

Notes of the informal virtual meeting of the **Members of the FINANCE & HR COMMITTEE** held on **Monday 22 November 2021** at 2:00pm. All decisions are made under the temporary delegated authority of the Clerk.



**Councillors Present:**

Cllr N Stratton (Chair)  
Cllr D Reilly

Cllr K Brooks (Vice-Chair)

**Apologies:**

Cllr J Pearce

**Also in attendance:**

Helen Munro (Clerk)

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Cllr Pearce gave his apologies which were accepted.
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** There were none.
3. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.** The Chair reported that Cllr Partridge has resigned from the committee. He also welcomed Cllr Reilly onto the Committee.
4. **CLERK'S REPORT.** The following report was **noted**:
  - a. Pavilion Joint Management Committee – The Joint Management Committee have now become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). An application for small rates relief has been granted and a refund on Business Rates is expected.
  - b. Hardship Fund – Full Council agreed to support the recommendation of the committee to fund the fridge for the Baptist Church Kingdom Café. They also agreed to make a financial contribution of £1,000 from the Hardship fund towards Christmas hampers and gas and electricity costs for the needy, provided by the Baptist Church.
  - c. Computer Hardware – Information has not yet been erased from the desktop computers.
5. **OPEN SESSION.** There were no members of the public present.
6. **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2020-21.** The audited AGAR was noted. There were no "except for" items or other comments. It was agreed that this be reported to Full Council.

7. **INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT 2021/22.** The Interim Internal Audit for 2021/22 taking place on 24 November 2021 was noted. The Chair to meet the Auditor virtually after the audit.
8. **HYBRID COUNCIL MEETINGS.** Quotes for types of equipment to hold hybrid meetings were circulated and discussed. Further advice about suitable cameras would be researched.
9. **BUDGET & PRECEPT 2022/23.** To consider the following for recommendation to Full Council
  - a. The committee's wish lists were noted.
  - b. Staff budgets were reviewed. It was reported that national pay increases for 2021-22 had still not been agreed. An increase of 2% had been assumed in the budget for both 2021-22 and 2022-23. It was agreed that if pay increases were higher this would be covered through General Reserves.
  - c. The draft consolidated budget was reviewed in detail. The Parish Council has not yet been notified of the updated tax base which would affect the Band D equivalent calculation. If the tax base affected the Band D equivalent significantly, the budget would be further reviewed by email. However, if the effect of the tax base was insignificant then it was agreed that an increase in precept of 5.11% would be recommended to Full Council.
  - d. Earmarked reserves were reviewed. It was agreed to recommend the following changes to Full Council:
    - Release £3,000 from Streetlight Replacement Programme Reserve.
    - Release £2,092 from Entrance Lighting at Lower Green Recreation Ground Reserve.
    - Allocate £5,000 to a Lower Green Recreation Ground General Reserve.
10. **FINANCIAL INFORMATION.** Reports to 30 September 2021 were reviewed and would be recommended to Full Council:
  - a. Budget monitoring report.
  - b. Bank reconciliation and bank statements.
  - c. Reserves.
11. **INVESTMENTS & BANKING.** An update on investigations and lack of progress was reported. It was agreed that this will be reviewed in future if interest rates increase.

12. **LEGAL FEES.**
  - a. The fee proposal to redraft the Pavilion Joint Use agreement for the Charitable Incorporated Organisation was reported. It would take no more than 3 hours at £130 per hour. An update was awaited on whether these legal costs would be shared with the other party to the agreement or whether they wanted to take their own independent legal advice.
  - b. Consideration of joining the Kent County Council Parish Council Legal Scheme was discussed. It was agreed not to enter into the agreement at this time. It would be reviewed in future.
13. **CLIMATE CHANGE.** An update on progress with the Working Group was reported. The draft policy wording was amended and would be considered further at a future Working Group meeting to be arranged in the New Year. Quotes for an Eco Audit would continue to be sought.
14. **COVID RISK ASSESSMENT.** An updated risk assessment for the office and depot was reviewed and noted.
15. **PARISH OFFICE OPENING HOURS.** Comments from Councillors about the trial were discussed. It was agreed to recommend to Full Council that a further review be undertaken in 3 months' time in March 2022.
16. **RISKS.** Reports of recent spiking incidents locally were noted, and vigilance was required.
17. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS OR AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS.** There was none.
18. **NEXT MEETING DATE.** 31 January 2022 – 2pm – Parish Office.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 15:46.