

FELSTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2018 at 5.00 pm in the United Reformed Church Hall, Committee Room.

- Present** Councillors John Moore (Chairman), Graham Harvey, Alan Mackrill, Frances Marshall and Stephanie Woodhouse.
- F18/16 **Apologies for absence and declarations of interest**
Apologies had been received from Cllr Peter Rose. Cllr Frances Marshall declared a prejudicial interest in Item F18/18.4 (Sunnybrook site)
- F18/17 **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2018**
The Minutes of the meeting were agreed and were signed by the Chairman.
- F18/18 **Matters arising from the July meeting**
18.1 Installation of safety surfacing at Bannister Green and Willows Green play areas (Item F18/09.1) – Members noted that these works had now been completed to a satisfactory standard.
18.2 Vacancy for Assistant Clerk (Item F18/12.1) – Members noted that 9 applications had been received and the HR Committee would meet next week to study them and arrange to interview the most suitable candidates.
18.3 Councillor training (Item F18/15.1) – The Clerk had contacted EALC and established that a weekday evening training session for up to 13 Councillors would cost £360. The Council could choose the most appropriate modules from the EALC list. After some discussion it was agreed to leave this training session until after the May 2019 election.
18.4 Replacement of bench in Braintree Road (Item F18/15.2) - The Clerk and Village Attendant had inspected the existing concrete base which had subsided. It was agreed that the existing base should be dug out and replaced with a new one. Members noted that the location should not be affected by the proposed development at Sunnybrook Farm but if it were, the developers would be asked to relocate the seat at their expense.
- F18/19 **Bank Reconciliation and PAYE records**
The Chairman checked and signed the Barclays Bank Reconciliations for June, July, August and September 2018 and the PAYE records for July, August and September 2018. The Chairman also noted the current balance in the Metro Bank account for the Nature Area funds.
- F18/20 **Review of Financial Risk Assessment**
The Clerk had updated the Financial Risk Assessment to reflect recent changes in legislation (such as GDPR) and changes to the Council's responsibilities (such as the acquisition of the Nature Area). Members agreed all the proposed amendments and approved the draft Financial Risk Assessment. It was agreed to discuss the computer back up procedures in greater detail at the next meeting.
- F18/21 **Review of Asset Register (including land values)**
Members noted that the insurance values had been increased by 4% for 2018-19 on buildings and property but not on land. It was 3 years since the land values were last reviewed and it was therefore agreed to ask Cllr Chris Woodhouse to review the land values, including the addition of the Nature Area. This would be considered further at the next meeting.
- F18/22 **Review of accounts for the current year to date**
Members studied the Budget Comparison to 15 October 2018 which had been prepared by the Clerk. The following points were highlighted:
INCOME
a) Allotment rents – These were due on 1 October but details would not be

available until receipt of the next bank statement.

EXPENDITURE

a) Assistant Clerk's salary – The new Assistant Clerk would be contracted to work 10 hours per week (an increase of 4 hours compared to the existing Assistant Clerk) so the salary figure would increase by £700 for the current financial year.

b) Advertising – A figure of £1000 was added to cover the cost of advertising the Assistant Clerk vacancy.

c) Play equipment repairs – Following receipt of the 2018 Play Equipment Inspection Report it was anticipated that the maintenance cost would exceed the £1500 currently allocated. However exact figures were not yet available.

d) The Planning Committee had been notified that UDC would no longer send out hard copies of plans from early January 2019. Plans would therefore have to be accessed online. The NPSG had a projector and screen which was stored in the Council Office and the Clerk agreed to confirm that this could be used by the Planning Committee at future meetings. [CLERK'S NOTE: This was agreed by the NPSG Chairman].

F18/23

Initial consideration of Precept for 2019-20

Members noted the following possible expenditure requirements in 2019-20:

- May 2019 Election costs (figures not yet available from UDC)
- Update play areas and equipment. Consider replacing wooden fencing and gates with more durable metal fencing.
- Highways Devolution pilot scheme (costs not yet known)
- Special Constable sponsorship

F18/24

Proposals for future Agenda

24.1 Churchyard Working Group – It was suggested that the WG should meet and consider formulating a policy for cutting the grass on grave tops and also for placing items on top of graves (glass jars and vases to be placed at owner's risk) so this would avoid future misunderstandings. The Clerk would check if the churchyard wildlife area had been strimmed as scheduled.

24.2 Reclaiming of VAT – It was noted that claims could now be made online.

Next Meeting

The meeting closed at 6.16 pm.

The Chairman requested that the date of the next meeting be changed to enable him to attend. The next meeting would be held on Monday 19 November 2018 at 5.00pm

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Chairman

19 November 2018