Minutes of a meeting of the
Administration and Resources Standing Committee
held on Tuesday 21st June 2022 at 7:45pm
Held in the Cricket Pavilion, Meopham Green

Members Present: Cllr M Bramer
Cllr S Buchanan
Cllr J McTavish
Cllr C Price
Cllr B Wade

In Attendance: S Fishenden – Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
C Collings – Assistant Clerk
Cllr D Sims – Observer only ***(until 8:10pm)***

Item 1: **To receive and accept apologies for absence**

A.1 Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Green (family commitment) and Cllr Ogden (prior commitment)

Item 2: **Declarations of Members' Interests: To receive declarations of pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests**

A.2 There were no declarations of interest.

Item 3: **To receive minutes of previous meeting: 19.04.22**

A.3 The minutes from the meeting of 19.04.22 were approved.

PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan and SECONDED: Cllr Price. All voted in favour.

Item 4: **A&R Chairman's Update**

A.4 The Chairman's update was received and is attached as an appendix to the minutes.

It was noted there had been an update in that the Allotment Association had now paid their annual rent.

Item 5: **Other Matters Arising**

A.5 There were no other matters arising.

Item 6: **Financial Matters**

6.1 To approve the expenses claimed by the Clerk and Assistant Clerk

A. 6 The Clerk's expenses were approved at a total of £67.56
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

A.7 The Assistant Clerk's expenses were approved at a total of £70.79
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

A.8 The Committee wished to endorse again that they were satisfied with the temporary use of the Clerk and Assistant Clerk's personal debit cards whilst we await the parish council card. It is recognised this practice would be stopped as soon as this card was received.

6.2 To approve the schedule of payments in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.2

A.9 This was received. It was noted there were no payments requiring approval.

6.3 To receive the Receipts and Payments report up to 15.06.22

A.10 This was received.

Item 7: Parish Online: To consider purchasing an annual subscription to Parish Online at a cost of £300.00 per annum

A.11 It was agreed to purchase the subscription for a twelve-month period at a cost of £300.00 + VAT.

PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

Item 8: Parish Council Website

8.1 To receive an update from the Clerk on the migration of meopham.org to meopham-pc.gov.uk

A.12 The Clerk provided an update that the site had been migrated from TSOHost to the gov.uk provider; CloudNext. There however were issues with the visual appearance of the site which had been raised with CloudNext. They had not managed to resolve it yet.

8.2 To consider the future of the meopham-pc.gov.uk website

A.13 Cllr Price will assist the Clerk in following up with CloudNext's technical support team to get the issues resolved. It is believed to be an issue with the style sheet.

8.3 To consider the specification for a new parish website

A.14 This was deferred until the next meeting of the Administration and Resources Committee.

Cllr Sims left the meeting at 8:10pm

Item 9: Work Experience: To consider the draft Work Experience Policy

A.15 An amendment was first agreed to merge the draft policies of the Clerk and Cllr M Bramer. This would be to encompass the following amendments:

- The Clerk to have delegated authority to arrange work experience placements, in consultation with the Chairman of the Parish Council
- Addition of introduction paragraph *'Meopham Parish Council believes that work experience is an important way for young people to gain insight into the working world. Time spent with an employer can broaden young people's knowledge and shape their career decisions'*.
- The addition of *'Applicants aged 14 or 15 will only be considered if all the staff with whom they will be working with meet current DBS requirements'*
- Addition of '*Those on placement will be in the office **only**…'*

- Addition of *'Applicants will not be discriminated against on the basis of any of the protected characteristics specified in the Equality Act 2020. Appropriate adjustments will be made as far as is practicable to accommodate applicants with disabilities'*
- To amend the 'Placement – Duties' section to include listing 'answering telephone calls' as a potential duty.
- Addition of *'and notify the school'* at the end of the sentence 'the Clerk will report the nature of the issue and steps taken to resolve it to the next Full Council Meeting'

The Clerk will circulate the merged version to committee members

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

A.16 It was then agreed to adopt the Work Experience policy with the amendments agreed above. This is subject to NALC's legal advice team confirming that work experience placements do not hold employee status other than under health and safety law.

If NALC confirm they do hold employee status, then this will be referred to Full Council in order to review the council's delegation policy.

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

Item 10: Cleaning Contractor: To consider the response received from the cleaning contractor for the public toilets and parish office

A.17 This item was deferred until the next Full Council as the Clerk had not had time to circulate a draft to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of A&R for their consideration.

Item 11 Co-option Policy: To consider advice received from KALC and if considered appropriate revise the existing councillor co-option policy

A.18 It was agreed not to adopt the draft policy presented by the Clerk.
PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

A.19 It was then agreed to delegate to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman of A&R, to prepare a proposal for an extension to the existing policy based on the amendments circulated prior to the meeting by the Chairman. This will be referred to the next Full Council meeting.

Full Council would also be asked to review the induction process for new councillors.

PROPOSED: Cllr Price. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

Item 12 Code of Conduct Review: To review the Code of Conduct

A.20 It was agreed to recommend to Full Council the following amendments to the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct are made:

Standing Order 13
The words 'See also standing order 3(j)' should read 'See also standing order 3(o)'.

Paragraph 13(a). Add a final sentence 'The term 'disclosable pecuniary interest' in these Standing Orders shall be interpreted as meaning one of the types of interest listed in Appendix A of the Code of Conduct'.

Paragraph 13(e): change '[by the Proper Officer] OR [by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required]' to 'by a meeting of the Council, or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required'.

Code of Conduct
Paragraph 15. Amend the wording to begin: 'On a written request made via the Council's proper officer, the Council or committee or sub-committee for which the dispensation is required may grant a member ...'.

PROPOSED: Cllr M Bramer. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

Item 13 **Presentation of financial information: To receive a proposal from the Chairman**

A.21 The proposal to establish a financial monitoring working group was discussed.

It was felt that there was not sufficient knowledge of the Scribe accounting software to utilise its full functionality at the present time. It was therefore agreed for Cllr Price, Cllr M Bramer, the Clerk, Assistant Clerk and the council's book-keeper to attend training offered by Scribe. One aim would be to produce a Scribe generated report that matches the previous style of Schedules of Payments. This will be considered again at the next meeting of A&R.

PROPOSED: Cllr McTavish. SECONDED: Cllr Wade. All in favour.

Item 14 **Circulation of correspondence: To receive a proposal from the Chairman**

A.22 It was noted that correspondence lists are to appear on agendas for full council and committee meetings. The Chairman's proposal that they should not appear on extra-ordinary meeting agendas was not discussed.

A.23 The Chairman of the Parish Council is to raise the issue of a lack of circulars from GBC and KCC at the next Chairman's meeting, being held in September.

Item 15 **Correspondence List: To note correspondence received**

A.24 This was noted.

Cllr M Bramer then PROPOSED entering closed session. SECONDED: Cllr Buchanan. All in favour.

CLOSED SESSION
Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, that due to the confidential nature of the next item, the public and press were asked to leave the meeting

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Item 16 **Internal Auditor for 2022-2023: To consider the quotes received for internal audit for financial year 2022-23**

A.25 It was agreed to appoint Mulberry and Co as our internal auditors for the 2022-2023 financial year.
PROPOSED: Cllr Buchanan. SECONDED: Cllr McTavish. All in favour.

Item 17: Electricity Supply for Parish Office and Pitfield Toilets
To consider the quotes received for electricity supply

A.26 It was agreed to accept the quote from EDF Energy for a one-year fixed term contract for the parish office and public toilets, this has a unit rate of 42p and daily standing charge of 25p.

PROPOSED: Cllr Wade. SECONDED: Cllr Price. All in favour.

The meeting closed at 9:47pm