

## TERLING AND FAIRSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE

**SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**

### **Minutes of the Meeting of Terling and Fairstead Parish Council Finance Committee held at 8pm on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at Copse Rise, The Street, Terling**

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**Finance Committee Present:** Mr I Smith  
Mr R Dixon  
Mrs S McNamara  
Mrs S Alder  
  
Mrs J Halfhide (Parish Clerk)  
  
(no members of the public present)

1. ***Appointment of Chairman of Meeting*** - The Finance Committee unanimously asked Mrs McNamara to chair the meeting.
2. ***Apologies for Absence*** – none.
3. ***Declaration of Interests*** - to receive any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, Other Pecuniary Interests, or non Pecuniary Interests relating to items on the agenda – none declared.
4. ***Meeting Open to the Public*** – no members of the public present.

#### ***5. Transparency Code***

The meeting discussed recent communications from EALC on Transparency Code obligations being placed on Parish Councils in their future operation, compliance, behaviours and audit; The Clerk gave the Committee comfort to the Council's existing performance and continuing satisfaction of these changes with only minor amendments.

Any agenda item requiring a decision needs to full supporting documents posted on line 3 clear working days prior to the meeting. Committee minutes must amplify, with reasons of decisions taken:-

1. Planning
2. T&FPC tenders
3. Committee meetings should have supporting papers with agenda published at least 3 clear working days in advance
4. Committee minutes have to state decisions and recommendation(s) to Council

Committee meetings may be held in Councillors' houses but notice of such meetings has to be published on line and agendas issued (on line) 3 clear working days in advance referring to BDC website for application numbers. Larger public meetings will be held at Village Hall with SM in the Chair using the same notices/ procedures. All meetings must be open to the press and public.

The Clerk advised minor changes to Council procedures to comply with Transparency obligations which do not require changes to Council Standing Orders, but she would check with the EALC.

Changes to audit; The Clerk explained the audit changes and in future papers will have to be scanned to the Council community website; The Clerk had attended an EALC training course and reported back to all Councillors by

email; she advised the Council presently complied with most of the new Transparency Code requirements and would ensure that the remaining requirements were met. The Committee thanked the Clerk for her stewardship of this new regime towards its adoption by Council in due course.

Whilst mindful of the Data Protection Act, the Clerk's salary has always been published on line on the Council's Agenda and minutes and would continue to be for complete transparency, but the Clerk would check with the EALC.

#### **6. Audit**

Documents required for audit have to be ready for submission on the community website by 1 July 2016 under the new Transparency Code, and same date as an absolute for future years; Amongst other requirements the Parish Council must publish its internal audit report, and a list of all items of expenditure of £100 and above. The latter requirement will be met by publication on line of the full cash book for the previous year by 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Any Tenders in compliance with Council adopted Standing Orders requiring a decision of the full Council are required to be minuted by Finance Committee.

The Council's Statement of Governance together with a list of Councillor responsibilities must be included in the Audit papers put on line.

Details of public land and building assets should be published on the website, but not the Council's full Assets Register. (Village Hall ownership and valuation see later.)

Audit pages have to be perused and recommendations made to full Council under the new regime. The Clerk and IS to meet and peruse prior to the Council AGM in May when a report and recommendation to approve the audit will come forward (with support papers as now required on the agenda); these are to be available in hard copy and on Council's website.

#### **7. Transparency compliance grant funding**

Grant funding was available from EALC to assist all Parish Councils to comply with new mandates of Transparency compliance. These include training, lap top, printers and website hosting. The Clerk was requested to prepare a budget and scope of her suggested requirements for next Council meeting seeking approval, so an expeditious grant application may be made.

A benefit of laptop ownership by the Council facilitated by the grant funding would ensure a back up system for Council; future training of the Clerk (and Councillors) would be also considered.

#### **8. Village Hall**

To satisfy the Council's audit the location of the Village Hall deeds and the custody of these has to be identified to comply with the Council's obligations as trustees; the value of the Village Hall in the audit return has to be agreed.

The Council also needs to see a copy of the buildings insurance ensuring a note including its interest on the policy is noted; this is an annual audit requirement.

SM will seek Lord Rayleigh's co-operation in establishing if these originating documents are still in his safe keeping; they are not in the Clerk's records or at Essex Records Office.

Failure to obtain this information will require the audit to be qualified accordingly.

RD to scan copy of the Village Hall management agreement and HMLR title extracts.

### ***9. Clerk's Workplace Pension Scheme***

Two schemes were discussed, the Nest scheme and that administered by ECC pensions. (The latter being a Local Government pension). Papers were circulated to the Committee.

IS will produce a comparative paper for the Council AGM when a formal resolution to advance the Clerk's pension, with a preferred scheme provider, will be made.

To satisfy the requirements of the ECC scheme a public notice is required to be issued prior to the AGM. It was agreed the Committee would recommend to the next full Council meeting such public notice be issued. RD would provide the Clerk with the relevant notice.

The Clerk has been provided with copies of both schemes; she is able to make voluntary contributions to both schemes.

### ***10. Next Meeting Date***

The Finance Committee would need to meet in the week prior to the June full Parish Council Meeting (i.e. week of 20<sup>th</sup> June 2016) to consider the Internal Auditor's report and to prepare a report on the effectiveness of internal controls which the Clerk needs to prepare

Meeting closed at 9.45