

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING held on Tuesday 12th June 2018, 7.45 pm at Council's Meeting Room.

PRESENT: Cllrs: Margaret Bussell (Vice-Chair), Jenny Forbes, Brian Phillips, Jonathan Samways and Derek Wailes.

IN ATTENDANCE: Caroline Leet (Clerk)

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: 0

The Chairman opened the meeting and welcomed everyone.

Responsibility of

183 **Public Questions**

None.

184. **Apologies for absence**

Cllr Bright apologies were received and **resolved; the reasons were accepted.**

185. **To receive Declarations of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda**

None.

186. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held 20th March 2018**

The minutes were **approved as an accurate account of the meeting.**

187. **Clerk's Report**

The Clerk's report was received. Cllr Bussell noted the annual leave arrangements over the summer period. She also noted that there had been an occasional issue with discolouration of the tap water in the office; the Clerk had reported this to South East Water who had tested the water and samples were shown to be satisfactory. Members discussed; it was suggested that a filter tap should be considered.

Clerk

a **To receive bank reconciliations for March, April and May 2018**

Cllr Bussell confirmed that the bank reconciliations for the Unity Trust bank account, Public Sector Deposit Fund and the FairFX pre-paid cards for March, April and May had been checked by Cllr Bright or herself and were in order.

188. **Audit**

a **Annual Return**

i. **To note: the Annual Return has been completed and submitted to the external auditor**

Noted

ii. **To note: the Notice of Public Rights and Publication of the unaudited Annual Return has been published on the notice boards and the website; the inspection period is 4th June to 13th July 2018**

Noted.

b **To receive the internal Auditor's report**

i. **To note: There were no issues. However, it was recommended for spot checks of the invoices/payments to be carried out and to initial these**

The Internal Auditor's report was received. Members noted the comment about spot checking invoices with the payments. Cllr Bussell said that she did not see this was necessary as the procedures in place already ensured payments were checked: the

Clerk raises a payment on the online bank facility, this then needs to be approved by two (of the three) councillors who are authorised signatories. These payments are checked against a payment report (or email if prior to a meeting) and thus checked also for input errors. Payments are individually authorised (and not bulk authorisation). Also, if there was a payment which wasn't recognised then the councillor(s) do question.

Cllr Forbes mentioned that at new councillors training, councillors are told they that they have responsibility for finance and checking the payments is to help prevent fraud. She also said that before the Council had online facilities payment invoices were checked when the cheques were signed, but procedures had move on and this request did seem a legacy from this. Cllr Wailes said the Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer is also responsible. He also said that he was not sure that spot checking invoices would pick up any errors. Members discussed; it was agreed that when the monthly payment reports were checked if there was anything unfamiliar they did already query. Members **agreed** that the current procedures already employed diligence for checking the payments and amounts.

189. **To review the expenditure 2018/19**

a **Quarterly review up to 5th June**

The income and expenditure report was received; it was noted that the report was 18% through the year. There were no questions.

b **the predicted year-end expenditure**

Cllr Phillips said that the Excel spreadsheet had not included the predicted year-end figures, so he had prepared an updated sheet (which he circulated). He had put the figures in as per the budgeted figures except where there was a known variance:

- Website (4027) had been increased from £200 to £300 to allow for the website host package upgrade
- Dog bins (4230) had increased from £600 to £1200 to allow for the unpaid invoice from last year; the money was already accounted for last year and was now in the general reserves
- Village Centre Improvements (4085), it was known that the heating system was going to be replaced, but was not in the budget
- War Memorial (5005) the reserves would be used to allow for the difference between the actual cost of the works and the grant contribution; approx. £900

Members then looked at the percentage spend. There was nothing unexpected to query.

190. **General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):**

a **To receive an update**

Cllr Bussell referred to the Clerk's report; there was nothing which hadn't already been reported to the full Council. Cllr Wailes said that there was nothing pressing and he was working with the Clerk; an updated Data Audit would be carried out at the end of the summer period.

b **To consider any further recommendations to the full Council for data provisions and policies**

Cllr Forbes said that policies would be reviewed towards the end of the year.

191. **To consider holding Council Meeting papers in a Dropbox folder**

Cllr Bussell said that this item had been requested by Cllr Bright. She said that

some members email accounts were not always receiving emails with several files attached. Cllr Wailes reported that the Council's website now had a members' area which allowed for papers to be uploaded. Members discussed, including the time factor for the Clerk to upload documents on different media and that not all councillors used Dropbox. Members **agreed** to pilot the website's members' area and for the Clerk to send out a standard email advising when meeting papers had been uploaded. This could be reviewed after a reasonable trial period.

Clerk

192. **To consider monthly payments cut-off date, payment date and timings for payment reports to be sent out for council meetings**

Cllr Bussell said that she had discussed this with the Clerk and how might be the best way to proceed. The issues were:

- Councillors needed to receive the finance payment reports with enough time before meetings to view them; sending them out on the Monday or Tuesday before the meeting meant that councillors did not always have the opportunity to view the reports fully.
- The Clerk had more time on the Monday/Tuesday before a meeting to prepare the payments, this also allowed for invoices received at the end of the month (and the Community Shopping Bus which was issued at the beginning of the month); and there should be more payments to be approved than to ratify.

Members discussed at length. It was **agreed** that the Clerk would prepare the payments at the same time as when the wages were prepared (roughly around 25th of the month). Any invoices not received by this date would carry over to the following month. Payment reports would then be sent out with the meeting papers by the Thursday before the full Council meeting.

Clerk

It was noted that if there was a regular payment i.e. the shopping bus, then perhaps this could be considered to be paid and added to the payments to ratify.

193. **Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda**

None.

194. **Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday 16th October 2018**

Meeting was closed at 20:30

Chairman.....

Date.....