

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING** held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2018, 20:05 at Council's Meeting Room.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs: Margaret Bussell (Chair), Rob Bright, Jenny Forbes, David Loveday, 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

162. **Public Questions**  
None.

163. **Apologies for absence**  
Cllr Phillips apologies were received and **resolved; the reasons were accepted.**

164. **To receive Declarations of Interests from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda**  
None.

165. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held 28<sup>th</sup> November 2017**  
The minutes were **approved as an accurate account of the meeting.**

166. **Clerk's Report**

The Clerk's report was received.

a **To receive bank reconciliations for November and December 2017**

Cllr Bussell confirmed that she had checked the bank reconciliations for the Unity Trust bank account, Public Sector Deposit Fund and the FairFX pre-paid cards for November and December and they were in order.

b **Risk assessment (RA): to receive the draft general RA for the Council**

Members received the draft Risk Assessment for the Council. Cllr Samways said there was still a small amount of work to do, but it was mostly complete.

c **To receive the RA control measures for the Council facilities**

The control measures document for the Council office and meeting room was noted.

d **To note: RAs have been prepared for Council events, the Street Snooker Wall and the Youth Club**

The Risk Assessments for the Street Snooker Multi Games Wall and Youth Club were received and the template for Council Events. Cllr Samways said if there were any comments about any of these to forward them to him direct.

Clerk/JS

167. **Audit:**

a **To note: the Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments (SAAA) have given notification of the external auditor appointments for 2017/18 financial year – Moore Stephens have been appointed for West Sussex authorities**  
Noted.

b **To review the internal auditor arrangements**

Cllr Bussell referred to the Clerk's report: Rodabe Rudin had been appointed as the Council's internal auditor in September 2013; the Clerk had always found her to be

thorough and valued her advice. Cllr Bussell invited the members' views. Cllr Forbes said that National Association of Local Councils (NALC) advice was that the Council should review its internal audit arrangements every three years. Members discussed the internal audit arrangements. It was noted that the internal auditor should be someone who is independent to the council and that the Council was responsible for appointing a person who is competent to carry out the role in a way that will meet the business needs. Members discussed if 'independent' should also be someone who was detached from the village and if 'competent' should mean suitably qualified. The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) changed membership criteria from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017; principal and fellow members are listed on its website. It was noted that Mrs Rudin was not on this list. Cllr Forbes mentioned Forest Row Parish Council used Mark Mulberry, Chartered Accountant who the council had used in the past for VAT advice; his reports were about 30-pages long. Or, Peter Frost who currently audits Haywards Heath Town Council and Lindfield Parish Council. It was noted that both of these would cost more than in the current budget. Members discussed further and agreed that the internal auditor arrangements should be reviewed every three years for good practice. The Clerk was asked to approach Mark Mulberry and research other possible auditors and to get quotes for two internal audits per year. Members **agreed to recommend to the full Council:**

- **that the internal audit arrangements should be reviewed every three years**
- **that it was time to appoint a new internal auditor for the Council**
- **and to increase the audit budget code 4057 (this includes internal and external audit costs) from £600 to £1000 for 2018/19.**

Clerk/AWVC

168. **Budget 2017/18**

a **To receive the income and expenditure up to 16<sup>th</sup> January (3<sup>rd</sup> quarterly review)**

Cllr Bussell said looking at the Excel spreadsheet and the RBS income and expenditure report dated 15<sup>th</sup> January, 79% through the year, there was nothing contentious.

b **To review the predicted year-end**

Looking at the expenditure versus the income the Council would end they financial year with an excess of £2,960. However, Cllr Bussell reminded members this would change as there would be the replacement heating costs for the office to be considered and accounted for.

Cllr Bussell said noting the above discussion about the audit, the draft budget for 2018/19 would need to be amended. She also mentioned that the Clerk had suggested that the Youth Club wages (4040) budget should be increased slightly to reflect the actual hours needed for the role. The Committee **agreed to recommend to the full Council to increase the Youth Club budget (4040) from £1,400 to £1,700.**

Clerk/AWVC

c **To review the overtime allowance for 2017/18**

Cllr Bussell said that she wanted to clarify the position on overtime hours for the remaining three months of the current financial year, 2017/18. It was noted that this had already been discussed at the last Committee meeting, and members said that there should not be any reason to exceed the salaries budget (4000). One member suggested that any additional hours should be taken as time in lieu and if necessary the office should be shut to allow for this. Cllr Forbes added that the employee contracts should reflect employee actual hours and the Council needed

to make sure that employees were not losing out on annual leave if they were regularly working additional hours; and this would need to be budgeted for so that the Council would remain within budget.

169. **To approve and make recommendation to the full Council the annual pay increments (as budgeted)**

It was noted that this had been discussed at the November meeting and a recommendation made to the full Council meeting in December: members resolved to continue to award pay increments as per employee contracts and when an employee reaches the maximum spinal level within their scale to receive only the increases as and when agreed by the National Joint Council for Local Government.

170. **Financial Regulations**

a **To receive the draft updated Financial Regulation and to make recommendation to the full Council**

Cllr Bussell thanked Cllr Forbes for producing the new draft Financial Regulations noting that this had involved a huge amount work on them. She added that the Clerk had looked through them and made some comments. Cllr Forbes said that she had referred to the NALC model regulations and the existing Council's Financial Regulations. There were some updates in particular to the EU procurement rules (item 11 of the Regulations). She mentioned that the NALC model regulations also included Risk Assessment, though it was a bit vague. The Clerk had raised concerns as the model regulations suggested that the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)/Clerk shall prepare risk assessments, however this has now been amended to say the RFO will ensure that risk assessments are prepared; this reflects the Clerk's job description. Members **agreed to recommend to the full Council to adopt the new Financial Regulations.**

Clerk

b **To make recommendation to the full Council changes to the Standing Orders to reflect the changes to the Financial Regulations**

Cllr Forbes said that although the new Standing Orders were currently being prepared, the current Standing Orders would require some minor changes to reflect the new Financial Regulations. Members **agreed to recommend to the full Council to amend the Standing Orders accordingly to reflect the new Financial Regulations.**

Clerk

171. **Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda**  
None.

172. **Date of Next Meeting** – Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Meeting was closed at 20:35

Chairman.....

Date.....