

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF ASHURST WOOD FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING held on Tuesday 16th October 2018, 7.45 pm at Council's Meeting Room.

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

195. **Public Questions**
None.

196. **Apologies for absence**
None.

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

198. **To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held 12th June 2018**
The minutes were **approved as an accurate account of the meeting.**

199. **Clerk's Report**

The Clerk's report was received.

a **To receive bank reconciliations for June, July, August, September 2018**

Cllr Bright confirmed that the bank reconciliations for the Unity Trust bank account, Public Sector Deposit Fund and the FairFX pre-paid cards for June, July, August and September had been checked by he or Cllr Bussell and were in order.

b **To note: Unity Trust Bank has made some changes to their paying-in charges for cash and cheque. This will have a negligible effect on the Council**

Noted.

200. **Audit**

a **To receive the External Auditors report and comments for the Annual Return year end March 2018**

Cllr Bright referred to the comment from the External Auditors (Moore Stephens) who said that the accounts are prepared on the basis of income and expenditure and not receipts and payments as stated. The Clerk said that she had raised this with the Internal Auditor who had confirmed that the Council's reports had been prepared as income and expenditure which was correct.

b **To note: Half-yearly internal audit has been arranged for 16th October; report will be presented at the November meeting**

Noted. The Clerk reported there had been no issues with the internal audit, but the Internal Auditor did have a couple recommendations including additional checks for the bank reconciliations which will be reported at the next meeting.

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

a **To receive the half-yearly expenditure**

- The income and expenditure report (dated 10th October) was received; it was noted that the report was 53% through the year. Staffing (4000), was at 51% of budget expenditure, so on target; there were no questions.

b

To review the predicted year-end expenditure

Cllr Bright referred to the predicated year-end figures on the Excel spreadsheet noting the following:

- Dog Bins (4230) had increased from £600 to £1,270 to allow for the unpaid invoice from last year; the money had already been accounted for last year (2017/18) and was now in the general reserves. Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC) had been asked to produce an amended invoice.
- War Memorial (4260) had a budget of £150, but the projected expenditure was £3,250. This included the recent cleaning and renovations to the War Memorial. The War Memorial Trust were expected to award a grant for £2,287.50 (75% of the cost); this would be recorded under Grants received (1050)
- Winter Management/Snow Clearance (4212) was a new code to allow for the Council to manage local snow clearance; £250 was the projected expenditure
- Grant income (1050) had been zero budget, but the projected actual was £13,066: Car Park donation £10k; Youth Club equipment donation £778; WMT £2,287

Cllr Bright said that although the income and expenditure was greater than budgeted, there was nothing unexpected for example, the car park resurfacing. When comparing the net difference of expenditure versus income, the budgeted (-£6,124) and projected (-£7,246) difference was £1,122. This was accounted for in the above explanation. The projected carry forward end-of-year including the allocated reserves budget was £45,987.

202.

To review staffing hours; in particular a review of the past six months looking at contracted hours and over-time hours

Cllr Bright reported that the office hours were within budget. However, this had included using the allocated contingency overtime hours; 100 hours had been budget of which 81.75 had been used. Ashstock had used 171 hours (£3,241 approx.) which had been absorbed through office hours and some of the overtime contingency. Cllr Forbes noted that the Ashstock office hours were the equivalent to five weeks work. There was some discussion over how Council events could impact on other Council work and that it would be interesting to see how the office hours compare without Ashstock in 2019.

Cllr Bright said when looking at the staffing cost for Ashstock, should this be deducted from the budget for 2019/20 or could this be directed in to another area for example, improving the village general tidiness and maintenance. Members discussed at length the role of the village handyman; the current hours allocated and if there was a need for expanding this role. Members **agreed** this needed to be looked at. Cllr Bright and the Clerk were asked to formalise a review plan to include the handyman's job description and a review of the work actually carried out.

203.

a **Budget 2019/20**

To consider an initial view on proposals for the draft budget 2019/20

- b Cllr Bright referred to the Excel Spreadsheet which included a proposed first view of the budget for discussion.

Community Equipment (4241) / or to create a road safety code, for £500 to be budgeted to support the proposed shared ownership for a Speed Indicator Device with parishes in the Cluster Group

- Cllr Bright reminded Members the Public Services had supported a Speed Indicator Device (SID) shared purchase scheme and had recommend to the Finance and Administration Committee to include in the budget. He noted that in the West Sussex County Local Committee (CLC) minutes it had been minuted that £3k had been allocated to purchase a replacement SID for the northern district. Cllr Phillips said that the Cluster Group felt that West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) were not forthcoming with the money for a replacement SID and that they should go back to the original plan and purchase its own shared SID; if WSSCC did eventually purchase one then there would be two to share between the parishes. Cllr Wailes noted East Grinstead Town Council had resolved £400 towards a shared SID scheme. Members
- c **supported** £500 to be allocated to Community Equipment (4241).

Clerk

To consider allocating funds towards the following projects supported by the Public Services Committee:

- **Civic Amenities collections (4211) – to increase the budget from £650 to £1,000 to allow for three collections per year**

Members **agreed** to increase the budget for Civic Amenities collections (4211) to £1,000 to allow for three collections

- **To consider supporting a financial contribution towards a new tennis court access system. The project would be a collaboration with MSDC and AWCTC**

- Members discussed the need for an improved tennis court access system; (this had been reported to the full Council and Public Services Committee). Whilst there was support for improvements, it was noted that the courts are owned by MSDC, although the Council did receive some income for managing the facilities. The Clerk advised that a quote had been received for installing the new court access system and further discussions with MSDC regarding funding needed to be arranged. It was difficult at this stage to say how much would be needed to support the project as it was hoped that MSDC would be prepared to fund the majority of the set-up costs. Members
- d were not opposed to including a nominal figure in the facilities reserves (5007).

Election costs (4030), to allocate a budget for the May elections

Cllr Bright said that in view of the new Council term and elections in May 2019, £1,650 had been moved from the Election reserve (5004) into Election costs (4030). 5004 had been reduced to £900. Members **agreed**. It was noted that the reserves should be built up again over the coming years in case of a bi-election.

Clerk

Cllr Bright then referred to the Excel spreadsheet and the other income and expenditure codes. Members discussed. Of note:

- Loan Repayment for the Village Centre (4090) – this would end in July 2019, so would be only one repayment of £1,350
- John Pears RMA payment (1000) – this was dependent on the volume of hirers of John Pears Pavilion; £1,600 based on past two years income
- Village Centre improvement (4085) – the code was set-up for the new office facilities. This year included the replacement heating costs for the office and meeting room. However, the replacement heating was based on providing the same level of heating as the initial heating specification (3kw each room). It may be that during the winter the heating may not be sufficient to heat the hallway and toilet and therefore, a further heater would be needed for the hallway. Cllr Phillips mentioned during the tender process, two electricians had

advised to monitor once the replacement heating was in and to add a further heater if needed. Members **agreed** to allocate up to £1,500, but under Council office reserves (5007).

- Winter Management/Snow Clearance (4212) – Cllr Loveday mentioned that the proposed budget of £250 may not be enough. Since the Winter Management Plan arrangements had been discussed in June, there had been some changes with the local contractor. These were currently being looked at with WSCC and any impact would be reported once known

There were no further comments and it was noted that the November meeting would consider the budget further before making its recommendation to the full Council.

204. **To receive an update on General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)**

Cllr Wailes presented a report he had prepared: Ashurst Wood Village Council Data Protection and GDPR Audit Note March 2018 – updated 15th October 2018. The report looked at what the Clerk had already done and the first data audit report; the types of data and how it is used; and suggested action points. Cllr Wailes said that everything looked fine, but advised two areas requiring attention:

- To review the data audit
- To review the computer security

Cllr Forbes said that the Councillors also held information for example, emails; councillors needed to make sure the appropriate protection and security measures were applied. She also said that the Privacy Notice was on the website. Having looked at Privacy Policies, effectively these were the same as a Privacy Notice and therefore the Council's Privacy Notice would suffice.

Cllr Wailes suggested Councillors look at the report he had presented, any comments should be submitted to the Council and this would be presented to the full Council at their October meeting.

Clerk

Cllr Forbes mentioned that the Council's Retention Policy would need to be updated. It was agreed that a draft amended policy would be presented to the Finance and Administration Committee (ideally at the November meeting).

Clerk/JF

205. **To set a date for the annual Risk Assessment (last carried out 24th October 2017)**

It was agreed Cllrs Bright and Bussell would carry out the Financial Review; date to be agreed.

206. **To review the use of the Members' pages on the website for receiving Council Meeting papers**

Members agreed that the Members' page on the website was working well. Cllr Wailes said that he would instruct the Clerk how to upload emails.

207. **Personnel policies: To consider the arrangements, principles for staff leave and the policy requirements for the following circumstances:**

- **Bereavement**
- **Jury Service**
- **Special Leave**

Cllr Bright said that there had been a couple of examples of special leave recently which has raised the issue of the Council not having a policy(s). Should special leave be covered under individual policies or one policy; also were there any specific principles to include. Cllr Forbes said that one policy can cover all circumstances.

She also mentioned that the Council's Financial Regulations state that salaries shall be made in accordance with the employee's contracts of employment and no changes shall be made without prior approval of the Council and changes to the employees' contracts. Cllr Wailes pointed that employees have an option whether to accept the changes. Cllr Forbes said that the policy would be covering what employees are entitled to by law or an improvement so they would not be getting anything worse in their contracts. Members discussed circumstances for special leave. It was agreed Cllr Forbes would prepare a draft policy for the Committee to consider.

JF

208. **To consider setting out a Terms of Reference for working groups**

Members **agreed** that this was not necessary and could be covered under the Standing Orders (currently being redrafted).

209. **Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP): West Sussex Pension Fund are requesting Scheme employers within the Pension Fund to have the appropriate arrangements/policies in place for dealing with internal disputes and therefore are requesting the Council to an IDPR. To nominate someone to look in to this and prepare a draft policy**

Members discussed. They could not see the rationale and relevance for the Council to have its own Pensions Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure (IDRP) especially when they were members of the WSCC Pension Scheme. It was agreed that the Clerk would reply saying that it was not clear why a small parish would need its own IDRP when they were members of their scheme.

Clerk

210. **: Any Items for reporting or inclusion on future agenda**

None.

Cllr Wailes mentioned that he had seen in the WSCC Administration Committee minutes, under GDPR, that the Chief Information Officer would support smaller councils, but would also refer them to the Sussex Association of Local Councils (SALC). Cllr Wailes said his question was, what exactly did they mean and if a council was not a member of SSALC would they offer support?

He would email and ask.

DW

211. **Date of Next Meeting** – Tuesday 20th November 2018

Meeting was closed at 21:03

Chairman.....

Date.....