

Main issues arising: Annual Internal Audit report for 2013/14; Payment schedules for April and May 2014; Location of Cheshire's Historic Archive and Local Studies Service; Bank reconciliation for end-April 2014

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 16TH JUNE 2014 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr M Beanland

Cllrs. L A Clarke, A Smith and G Smith

Attending under SO 54 – Cllr P Hoyland substituting for Cllr Mrs J Saunders

Attending under SO 56 – Cllr Mrs S Horsman

1. Apologies for absence

Cllrs G Bartos, C A Gorst, H Murray and Mrs J Saunders

2. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Interests

Cllr Beanland reminded Members of a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest he had declared in 2012. This was with regard to Item 4, given that his wife, Suzanne, a Town Council employee, was named in an internal audit report in connection with a timesheet that had not been signed off by the Clerk.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th April 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 28th April 2014 are approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman (4 - 1 abs)

4. Annual Internal Audit report for 2013/14

Members received the Annual Internal Audit report for 2013/14, the two issues and recommendations flowing from it, and the follow up to recommendations made in the 2012/13 internal audit. The Clerk provided some background to the auditing of the Town Council's accounts in the form of the Annual Return submitted to our external auditors, BDO. There are four sections to the Return and Section 4 deals with the annual internal audit, which for 2013/14 was conducted on 20th May 2014. The two recommendations made in it have already been addressed. The 2012/13 recommendations were also reviewed and these have also been addressed and implemented.

The Clerk explained that for 2012/13, Issue 3, concerning the Payment Schedules, a breakdown of salaries is now provided to the Chairman of F&GP so that it can be reconciled with the total salaries figure. At this meeting it would not be possible to provide this information to the Vice Chairman, who is chairing the meeting, given a conflict of interest (as set out in paragraph 2 above). The Chairman of F&GP will view and sign the salary breakdown as required on his return from leave.

Cllr Clarke noted that ambiguous wording had been used by the internal auditors regarding follow up to Issue 1 in the 2012/13 internal audit report, which he suggested should be clarified. The Clerk said that this was simply one entry posted incorrectly as income rather than expenditure. In order to improve internal controls the Clerk now writes the correct budget code on each invoice, to ensure it is posted correctly.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Internal Audit report for 2013/14 and the observations are received, and that the follow up to recommendations made in the 2012/13 Internal Audit Report are also received (NC)

5. Payment Schedules for April and May 2014

The Clerk highlighted the following areas:

April Schedule

The Community Transport Association (CTA) entry is for membership of the CTA now that the Town Council have taken on two ex-Cheshire East vehicles. The CTA have provided a lot of valuable advice, and they are running a workshop at the Civic Hall later this month for all Town and Parish Councils who have taken on vehicles.

May Schedule

Nightingale Solicitors - this was the cost of providing a legal check to the wording of the Town Council lease agreement with Cheshire East regarding the transfer of the Coppice Road Allotments. No funding was provided by CE with this transfer.

Recycling UK Ltd - one of the conditions of accepting the £35,000 grant funding for Brecon Park from WREN is that the Town Council pay the cost of administration, which equates to 11% of the grant. This is a standard WREN condition.

Cllr Hoyland queried the costs for Town Centres Manager Diane Smith. The Clerk explained that this was for a build up of hours which are usually submitted quarterly. The Clerk explained that the Town Council pay a daily rate of £250 for Diane Smith's services. Her hours are checked against the meetings that she attends. The Town Council did make some allowance in the budget for this, and her involvement is kept to a minimum.

RESOLVED: That the Payment Schedules for April and May 2014 are received (NC)

6. Location of Cheshire's historic archive and local studies service

Members discussed the Cheshire East consultation on the relocation of Cheshire's historic archive and local studies service.

Cllr Clarke suggested that the new location should be central and reasonably accessible to the residents of Poynton, who could travel easily by car or public transport to access information. The Clerk added that from his experience in the last four years he could only recall one request to consult the archive, but agreed that this would be of interest to the Local History Society and others.

Cllr A Smith suggested that this information should be publicised so that residents are made aware.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk completes the on-line response and recommends the Middlewich site as the most convenient for this area, and that there is a link on the PTC website to publicise this resource (NC)

7. Bank Reconciliation for end-April 2014

RESOLVED: That Members note that the Bank Reconciliation for end-April 2014 had been verified and signed by the Chairman (NC)

The meeting concluded at 8.20pm