taken through the 'small claims court' process.

72.9 VAT payable on Beach Hut annual rental

Further to a query from a beach hut owner as to why VAT is charged on the beach hut annual rental fee, it was confirmed that beach huts were classed as holiday accommodation, even though owners were not allowed to sleep overnight in the huts, and due to their leisure use. VAT Notice 709/3 refers.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.08pm.