

BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk: Miss B Macklen & Mrs C Feltham, PO Box 202, Heathfield, East Sussex TN21 1BN, Phone: 01435 813264

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12th December 2016

The Chairman and Members of the Finance Committee

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council,

copy: other Members of the Council

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 12TH DECEMBER 2016 IN THE READING ROOM, CHURCH ROAD, BUXTED

Attendance: Cllrs Roberts (Chairman), Blandford, Illingworth, Milner and Clerk to the Parish Council:

Beccy Macklen

1. **Apologies for absence:**
Apologies were accepted from Cllrs, McQuarrie, Skinner and Rose
2. **Declarations of members' interests in respect of items on this agenda**
Councillor Illingworth declared a personal interest in relation to item 4 on the agenda due to a family member using the Reading Room on a regular basis.
3. **Review of the Minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2015**
Minutes were reviewed with no issues raised.
4. **Review of the Reading Room Hire Charges**
The clerk advised that Reading Room charges have not been raised since 2009 and needed reviewing. In the last financial year, the Reading Room costs totalled £3,959 whereas income was £1,394 which means the total loss for the year was £2,565. The parish council acknowledges that the building is parish council owned and therefore it should subsidise the upkeep, however a £2,565 loss is considered too much. Members therefore worked through each of the regular users in addition to the 'one off' hire charges to set new rates. The clerk to write to each of the regular users and advise of the new charges.
5. **To review the remuneration of the Clerks to the Council and the Caretaker for 2017/18.**
(Clerk Beccy Macklen left the meeting whilst the following two items were discussed).

Upon return it was noted that the remuneration was approved.
6. **Pension – auto enrolment – update from Cllr Roberts.**
Automatic enrolment is a Government initiative to help more people save for later life through a pension scheme at work. In the past, many workers missed out on valuable pension benefits, because their employer didn't offer them a pension, or they didn't apply to join their company's pension scheme. Automatic enrolment changes this. It makes it compulsory for employers to automatically enrol their eligible workers into a pension scheme. The employer must also pay money into the scheme. Automatic enrolment is being phased in, with the parish council's implementation date set at 1st April 2017. The parish council is able to choose which of the various

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pension schemes it wishes to provide for its employees but the preferred option at this stage would be the well established Local Government Pension Scheme. At this time, it has been decided to budget for this scheme, but further research will be carried out by the chairman of the Finance Committee with a view to providing members with detailed financial implications.

7. To consider a new grant application procedure – verbal update from Mrs Feltham.

To date, the parish council automatically provides grants to a number of charities/churches/clubs and associations within the parish. However, it has been advised by the council's internal auditor that it would be good practice for the parish council to ask for grant application forms to be completed every financial year by these recipients. Members agreed, and therefore a grant application form was approved and will be sent out in August/September 2017 with a view to providing grants in November.

8. To consider the Parish Council's Budget for 2017/18 and to recommend a Budget and Precept for that year.

The draft budget documents were reviewed following careful consideration it was decided to request an increase of 9% on the precept for the financial years of 2017/18. This would amount to an increase of £7,651, bringing the precept up to a figure of £92,671 which equates to £4.66 per household per year/or 39 pence per household per month. This rise has been proposed due to the following:

- Previous raises either on or below interest rate
- Consideration of Auto Enrolment
- Requirement to cover costs of East Sussex County Council Highways works due to budget cuts at County level

9. Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit – a review of terms of reference against revised edition of 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils' (verbal report).

The current arrangements for the internal audit were considered to be extremely effective. Thanks were provided to clerk Claudine Feltham for all of her hard work preparing the budget and for a very efficiently collated end of year accounts and audit review.

10. Review of Buxted Parish Council's Financial Regulations - adopted by the Council at its Meeting held on 11th November 2014

The financial regulations do not require a further update at this time, they were considered by the Finance Committee to be appropriate and fit for purpose and follow the NALC guidance.

11. Risk Assessment:

- **Review of Risk Assessment Programme in relation to Finance, Governance, Systems and Administration**

- **Annual review of Insurance cover**

(both previously reviewed at Property and Recreations Ground Committee on 20th June 2016)

All documents considered fit for purpose. Members did discuss whether users of the hall should be required to sign a disclaimer when hiring the hall. Clerk advised that regular users of the hall have their own insurance and that the current insurance cover would be sufficient in regards to injury cover of 'one off' hall users. Clerk to investigate whether a disclaimer is also necessary.

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The Risk Assessment was reviewed at the Property Committee in June 2016, and does not require any additional updates at this time.

Buxted Parish Council insurance is in the final year of a 3 year contract, so will be renewed next year.

12. Any other matters properly notified.

Meeting closed at 8.54pm

Beccy Macklen

Clerk to the Council

Copy to ESCC Cllr R Galley, WDC Cllr. Lunn