

Holme Valley Parish Council

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 05 MARCH 2007 -

Those present :

Chairman : Cllr P Robinson

Vice-Chairman : Cllr Mrs H P Smith

Councillors : Cllr M Bower, Cllr Mrs M Bower, Cllr R P Dixon, Cllr R N Haynes, Cllr C M Kaye, Cllr R Oldfield, Cllr A R Otterburn

Officers : Mrs MA Bewick

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Councillors Christofi, Collins, Firth, Macpherson and Rogers.

Cllr. Otterburn apologised for his late arrival at the meeting, but he had been attending another meeting in his capacity of Chairman of the Council.

06 83 Disclosure of Interests

None were given.

06 84 Admission of the Public

It was resolved item 14 of the agenda (Awarded Quarries) be taken in private session owing to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, and the potential for legal action.

06 85 Notes of Meeting

RESOLVED: That the notes of the inquorate meeting held on 22 January 2007 be received.

06 86 Correspondence arising from the Minutes

The Clerk reported that acknowledgements of grants awarded had been received from Holme Valley Music Centre, and from 4 Guides/Young Leaders from Agbrigg Division Girlguiding (Minute number 06 74(2) and (4)).

In connection with Minute number 06 75 (3), the Clerk reported that she had discussed the potential use of the new meeting room and the suggested rental with the Kirklees Elections Officer. Based on rents charged for other Kirklees accommodation, the suggested rental represented good value to the Council. The Clerk, therefore, recommended that the rental as suggested, and as already included in the budget for next year, be approved. Members accepted this recommendation.

The Clerk also reported that Kirklees MC had informed her that it could only include an abbreviated report on the Council's precept and budget information in this year's Council Tax leaflet. She had, therefore, requested that the Council Tax leaflet should inform residents that further budget information would be found on the Council's website. Arrangements would be made following the Council meeting to post detailed budget information on the website; information which would normally have appeared in the Council Tax leaflet would be placed on the website as soon as possible. This was noted.

06 87 Investment of Income

RESOLVED: That the Clerk's action in the investment and withdrawal of the Council's funds be approved and the current rates of interest applying to the Council's accounts be noted.

06 88 Financial Statement

(1) RESOLVED: That the Financial Summary, Comparison and Income as at 28 February 2007 be approved.

(2) RESOLVED: That the appointment of Mazars as External Auditor for 2006-07 be noted and the related costs of audit for the period 2006-2011 be noted.

06 89 Applications for Grant

(1) Hade Edge Band - an application for financial assistance had been received on behalf of a young musician in the Band who hoped to attend a residential course for the National Children's Orchestra (reference: 06 74(5)). Members discussed this application and

RESOLVED: That a grant of £100 be awarded to Hade Edge Band on behalf of the young musician, and that the Band be asked to update the Council nearer the time regarding his attendance on the course.

(2) Holme Valley Brass Band Contest - Members considered this application for assistance with the award of prizes for this annual event. It was agreed that the Contest Committee should be asked to complete a grant application each year, in the future.

RESOLVED: That a donation of £400 be granted, to be apportioned as follows: £100 towards general prizes, £300 to be split equally as prizes to the Best Band from the Holme Valley in each section, including the Youth Section.

06 90 Annual Review of Policies/Regulations

It was necessary for the Council to undertake reviews of certain policy documents:

(1) Council's Insurance Cover: Members reviewed the Council's insurance policy and cover. The Clerk was asked to check regarding the cover for Members for libel and slander. Although the Clerk had been asked to investigate alternative insurers, she had concerns about such cover being adequate for the Council's responsibilities. The current supplier was the industry specialist for larger Local Councils.

RESOLVED: That the insurance policy and cover as at present be retained and that no change be made for the next financial year.

(2) Risk Assessment: Members reviewed the current procedures and noted some recommendations made by the Clerk.

RESOLVED: That the Risk Assessment, as attached, be approved, and the Clerk be asked to obtain costs for the actions so recommended.

(3) Financial Regulations: Following a comment by the External Auditor, it had been agreed to review these Regulations every two years. The Clerk had made alterations in the Regulations now before the Committee to take account of changes recommended for adoption at the Annual Meeting of the Council. She was also recommending some changes in financial thresholds given the length of time since the Regulations were last reviewed.

RESOLVED: That the Financial Regulations, as amended by the Clerk, and now attached to the Minutes be recommended for approval by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May with immediate effect.

(4) Standing Orders: Following a comment by the External Auditor, it had been agreed to review Standing Orders every two years. The Clerk had made alterations in the Standing Orders now before the Committee to take account of changes in the Committee structure recommended for adoption at the Annual Meeting of the Council. She queried in view of these changes whether Members wished to continue the practice of substitutes with the new Committee structure. Members discussed this but felt that such a practice would not prove as helpful or as easy to operate with the new structure, and that the practice should be discontinued and mention of it removed from the Standing Orders.

RESOLVED: That the Standing Orders, as amended by the Clerk and by the Committee, and now attached to the Minutes be recommended for approval by the Council at its Annual Meeting in May with immediate effect.

(5) Use of Internet Banking and Accounts: The Clerk had been asked previously to investigate the potential use by the Council of internet banking and accounts. She had made some investigations and the Committee had been circulated with advice and guidance in this respect, in that section 150(5) of the Local Government Act 1972 was still in force which required that "every cheque or other order for payment of money by a parish or community council shall be signed by two members of the council". This would not be the case whilst using internet banking and it was, therefore, felt inadvisable to make any change to the current practice and the banks accounts held.

Holme Valley Parish Council

RESOLVED: That the above information be noted, and that no change be recommended to the current accounts.

06 91 Administrative Matters

(1) Review of the Quality Council Scheme:

RESOLVED: That the above correspondence and information be received and noted.

(2) RESOLVED: That the information received relating to a Science Horizons project be noted.

(3) RESOLVED: That the further information from Local Works be noted.

(4) Local Government Pension Scheme:

RESOLVED: That the information and report from the Clerk regarding proposed changes to this scheme be accepted, and the response to this consultation approved.

(5) WAIT Group: offer to attend a meeting to explain work re impact of Mottram bypass:

RESOLVED: That the matter be left on hold for the time being, until there is more specific information to consider.

(6) Isle of Wight Council: offer to attend a meeting to give information about working with the principal authority. Members discussed this offer and agreed that it was something which might best be considered at the joint meeting of Parish and Town Councils with Kirklees MC.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk submits this letter as an agenda item for the forthcoming meeting.

(7) Consultation had been received from the Department for Communities and Local Government about amendments to the Model Code of Conduct for Local Authority Members. A report from the Clerk had been circulated highlighting some points within this consultation.

Information had also been received regarding changes to the Standards Committee at Kirklees MC; comment on this was contained within the Clerk's report.

RESOLVED: (1) That the points mentioned by the Clerk in relation to local investigation of complaints be raised at the forthcoming joint meeting of Parish and Town Councils with Kirklees MC

(2) That the Clerk be authorised to submit comments as highlighted in her reports as soon as practicable.

06 92 Representation

(1) Members considered attendance at the following events:

YLCA - "In the Chair" - A training series for those interested in the Chaining of Parish and Town Councils - March/April 2007 was being offered by YLCA. Although Members expressed interest in such training, it was felt that attendance on 5 evenings in consecutive weeks was a significant commitment, and it was suggested that a single intensive day would be more attractive. It was also felt that the timing of this training was not right. It was also suggested that offering such a course as a package to the five Parish and Town Councils within the Kirklees area should be examined.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk passes these comments to YLCA for future planning of such a course.

Edge Designs Ltd - End of Year Seminars - the Clerk reported that although she was interested in attending such a course, none were scheduled at a suitable location. If sufficient interest was expressed, there was a possibility that Holme Valley Parish Council could host such a seminar.

RESOLVED: That Holme Valley Parish Council would be happy to host such a seminar, provided the Clerk could attend free of charge.

SLCC Larger Local Councils Conference - 26-27 April 2007 - London

RESOLVED: That the Clerk be authorised to attend the above Conference as part of her training commitment for the year; delegate fees and associated expenses to be met by the Council.

(2) Joint Meeting of Parish and Town Councils with Kirklees MC - 22 March 2007:

RESOLVED: (1) That the draft agenda as circulated be noted, together with the addition of items submitted by the Clerk and as agreed at this meeting

Holme Valley Parish Council

(2) That the Council be represented at this meeting by the Chairman of the Council, if possible, and by Cllr. Robinson, as Chairman of Finance and Management, and the Clerk.

06 93 Holme Valley Bus Services

(1) Holme Valley Minibus Service: Metro had responded in respect of the proposed alteration to route H7, to include Laithe Avenue, Holmbridge, to indicate that there was insufficient latitude in the current schedules to allow such an addition to the route.

RESOLVED: That this response be noted with regret.

(2) Holme Valley Bus Services - a complaint had been received re the Holmfirth Connection services which had been forwarded to First Bus. Members noted the reply which had been sent to the complainant.

06 94 Rural Transport

(1) RESOLVED: That the update on the Valleys Community Transport project be noted.

(2) RESOLVED: That the information relating to the West Yorkshire Rural Partnership Delegated Fund be noted.

06 95 Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED: That the business of this Committee now to be transacted be not open to the public or press on the grounds that the matters to be considered are of a confidential nature (agenda item 14).

06 96 Awarded Quarries

(1) Voluntary Registration - the Chairman reported briefly on the progress in relation to Towns Quarry and the potential adjudication process. Members confirmed that the Council had wished for this matter to be resolved as efficaciously as possible, and noted that it was hoped to report a good outcome to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the above report be accepted and that it be reiterated that the Clerk and Councillors Chilton and Robinson continue to work towards achieving a good outcome for the Council.

The Clerk also reported receipt of charges incurred by the Council's legal advisers in this respect.

RESOLVED: That this invoice be paid.

(2) Discussions with Charity Commission - Members considered a letter from Lupton Fawcett re steps that might now be taken to progress matters with the Charity Commission, and to inform the Council's tenants of the progress to date.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk be authorised to follow the advice offered in this correspondence and put in place the necessary actions.

(3) Cliffe Quarry - Members noted a further letter from residents in this respect.

06 97 Freedom of Information Act 2000

RESOLVED: That, under the Council's Publication Scheme, supporting papers for any item within the public session of the meeting be made available, if requested, after approval of the minutes by the full Council.

.....
Chairman