

Framlingham Town Council
Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held via Zoom
on Thursday 8th April 2021 at 7.00pm

All documents relating to this meeting were made available to Councillors (Cllr) in advance

1. APOLOGIES:

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr G Kitching and Cllr S Garrett.

*Cllr Jones had given advance apologies as he would be late attending.

Present:

Cllr D Carter (Chair), Cllr P Collins, Cllr C Eastwood, Cllr M Hine, Cllr J Jones, and Cllr P Wraight

In attendance:

Mrs E Coe (Town Clerk/RFO)

2. Declarations of Interest:

None.

3. Minutes of previous meeting:

3-18421 Cllr Carter proposed the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 11th March 2021 (circulated in draft form prior to the meeting) be approved as an accurate record, which was seconded by Cllr Wraight with all in favour.

Cllr Carter signed the file copy of the minutes.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

5. FINANCIAL MATTERS:

5.1 End of Year Report:

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that she had completed the end of year Pension return and the HMRC end of year return and had set up the payroll template for the next financial year. The accounts had been prepared ready for Rialtas to assist with the end of year closedown on 15th April, after which she would finalise the accounts ready for the External Auditor.

The Internal Audit was scheduled for 11th May after which she would circulate all the documents to Councillors, and these would be put forward for approval at Full Council on 3rd June.

A copy of the Budget for the new financial year would also be circulated.

5.2 Ear Marked Reserves – end of year report

The Town Clerk/RFO provided an Excel spreadsheet report on the EMR to the end of the financial year and explained the transfers to and from reserves during the year and at year end. Cllr Hine requested a breakdown of costs and funds left for the Fram Free Wifi Project, which the Town Clerk/RFO agreed to provide.

*Cllr Jones joined the meeting at this point.

The Town Clerk/RFO suggested that the Committee consider the spreadsheet to see if any transfers within reserves were needed in the new financial year and it was agreed to consider this at the next meeting.

5.3 Bank balances and bank reconciliations to date:

The Town Clerk/RFO provided an HSBC printed copy of the bank balances to date, which was noted, and a copy attached to the file copy of these minutes. The Town Clerk/RFO noted that all the reconciliations were complete and up to date.

5.4 Investments:

Update on application with Nationwide Building Society

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that further documents and information had been requested and she had responded accordingly.

6. Insurance:

Zurich Year 3 of 3-year contract – due 1st June 2021

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that she had worked with Cllr Jones on the revised schedule and reported on the suggested increases.

A revised schedule had been circulated to members and the cost options for one year: at £2,700.34, first year of three years at £2,575.83 and first year of five years at £2,454.29 were considered.

Following further discussion it was agreed not to continue with the insurance for the concrete skatepark which would enable a saving of £135.80.

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that she had also contacted BHIB Councils Insurance which could provide cover via Aviva based on current schedule at £1,796.46 with standard indemnity of £500,000 whereas Zurich is £1m.

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that she had contacted Came and Company who had responded that unfortunately the £1,000,000 Fidelity Guarantee was making them uncompetitive, but Hiscox Insurance may be able to provide cover at a cost of around £2,300 based on the old schedule. They had also expressed concerns relating to the skatepark and events such as Fireworks

The Town Clerk/RFO advised that most larger Councils use Zurich and they had been very competitive, supportive over the years that the Town Council had been with them, with a clear policy document and named account contact.

6-18421 Cllr Carter proposed to recommend to Full Council approval for the revised insurance schedule and cost for a five-year contract with Zurich, subject to confirmation of revised costs and increased indemnity from BHIB and Came and Company, which was seconded by Cllr Jones with all in favour.

7. Code of Conduct:

To consider new Code of Conduct LGA version: <https://www.local.gov.uk/local-government-association-model-councillor-code-conduct-2020-0>

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that SALC have a meeting with Monitoring Officers on 12th April and as soon as the new Suffolk Code was available she would circulate to all and add to the agenda for the Full Council meeting on 6th May.

8. Town Council Office:

No business

9. Correspondence:

9.1 Suffolk Pension Fund

New Ill-Health Liability Insurance Arrangements – Information for Employers.

The document was noted and it was agreed to draw attention to all members of staff the Employee Assistance Programme.

A resolution to exclude the press and public will be passed by virtue of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1 (2) for item 6 because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

No public present.

10. Employment Matters:

10.1 Deputy Town Clerk/Interim Staff Appraisal:

It was noted that the document had been completed, signed and filed for reference.

10.2 One to one specific Excel Training for Town Clerk and Office Assistant:

The Town Clerk/RFO advised that she had sourced training by Jenny Labbett for specific Excel training relating to financial spreadsheets, which would help her to produce documents more efficiently and also for the Office Assistant relating to Excel documents produced for the Market and Allotments. This would be one to one training with the creation of specific document macros at £50 per hour.

Cllr Collins noted that the need for this training had been identified during the appraisal process.

10.218421 Cllr Carter proposed to approve the cost of £150 for the Town Clerk/RFO and £150 for the Office Assistant for specific Excel training using Budget 1130, which was seconded by Cllr Jones with all in favour.

It was noted that opportunities for specific training needs for the Deputy Town Clerk could be considered during the year.

11. HR Sub-Committee:

11.1 Minutes of first meeting held on 6th March:

Noted and the next meeting would be held on 27th April at 6.30pm via Zoom.

It was agreed for Cllr Jones to join the committee in place of Cllr Kitching during his absence period.

11.2 Terms of Reference:

Cllr Carter proposed to approve the HR Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference, which was seconded by Cllr Eastwood with all in favour.

11.3 Pay Structure:

It was agreed to rename the document Framlingham Town Council Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022, recognising the fiscal year.

Cllr Carter proposed to recommend the Pay Policy Statement 2021/2022 for approval to Full Council, which was seconded by Cllr Collins with all in favour.

Cllr Wraight was thanked for all her work on this document, which was much appreciated.

Cllr Wraight (HR Sub-Committee Chair) noted that the agenda items for the next meeting would include:

Review of all Job Descriptions

Town Council Policies review and prioritisation

12. Action Plan:

Updates – None.

Cllr Jones reported that the Action Plan was under review and he and the Town Clerk/RFO had been working on a revised template and procedure, which would be considered at the next SP Committee meeting.

13. Matters of report or items for next agenda:

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that she had updated all the Transparency Code documents and these were now on the website.

The Town Clerk/RFO reported that she had written to Dr Dan Poulter MP requesting help and support to local Town and Parish Councils to enable them to continue meeting remotely. There followed some discussion on the practicalities and risks associated with the return to face to face meetings.

Cllr Carter reported on the next meeting and the uncertainty surrounding the timing and suggested no meeting be held in May unless there was an emergency, which was agreed.

14. Date of next meeting:

(No meeting in May)

Thursday 10th June 2021 at 7.00pm

Meeting closed at 20.42