

MINUTES of the Finance Committee of Melksham Without Parish Council held on Monday 12th June 2017 at Crown Chambers, Melksham at 8.10 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Richard Wood (Chairman), John Glover (Vice Chair & Chairman of this Committee), Alan Baines, Mike Mills & Paul Taylor.

Officers: Teresa Strange (Clerk) & Jo Eccleston (Parish Officer)

Apologies: Cllr. Carter who was on holiday. These apologies were accepted.

Housekeeping: Cllr. Glover welcomed all to the meeting and explained the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire.

078/17 **Declarations of Interest:** None.

079/17 **Public Participation:** There were no members of the public present.

080/17 **Statement of Accounts & Accompanying Report 2016/17:**

- a) **Statement of Accounts & Annual Report for year Ending 31st March, 2017:** The Clerk reported that the main opening and closing balances were correct, but the breakdowns with regard to separate accounts and reserves were not. She had identified that the brought forward figures reflecting transfer figures between the general account, allotment account, sports field account and reserves account for 2015/16 were incorrect. This had resulted in the closing balance for the general reserve account being -£6,762.83. The External Auditor had commented on the 31st March 2014 Annual Return that the Council held a low level of general reserves, as reserves were all earmarked and recommended that the council take steps to increase the level of general reserves in future years. This had been addressed in the financial years 2014/15 and 2015/16. When the 2016/17 budget was reviewed against the anticipated year end figures corrective action was not taken to address this shortfall at the end of the year because the budget figures at that time showed a year end general figure of £146,957.51. It has subsequently been investigated and the council are now aware that the budget that they reviewed at their January Finance Meeting included incorrect opening balance figures. Errors had been made in the breakdown and treatment of reserves by a member of staff. **Recommended:** *The Clerk to update this document and the committee members to give any feedback on it by the afternoon of the 13th June.*
- b) **Local Government Transparency Code Compliance Report for 2016/17:** It was noted that this document could not be recommended in its current format and that more work was required.

081/17 **Audit:**

- a) **External Audit Annual Return:** The Clerk reported that she was happy that the figures reported on the Annual Return were correct, however this document was still in draft format.
- b) **External Auditor Submission Date:** The Committee noted that the External Audit Submission date had been the 19th June, however, permission had been granted for an extension to Friday 23rd June as there is a requirement to

include the minute number of the Full Council approval of the year end accounts.

082/17

Status of Invoices for Hire of Bowerhill Jubilee Sports Field: A staff member had confirmed that invoices had been sent out to all football clubs who had hired the Sports Field and Pavilion and that these had been paid. However, following an exercise to reconcile payments to invoices it was identified that some clubs had not been invoiced at all, some had been part invoiced and some had been invoiced twice.

- Trowbridge Town A & Reserves - were invoiced for the season and had paid in full.
- Melksham Town A and Melksham Town Youth – cheques from Melksham Town had been sent to cover payment for both Melksham Town A and Melksham Town Youth and these payments had not been accurately checked against invoices and payments had therefore become mixed up. Melksham Town Youth still owes £315. The staff at Melksham Town Youth are looking into the invoicing mix up and are assisting in addressing the issue.
- Foresters Arms – were invoiced for ad-hoc matches and had paid in full.
- Grapes FC – had not been chased for payment of invoices in writing. They should have paid £800, but two matches were not played so they were due a reduction of £160. £640 remains outstanding and they have offered £470 as a settlement. They have disputed a match fee of £80 as their understanding was £50.
- AFC – Invoiced for £450, but have paid £430 and have offered 4no of goal nets to remain at Sports Field for use of other hirers in settlement.

Recommended: .1.: *The Parish Council accept the gesture and payment of £470 in settlement of the hiring charges from the Grapes FC. .2. The Parish Council accept the payment of £430 and 4no of goal nets form AFC in settlement of their hiring charges.*

The Committee noted that as of 31st March, 2017 the outstanding payments amounted to £955.

083/17

Draft Finance Regulations based on NALC Model: Review of this document was deferred.

084/17

Banking:

a) Bank Signatory Changes:

- (i) The Clerk as RFO(Responsible Financial Officer) reported that she had begun the paperwork to set up councillors as new signatories with Lloyds Bank with “limited authority” and the Clerk has view only for the online statements. However, after discussions with the bank it transpires that the council cannot have all signatories with “limited authority” as no one could then effectively authorise transactions. Therefore, all the councillors on the Finance Committee need to be set up with “Full Authorisation”. However, the safety mechanism is that it always requires two signatories or two Finance Committee councillors to carry out on-line authorisations. The Clerk advised that the Financial Regulations were updated to include a clause which states that any councillors who are authorised bank signatories who have a spouse or cohabitee who is also a Council Member

and an authorised bank signatory, are not permitted to authorise the same banking transaction. **Recommended:** .1. Councillors on the Finance Committee are set up with Lloyds Bank with Full Authorisation as signatories .2. The Financial Regulations are updated to include a clause which states that any council members who are on the Finance Committee, and so by default are signatories, who are married or cohabiting, are not permitted to authorise the same banking transaction.

(ii) The Clerk and the Finance Assistant are both set up as “View & Set UP” only administrators of both Lloyds Bank and Unity Bank. The Finance Committee were informed that the Finance Assistant had resigned. The banking mandates with change of signatories for Councillors had not yet been submitted, and the Clerk as RFO advised that the Finance Assistant was removed as an account administrator and that the Parish Officer was added; this would ensure that there was always a member of staff in the office able to address banking issues. **Recommended:** The Finance Assistant is removed as a “view and set up” only administrator for Lloyds Bank and Unity Bank and the Parish Officer is added.

b) **Banking Charges for Unity Bank:** Unity Bank impose bank charges if the turnover within the account does not exceed £100,000. It was noted that any monies over £85,000 in any account were not protected by the FSCS (Financial Services Compensation Scheme), and that it would take a lot of officer time to ensure that the turnover in this account always exceeded £100,000. It was acknowledged that it would be more cost effective to pay the Unity Bank charges. These were £6 per month. It was noted that these bank charges were introduced in the period between the Council agreeing to open a Unity Bank account, and the account being opened.

085/17

Funding Split for Joint Neighbourhood Plan: It was noted that when the funding split for the costs of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan were agreed between the Town Council and the Parish Council, that this was to be reviewed on an annual basis. This had never been done, and the Clerk as RFO had advised that a review was carried out as initial investigations into the potential costs of holding a referendum for the Plan intimated that these could be up to £90,000. However, it now transpired that Wiltshire Council pay the costs of any referendum and claim this cost back from Central Government. Following the recent boundary changes under the Community Governance Review 835 properties had been transferred from the Parish to the Town; this equated to Melksham Without having 5,421 electors in 2,873 properties and Melksham Town having 12,733 electors in 7,567 properties. The Committee considered that the split between the two parishes was now 30/70, and therefore a fairer split of the financial contribution should be one third paid by Melksham Without and two thirds paid by Melksham Town on a 1:2 ratio, 33.3:66.6. **Recommended:** The Parish Council propose to the Town Council that following the transfer of 835 properties from Melksham Without Parish to Melksham Town Parish that the funding split for the Joint Neighbourhood Plan should be amended to one third paid for by the Parish Council and two thirds paid for by the Town Council.

086/17

Quotations for New Assets: The Committee review quotations for new assets as identified as required by the Asset Committee on Monday 5th June, 2017. The Clerk informed that the Caretaker felt strongly that the litter surrounding the bin at

Beanacre Play Area was due to overflowing litter, and not down to birds. The Clerk advised that there were some issues being experienced with the noticeboard style that was currently being purchased. The noticeboards were so well sealed that condensation was forming inside the boards, and making paperwork moist and mouldy. The Caretaker had drilled some small holes in the noticeboard opposite Shaw School to increase airflow and the Clerk had ordered some silica gel packets for inside the case. Quotations were now being sought for a similar looking noticeboard but without this issue.

Recommended.1.: *The following quotations were recommended for approval by the Full Council:*

1. *J.H.Jones – quote 272: for labour to remove 6no. existing bins and replace with 6no. new bins at the Bowerhill Sports Field, Beanacre play Area and Berryfield Play Area at £365 plus VAT.*
2. *J H Jones – quote 271:*
 - i. *To cut back hedge at Bowerhill Sports Field (to be done after first week in August to comply with bird nesting legislation) at £160 plus VAT.*
 - ii. *To cut back vegetation blocking kissing gate on Rights of Way at Bowerhill Sports Field at £88 plus VAT.*
 - iii. *To remove old noticeboards and install new noticeboards at Kestrel Court, Berryfield and relocate noticeboard at Bowerhill, to remove old benches and install 2no new benches, including installing concrete bases and anchoring in of benches at £1,605 plus VAT.*
3. *TDP Ltd – quote TDP-L88136-1Q: 2 no.Chatsworth seat with arm rests 1.5m length at £260 each plus carriage at £18; total cost £538 plus VAT for Shaw Play Area.*
4. *Glasdon – quote Q/251935-A/I/PUB08: 6no Fire Expire Litter Bins at £285.75 each, plus 6no personalised “Melksham Without Parish Council” plaques at £18.64 each; total cost £1826.15 plus VAT. 4no. for Bowerhill Sports Field, 1no. for Berryfield Play Area and 1no. for Beanacre Play Area.*

Recommended .2.: *The Clerk to have delegated powers to purchase 3no large computer screens up to the value of £150 excluding VAT per screen.*

Meeting closed at 9.25pm

Chairman, 19th June, 2017