



AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Belen Lopez Bloor

1 St Chads Way, Norton in Hales
Market Drayton, Shropshire TF9 4AW

Telephone: 07432 332857

parishcouncil@audlempc.co.uk

MEETING OF AUDLEM PARISH COUNCIL MINUTES OF FINANCE SUB COMMITTEE MEETING (FSC)

Tuesday 19th May 2020 at 11.30am

Online meeting through Zoom.

PRESENT

Cllr Lynette Hopkins standing in as Chair, Cllr Paul Barrett, Cllr Pat Salt and the Parish Clerk - Mrs Belen (Bee) Lopez Bloor.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Seddon.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

3. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

Cllr Barrett proposed to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2019, Cllr Hopkins seconded. Cllr Salt abstained as she was absent.

Resolved: that the minutes be confirmed as a true and correct record.

4. REVIEW OF CURRENT SPEND VERSUS BUDGET

The Clerk informed the FSC that £6,371 has been spent so far from a budget of £79,777, equating to 8% of the year's total budget. The bank balances at 6th May stood at £118,263.92 in the savings account and £53,849.54 in the current account.

The Clerk pointed out that the insurance annual payment was less than budgeted as £1,500 had been allocated for this pot however the invoice was for £1,090.

She informed the FSC that 89% of the allocated £250 budget for the repairs & renewals pot has already been spent due to the installation of a push button to allow the cleaner to use hot water in the public conveniences.

She also highlighted that the community expenditure spend was currently at £764 which is over the allocated £150 budget for this pot. These purchases were made under emergency measures at the beginning of April due to Covid-19 including a freezer to help store meals for the village, hand sanitiser for ADCA volunteers and the printing of information leaflets.

The Clerk asked if the FSC wished to recommend a virement to move money into the community expenditure pot. Cllr Hopkins agreed money would need to be moved into the community expenditure pot but did not want it moved from the insurance pot. Councillors discussed where the money could be reallocated from and agreed that the Parish Council could afford to reduce its contingency budget from £24,000 to £20,000 to cover this unforeseen spend under emergency measures. Cllr Barrett proposed recommending this to full Council in June, Cllr Hopkins seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting.

5. BANKING

a. **Payments via bank transfer.**

CHALC have confirmed that other Parish Councils have set up their banking so the RFO can pay their own salary as well as other BACS transfers without requiring two signatories. During May's meeting the Parish Council agreed a direct debit should be set up each month with the regular salary amounts for the Clerk and Lengthsman. Any monthly overtime for the Clerk will be paid in arrears through an authorised BACS transfer once the Parish

Council have approved the amount at the monthly meeting. The Parish Council also suggested setting a limit so no payment can exceed a certain level.

The FSC were satisfied with this proposal and recommend giving the RFO full account access to make online payments. They stipulated the RFO must not make any online payments without them being fully approved at full Council first. The Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and Finance Risk Assessment policies will be amended to reflect this change in protocol. Cllr Barrett proposed to recommend this to the Parish Council at June's meeting, Cllr Salt seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting and complete the bank's change of mandate forms. Clerk to also update the policies stated above and circulate these to the FSC for comment so the policies can be adopted at June's meeting.

b. **Granting RFO authority to sign cheques.**

The Clerk is conducting a review of the current bank signatories as these need to be updated urgently. The FSC recommend that two bank signatories are still required to sign each cheque but the RFO should be granted authority as one of the bank signatories to facilitate future cheque signing. Cllr Barrett proposed the above, Cllr Hopkins seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

c. **Criteria to allow/authorise bank transfers.**

As above.

6. **REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS & FINANCE RISK ASSESSMENT**

As agreed above in item 5a.

7. **GRANTS**

a. **Grants received**

i. **Audlem Indoor Bowling Group Grant Application for £1,500.**

A grant was requested to replace two indoor bowl mats costing £1,248 each. Cllr Hopkins proposed to recommend accepting the grant request, Cllr Salt seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting.

ii. **Wheelyboat grant application for £1,500.**

Their first grant request for money to purchase a spare electric outboard motor to ensure continuity of the service for children and disabled. FSC on principle agree to the grant request but decided to ask the full Council to agree when the money should be released. Cllr Hopkins proposed this way forward, Cllr Salt seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting.

iii. **ADAS grant application for £500.**

Cllr Hopkins proposed accepting the grant request, Cllr Barrett seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting.

b. **Review of grant spend 2019 – 2020**

Clerk confirmed the total spend for grants last year was £7,466.

- Audlem Scouts purchased new camping equipment with their £670 grant.
- ADAS kept our village looking pretty by planting flower bulbs and bought Christmas trees with their £1,500 grant.
- ADAPT continue to fly the green flag by installing new bike racks with the £500 grant they applied for.
- £1,250 grant helped the Music and Arts Festival put on last year's event.
- Audlem Football Club received £1,000 and Audlem Saints Football Club received £560 to help fund new equipment.
- £300 was awarded to TAVA (Touring and Visiting Arts) to host two professional arts events in Audlem and organise workshops for children.
- Audlem Cricket Club was granted £1,500 towards their new pavilion.

c. **Review of grant budget 2020 – 2021**

The Clerk informed the FSC there is £8,500 in the grant pot this year and thus far £200 has been spent on flags for VE day. Once the grants for the indoor bowling club and ADAS are awarded it will leave £6,300 in the pot.

8. **MONIES RINGFENCED FOR LONGHILL MOSS**

The Clerk confirmed that last year's budget has £1,195 ringfenced for Longhill Moss. FSC requested Cllr McLaren-Brown reports to full Council on the current situation.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting.

9. **PREPARATION & KEY DATES FOR AUDIT & AGAR RETURN**

The dates have changed and these must be published from 30 September to 30 November 2020. The 30-working day period for the exercise of public rights should start on or before the first working day of September, i.e. on or before 1 September 2020.

Action/s: Clerk to prepare the AGAR statement during May/June and will liaise with the internal auditor.

10. **PURCHASING FINANCIAL SOFTWARE TO FACILITATE RFO DUTIES**

Scribe financial software is used by 400-500 councils across the UK and have been in business offering accounts software to local councils for 30 years. They are quoting a set-up fee of £416.40 inclusive of VAT for two licences (one for the RFO and one for the Assistant Clerk when she joins) or £520 for unlimited licences so Councillors on the FSC could also have access. Ongoing costs of annual support and licences would be £172 per annum. The Clerk had also researched Rialtas software but found this software to be more dated and more expensive.

The Clerk and FSC discussed the benefits of having the software which could facilitate bank reconciliations, budget reporting, AGAR returns and could also be used to easily update and manage financial administration between the Clerk and the new Assistant Clerk. Cllr Barrett proposed recommending the software to full Council, Cllr Salt seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting.

11. **INTERNAL AUDIT PROCESS REVIEW**

Internal auditors ought to be reviewed every 3 - 4 years to ensure that they are doing a good job in auditing accounts. FSC discussed the current internal audit process and are satisfied but agreed the Clerk should send our internal auditor the information from another town council audit report so he may consider further audit checks. Cllr Hopkins proposed, Cllr Salt seconded. All Councillors unanimously agreed.

Action/s: Clerk to send auditor the audit document.

12. **FSA PROTECTION £85,000 LIMIT FOR OUR BANK ACCOUNT**

The Clerk pointed out that the Parish Council have just over £172,000 with Santander. This large amount would not be covered by the FSA protection limit of £85,000 if the bank folded. FSC thanked the Clerk for flagging this issue and asked her to check with Cheshire East Council who they bank with. They also asked for this to be added to June's agenda for discussion at full Council.

Action/s: Clerk to add this to agenda for June's meeting.

Cllr Hopkins declared meeting closed 12.40pm.

Next meeting will be Monday 8th June 2020 at 11am, online via Zoom.