



Minutes of the meeting of Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council Finance and Staffing Committee held on Monday 11/03/19 at 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall, Bradwell Rd, Loughton MK5 6JE

Present:

Members: Councillors Boland (Chair), Ballantyne, Todd and Howe.

Staff: Bev Field (Parish Clerk)

Public: None

FSC46/19 Apologies: apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Dransfield.

FSC47/19 Minutes of previous meetings: the minutes of the meeting held on 06/12/18 were approved and signed as an accurate record.

FSC48/19 Matters arising: None

FSC49/19 Declarations of interest: None

FSC50/19 Public participation: None present

Finance

FSC51/19 Finance report: Expenditure for March appears large because it includes unspent allocated budget brought forward that will go into earmarked reserves. EMR is now noted at the bottom of the sheet.

Agreed: Councillor Boland will add a "transfer to EMR" columns and widen the original budget column.

FSC52/19 Electronic payments update: The Parish Clerk has pursued 3 phases of submitting mandates for electronic banking, requiring considerable time on the phone to Lloyds. These have been unsuccessful as they have been lost, invalidated or not actioned by Lloyds. Lloyds do not provide a good customer service and a new bank could be investigated for a fresh start.

Resolved: To continue to pursue electronic banking with Lloyds.

FSC53/19 End of Year work: It was noted that the end of year work is booked with RBS for 18/04/19

FSC54/19 Pavilion: Bookings and the lease for the Pavilion, Loughton were considered. The land registry submission, with a pre-contract agreement and draft contract have been prepared. The surveyor has gone out to tender and 4 contractors have expressed an interest in the work and will assess the Pavilion over the coming week. Quotes are due by the end of March for work to be done in May. The football team have made a request to increase their use of the pitches, and there is another expression of interest that will be considered by the Premises Committee.

Noted.

FSC55/19 Great Holm Community Centre: The bookings for the Great Holm Community Centre continue with the Brownies, Open Circle, Sivapatha Natyalya dance and the pre-school. The 12-step group are ending their Monday night booking on 25/03/19 and the hall will be available to the Parish Council on Monday evenings. The Premises Assistant is preparing for lettings and the caretaker is undertaking some maintenance tasks to be ready for bookings to start from 01/04/19. The Clerk has been receiving increased interest in lettings as residents are aware of the recent recruitment process.

Noted.

A complaint has been received by Councillor Todd from the Chair of the Great Holm Pre-School (GHPS) committee regarding their rent increase, in a letter that included a range of complaints and allegations. It was copied to Milton Keynes Council and the MP. All groups were written to on 02/07/18 giving 8 months' notice of a rent review and likely increase from 01/04/19. The GHPS have been consulted by meeting, through considering the accounts they submitted, by letter and e-mails. GHPS were advised of the proposed rent-level by the Chairman and Clerk on 18/10/18 and they agreed the rent had been very low, should increase, and accepted the suggested level of rent at this meeting. Following the Finance and

Staffing Committee meeting on 06/12/18 a letter was sent on 08/01/19 to confirm the new rent level from 01/04/19 and setting out what was included and the reasons for the increase. In January, GHPS said they would write to request rent concessions for September. The Clerk advised they should do so as a last resort, with a business proposal and to provide evidence of what actions GHPS has taken to address their falling roll and income. A concession was agreed by the Parish Clerk on 06/02/19 to pay monthly in arrears, to help their cashflow. No evidence was submitted with the complaint and the letter is factually inaccurate. On 18/02/19 the Parish Council awarded a grant of £500.00 to GHPS for a community event aimed at stimulating new business, along with free use of the Centre. This was not referred to in the letter, nor were many other positive benefits, for example, new LST safety radiators costing £3600.00, fast and responsive repairs and a new double sink costing £841.20+VAT for their Food Hygiene inspection. The rent setting exercise was reviewed and the charges for other halls. The rent is competitive with many concessions including permanent occupation of an office, store room and 3 sheds. GHPS are suffering from a reduced take-up of places across Milton Keynes, having a new competitor in the area and the loss to the Centre of income from Milton Keynes Council, which meant that they were only charged a peppercorn rent for many years.

Resolved:

- a) That the scheme of charges is fair and realistic to sustain the future of the Great Holm Community Centre.
- b) That Councillor Todd will draft a reply and circulate it to the Committee members prior to sending it.

Staffing

FSC56/19 Disciplinary and Grievance Policy: The draft Disciplinary and Grievance policy was considered with the NALC legal topic note 22. Best practice for oral and written warnings was considered. This policy follows the guidance from ACAS using a model policy from NALC adapted for Loughton and Great Holm Parish Council. Councillor Todd has professional training relevant to chairing a disciplinary panel.

Resolved: To approve and adopt the Disciplinary and Grievance policy.

FSC57/19 Training and Development Policy: The draft Training and Development Policy was considered. Councillors are volunteers and cannot be required to attend training, although it is desirable that they aim to become knowledgeable in their roles.

Amendment proposed: Councillor Todd proposed that Councillors should be expected as a minimum to attend the induction training and to undergo further training as appropriate.
No seconder: motion failed.

Resolved: To approve and adopt the Training and Development policy.

FSC58/19 Sickness and Absence Policy: The draft Sickness and Absence policy was considered.

Resolved: to approve and adopt the Sickness and absence policy with the following changes:

- a) Insert where appropriate that the Parish Clerk will report any absence of the Parish Clerk to the Chair of the Parish Council.
- b) On page 2 change "week" for "year"
- c) On page 2 insert after the sickness pay period "thereafter SSP will apply".

FSC59/19 Exclusion of the public: in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, the public were temporarily excluded, and they were instructed to withdraw (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960).

Date and time of Next Meeting: To be arranged at the Annual Council.