



MINUTES OF THE F&GP MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 7PM
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

PRESENT:

Cllr H Ramsay (Chair)
Cllr D Strachan (Vice Chair)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr I Bond
Cllr F Foster
Cllr M North
Cllr M Russell

Mr M Thorn Deputy Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mrs H Hammond Administrator

21/1101

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr M Foster

ABSENT

Cllr S Patel

21/1102

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

21/1102.1

a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item - none

21/1102.2

b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – none

21/1103

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no Members of Public present and therefore no questions.

21/1104

4. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

21/1104.1

a. Members received and approved the Minutes of the Finance & General Purpose (F&GP) Meeting held on 17 January 2017.

21/1105

5. MATTERS ARISING

21/1105.1

a. Re: 7a. 'Pensions Automatic Enrolment' on p.3 of the 17 January 2017 minutes. Cllr F Foster asked if the Town Council's 1 February 2017 staging date for pensions auto-enrolment had been met, with the Deputy Town Clerk replying that it had been.

21/1106 6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

21/1106.1 a. **Financial Regulations 2017 – 2018**

Members formally recommended that the Financial Regulations 2017-2018 document was approved, subject to the following changes:

p.2 - add in the date of adoption of the Financial Regulations document in the sentence: "These Financial Regulations were adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on ()."

p.4 - re:2.2. Members requested that the paragraph is changed to: "On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, a Town Councillor other than the Chairman of the Council and other than a cheque signatory shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO. The Member shall sign the reconciliations and the original bank statements, or similar document as evidence of verification. This activity shall on conclusion be reported, including any exceptions, to and noted by the Finance & General Purposes Committee."

p.7 – re:5.7. "A record of regular payments made under 5.6 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made." A request was made for the Accountant to review if this process is necessary.

p.8 – re: 6.9-6.11, Members have requested that the Accountant review the following paragraphs:

"If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.

Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be retained in a sealed dated envelope, in a fire proof cabinet. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of the Town Clerk or Deputy Town Clerk. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments."

p.8 – re: 6.13-6.14 – 6.14 updated to include "The Council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that appropriate steps are taken to prevent IT security risks such as anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used."

p.13 – re:15.1 should be changed to: “Following the annual risk assessment (per Regulation 17), the Town Clerk shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims with the council's insurers.”

The Accountant will review the document following Members comments.

21/1106.2 **b.** **Risk Management Scheme**

Members **RECOMMENDED** that Council approve this document, subject to the following changes:

 P6, first topic - Change ‘cash’ to ‘monies’

 P8, under ‘Insurance Cover for Council’ add ‘fraud’ under ‘Management of Risk’ column.

21/1106.3 **c.** **Audits**

Members reviewed the following Operating Procedures:

(i) Audit Process

Members requested the following amendments:

p.1. – “To help the Town Council demonstrate the proper discharge of their responsibilities” to be changed to “To help the Town Council demonstrate the proper discharge of its responsibilities”

p.2 –Should read “9. At the end of each financial year, the external auditor will forward an annual return. The aim is to have it completed and returned by 30th June and the annual accounts audited by 30th September.”

p.2 – should read “10. The annual accounts (on income & expenditure basis) should be completed by the Council’s Accountants, as soon as possible after the year end. These needs to be advertised for 14 days on the notice board (also on a Website or Newsletter), stating when and where the accounts can be viewed, to give the public the opportunity to inspect them if they so wish.”

Members **RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the Audit Process document, subject to the above changes being made.

(ii) Approve the Internal Audit terms of reference

Members **RECOMMENDED** that Council approve the Internal Audit terms of reference.

21/1106.4 **d.** **Fees 2018-19**

Members reviewed the following schedules of fees for 2018-2019.

- (i) Allotment Fees (2018-2019 and 2019-2020)
- (ii) Cemeteries
- (iii) Market
- (iv) Orchard Centre
- (v) Recreation (DR)
- (vi) Sport Facilities

Members **RECOMMENDED** adjustments to the fees with the exception of (iv) Orchard Centre which was deferred until further information is available on bookings and income.

21/1107 **7. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

There were no items for information.

21/1108 **8. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no questions from Members of the Public.

21/1109 **9. EXEMPT ITEMS**

There were no Exempt Items

Meeting closed at 9pm