

BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held in the Reading Room, Buxted on Tuesday 22nd October 2013 at 7.30 p.m.

Present: Cllrs. Warner (Chairman), Dopson and Rose
Also present: R Macklen, Clerk to the Parish Council.

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
Received from Cllr Blandford

2 **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS.**

Cllr Dopson declared a personal interests by being a member, appointed by the Council, to the Buxted Community Hall Trust

3 **REVIEW OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2012 were approved and signed at the Parish Council meeting on 13th November 2012 and there were no matters arising .

4 **REMUNERATION OF CLERK AND CARETAKER 2012/13**

Members reviewed details of the Clerk and Caretakers remuneration for 2012/13.

The Committee **recommends** to the Parish Council that the remuneration for the Clerks be set in accordance with current contracts which reflect NALC scales. These figures have been built into the budget for 2013/14. The figures will no doubt be adjusted following the resignation of Mr Wilson as Clerk. A replacement will be recruited. Whilst the budget impact is uncertain at this time, the overall costs are likely to be reduced.

The Committee also **recommends** to the Parish Council that the existing remuneration arrangements for the caretaker continue unchanged

5 **PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2013/14**

Members discussed the budget proposals circulated by the Clerk in detail commenting that there is a predicted small surplus of £1584.00 I this years budget.

The comments made by the internal auditor that reserves were high in relation to the Precept. It was acknowledged that these were largely earmarked as a contribution to the new community hall but given the size of reserves any future budgets should not build in too great a surplus.

Following a discussion, the Committee **recommends** to the Full Council that the budget as circulated be approved subject to the following change:

Budget code 5220 – Amount as per original budget £250 – Revised budget £1750 (increase of £1500 taken from the surplus in current financial year due to predicted works to culvert and road surface)

The Precept will remain unchanged at £82,283. This will yield a predicted surplus of £84.

The Committee **recommends** to the Full Council that the Receipts budget including the Precept be £85,154 and the Payments budget be £85,070. The full budget proposals, which include setting grants for the next three years, are attached to these minutes.

6 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

The internal audit was conducted in accordance with the terms of reference agreed with Mulberry & Co. and the Clerk reported that the Annual Return for the year ending 31st March 2013 had received a clean bill of health from the internal and the external auditors.

7 **REVIEW OF BUXTED PARISH COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Revised Financial Regulations were adopted by the Parish Council at its meeting on 8th February 2011 and these were still felt to be up to date and fit for purpose, however a further review will have to take place when electronic payment methods are introduced.

NB - The internal auditor was happy with the current Financial Regulations

8 **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The annual Risk Assessment Programme was reviewed and considered to be up to date and no recommendations for changes were made as this time. The programme had been endorsed by the internal auditor.

The insurance arrangements had been reviewed in full during 2011 taking account of the cover provided and the level of premiums and a new three year agreement through Came & Co had been put in place which was still considered adequate. It will be appropriate to seek competitive quotes in the summer of 2014 when the existing three year agreement expires.

The clerk was asked to request to the High Hurstwood Village Hall Committee that within paperwork issued to hire the hall that a clause is included which requires the hirer to ensure that if any gazebo/marquee/structure is erected on the village green, that adequate insurance is sought. This would ensure that neither the Parish Council nor the High Hurstwood

Village Hall Committee would be liable to any insurance claim in the event of an accident.

The clerk was also asked that on renewal of parish council insurance in 2014, the insurance company is asked if:

1. The Parish Council are able to ensure buildings that they do not own i.e. Five Ash Down Village Hall and High Hurstwood Village Hall; and
2. If yes, how much extra would this be to the current insurance policy

It was considered that it may be more cost effective to include such insurance into the parish council's annual policy rather than reimbursing individual groups as stand-alone grants.

Members also discussed the need for a more reliable back-up system for the clerk's computers than is currently in place. At the moment clerks are responsible for backing up their own computer onto a hard drive. The clerk was therefore asked to investigate a more regular off site form of back-up that did not require the clerks to initiate. Subsequent to the meeting it has been arranged that a Soonr system will be installed which will allow clerks to sync up to 100GB to a 'cloud' (more storage can be added if required). This is effectively a backup of data which sync's as soon as a change is made. We can have up to 5 x users sharing the 100Gb as we wish. If we have two or more users we can also create a projects folder that will allow us to share, edit and view documents.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Signed: Chairman

Date: