

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee 25 February 2014
Bianchi Room of the Village Hall at 7.30 pm

Documents: presented to all Committee members by email with the Agenda; presented to Chair with shared copies for members at the meeting.

Code of Conduct; New Model Standing Orders; Financial Regulations; Publication Scheme; Data Protection notice; Legal Powers and Duties; Planning Protocol; Annual Investment Policy; Committee Terms of Reference and Responsibility; Complaints Procedure; Recruitment and Selection Procedure; Press and Media Communications Policy; Statement of Investments; Assets Register; Aviva Insurance Schedule; 2013/14 Monthly Analysis of Expenditure and Income; Statement of Reserves; Budget 2014/15; District Town and Parish Precepts; BDO Risk Assessment and Management schedule; Risk Identification and Internal Control Mechanisms; Internal Auditor's letter 20 November 2013; Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales – A Practitioners' Guide: Internal Auditor Control Checklist; Annual Return Section 2 Governance Statement

Present: Cllr Kelly (Chairman); Cllrs Jones; Doherty; Reeves; Acton; Young; Stansbury; Stirrup. Clerk/RFO

1. **Apologies for absence:** Cllr Barton-Briddon.
2. **Declaration of Interest:** None received.
3. **Governing Documents/Policies/Procedures**
To review: Code of Conduct; New Model Standing Orders; Financial Regulations; Publication Scheme; Data Protection; Legal Powers and Duties; Planning Protocol; Investment Policy; Committee Terms of Reference and Responsibility; Complaints Procedure; Recruitment and Selection Procedure; Press and Media Policy.

Code of Conduct

Adopted in 2013 and agreed as needing no amendments.

Financial Regulations

Adopted in 2013 and agreed as needing no amendments. New Model NALC Financial Regulations were expected shortly and would be reviewed accordingly.

Publication Scheme

Adopted in 2013 and agreed as needing no amendments.

Planning Protocol

Adopted in 2013 and agreed as needing no amendments.

Investment Policy

Adopted in 2013 and agreed as needing no amendments.

Committee Terms of Reference and Responsibility

Amendment: to include Footpaths and Rights of Way under Recreation and Amenities.

Standing Orders

The new NALC Model Standing Orders had been emailed to all Councillors with highlighted insertions and amendments for discussion with accompanying comments from the Clerk. The Chairman read aloud relevant parts. All were agreed as noted on the document excepting:

9. d) Cllr Acton requested insertion of the following words in italics: ‘If the Proper Officer *in consultation with the Chairman of the Council*’ considers the wording of a motion received...’

To make enquiries with HALC ref. change requested. To Agenda for 2014 Council meeting	Clerk
---	-------

5 xii) It was noted that the General Power of Competence required the Clerk to be CILCA qualified. Cllr Acton requested clarification as to which body had made the ruling on this.

To make enquiries as above – for information only	Clerk
---	-------

Legal Powers and Duties

Cllr Acton requested clarification relating to maintenance of churchyards and whether it had changed recently from a Duty to a Power. The Clerk was not aware of any changes.

To make enquiries relating as above – for information only	Clerk
--	-------

Data Protection

It was noted this had been renewed for 2014/15.

Complaints Procedure

This was a new document taken from the NALC model guidelines with additions from the Clerk. Councillors requested further opportunity to assess.

To assess document further and report to Clerk. To Agenda amendments for 18 March Council meeting	All members Clerk
--	----------------------

Recruitment and Selection Procedure

This was a new document taken from the HALC model guidelines with additions from the Clerk, compiled earlier in the year in conjunction with Interview Questions and Job Specifications. Council agreed it to go forward for adoption.

Press and Media Communications Policy

This was a new document taken from the NALC model guidelines. Council agreed it to go forward for adoption.

To Agenda all Governing Documents/Procedures/Policies for adoption at the 18 March Council meeting.	Clerk
---	-------

4. **Banking and Investments**

To review banking arrangements and investments.

A Statement of long term investments with recommendations from the RFO had been delivered to all Councillors with the Agenda. Long term Investments comprised: £25,000 on 12 month term maturing in April 2014 with the Co-operative Bank; £10,947 on 3 month term maturing in May 2014 with Lloyds Bank.

It was agreed preferable to reinvest the £25,000 sum plus interest accrued (£397) with Lloyds Bank for a further 12 months. It was agreed the £10,947 should remain with Lloyds Bank on continued 3 month reinvestment.

To Agenda 12 month investment at the 18 March Council meeting	Clerk
---	-------

5. **Asset Register and Insurance**

To review cover of assets; including Fidelity Guarantee and Public Liability.

Asset Register

This was up-to-date and approved. A column fixing values at 2012/13 had been added in accordance with request from BDO at last audit.

Insurance

Fidelity Guarantee: Agreed £100,000 was sufficient to cover requirements.

Public and Employer's Liability: Agreed £10 million was sufficient for requirements.

Excess: £250 for all claims. The Clerk had made enquiries of Insurance Brokers, Came and Co, but a higher excess was not possible. Came and Co had agreed to look into this.

Renewal: The 3 year tie-in with Came and Co will end in September 2014 and quotations from other brokers or insurance companies would be sought.

To obtain quotations from other brokers or insurance companies.	Clerk
---	-------

6. **Reserves**

To review reserves, funds and allocation.

A Statement showing reserves and funds allocated had been prepared by the RFO and delivered to all Councillors with the Agenda. The Reserves as represented by long term investments were agreed as follows: Emergency Contingencies £10,000; Replacement of Assets £24,396; Clerk's Gratuity Fund £1,948; Total £36,344. Forecast unallocated balance to end of year was estimated at £500. This allowed for estimated Overheads for February and March (£3,999); Youth Facilities project to be c/f £9,448; War Memorial Project to be c/f £3,529; Reserves to balance the 2014/15 Budget to be c/f £3,000.

7. **Overheads**

To review all overhead expenditure.

A schedule with the District, Town and Parish Council, Precepts gave comparison. Dog bin emptying had been identified as a potential saving in 2014/15.

Insurance quotations were being obtained in 2014/15.

8. **Assessment of risks and internal control systems**

To assess the risks facing the Council and review the effectiveness of the internal control systems in managing the risks. To receive the letter of the Internal Auditor's meeting with the External Auditor.

Risk Assessment and Management (Financial) for the period 1 April to 31 March 2014

Each item was read aloud and assessed by Councillors. An additional column recorded comments from the RFO and members. A further procedure to manage the risk of loss of key personnel (Clerk) was agreed: a statement detailing access to the office, files and computer records to be retained by the F&A Chair.

To prepare statement above and lodge with F&A Chair	Clerk
---	-------

Statement of Internal Control Mechanisms

There were no amendments.

The Internal Auditor's Control Check: Scope and Coverage of the Work Carried Out

The Check list was reviewed and controls agreed in place.

The Internal Auditor's letter

This was read aloud including comments noted by the Clerk. Each item was agreed as having been addressed with controls in place.

9. **External Audit - Annual Governance Statement**

To consider Statements 1-9 on the Annual Return to meet requirements for External Audit.

Councillors assessed and affirmed Statements 2 – 9 with regard meeting their responsibilities for the 2013/14 audit. Statement 1: the end of year accounts would be reviewed and approved when prepared. It was agreed to recommend Statements 2- 9 for approval to full Council.

To Agenda item when Internal Audit and the Annual Return is completed for the 20 May 2014 Council meeting.	Clerk
--	-------

10. **Any other business**

Public Consultation – Frequency of City Council Elections

A letter 28 January 2014 had been received from WCC requesting the Parish Council's view on a change from the current system of elections by thirds to an all-out council election every four years. Proposal to retain the current system: five in favour, two against, one abstention. Councillors were advised to visit the website to note a personal response if wished.

To respond to City Council by 14 March 2014 with carried motion.	Clerk
--	-------

Meeting closed 10.00 pm.