

ALRESFORD PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF ON-LINE COMMITTEE MEETING - THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Wednesday 24th February 2021 at 2.15pm

Present: Cllrs Frank Belgrove (Chairman), Linda Belgrove, Ernie Osborne and Rubina Swash
Also Present: Mrs M Salazar (Clerk), Mrs A Baxter (RFO and assistant clerk), Cllrs A Broom and J Claremont-Brown
Absent: Cllr Ann Wiggins

21/001 Apologies for absence: *To note any apologies.*

Apologies were received from Cllr Osborne who is going to be late.

21/002 Declaration of interests: *To state any interests in the below agenda items.*

Cllr F Belgrove – the Chairman’s allowance (items 008 – pecuniary)

21/003 Minutes of the last Meeting: *To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting of the 22nd of October 2020.*

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting of 22nd October 2020 are true and accurate, subject to the following changes.

A spelling change in item 20/016

To clarify that Cllr L Belgrove suggested that the council looks at allowances for all councillors, and to remove the reference to chairman’s allowance.

Proposed: Cllr F Belgrove, all in favour.

Cllr Osborne arrived during this item and participated in the resolution vote.

21/004 To receive an update on actions from the last meeting not covered elsewhere in this agenda.

Mrs Salazar has sent a thank you e-mail to Mr Andrew Barker, for his help as the P3 volunteer.

The committee will need to meet again before the April PC meeting to discuss grant applications and agree a recommendation.

The latest public works loan figures have been circulated.

No invoices were issued by TDALC over the last few years, which is why no payments have been recorded. Cllr L Belgrove will keep us updated.

21/005 Payroll Provision

To review providers to commence the council’s payroll from April 2021, for recommendation at the March council meeting.

As the current payroll provider is due to cease trading at the end of this financial year, details of alternative providers were provided. Mrs Baxter recommended Diane Malley as she is highly recommended by clerks, is reasonably priced and will provide all the services we need.

It was resolved to recommend to full council to appoint Diane Malley. Proposed: Cllr F Belgrove, all in favour.

21/006 Accounts Packages

To review different providers of accounts packages for local council to potentially use for the 2021/22 financial year. To discuss a recommendation to make at the March council meeting.

Cllr Broom stated that Scribe has the best user base (450 existing councils), is cloud based, so there are no concerns about back up and has good councillor reviews. Mrs Salazar felt that although all 3 offered their own advantages the aftercare from Scribe was particularly good. Their team includes clerks with specialist knowledge. Mrs Baxter added that all 3 came highly recommended, but that Scribe had the highest number of recommendations. She had felt that Rialtas would have a financial advantage but with the additional costs for software hosting

Signature.....

Date.....

that is not the case. Rialtas and AdvantEdge do offer more add on services, if the council is interested in those. Scribe only has facilities bookings as of April 21 but is looking at adding more. Cllr F Belgrove spoke to other councils and received recommendations of Scribe. Their service is very good, and you can get hold of people for help and advice.

It was resolved to recommend to full council to appoint Scribe. Proposed: Cllr F Belgrove, all in favour.

21/007 To approve payment of the following invoice:

Invoice Date 08/02/21 Ellisons Solicitors – Legal Services £826.50 net, £165.30 VAT Total Payment £991.80.

It was discussed that the legal services were required due to a Freedom of Information and Subject Access Request received in relation to criminal damage on the playing field. It was resolved to approve the payment of the invoice. All in favour.

21/008 Summary of 3rd Quarter of 2020/21.

The summary has been circulated. To review any material variances and answer any questions.

The committee reviewed the summary. The handyman's hours have exceeded 75% because he is also doing the litter picking. Office expenses are very low as the office has been out of use. Cllr F Belgrove advised that the General Power of Competence for the council started in September 20, so the works at St Peters churchyard now comes under that power.

The possible early repayment of the Public Works Loan was discussed. Cllr Osborne felt that there was no advantage as we would have to pay a penalty, and we could keep the low interest loan running and use the funds to benefit the village. Cllr Broom added that with interest rates so low at the moment it makes sense to keep the loan. Cllr F Belgrove added that we should continue to consider early repayment periodically. Cllr Swash suggested making overpayments to reduce the term of the payment and checking the terms and conditions to see if that is possible. The RFO is to look into this.

The Pavilion and Playing Field expenses are also low, due to the current situation. It was queried as to why a recent water bill shows use of water when the Pavilion is not being used. This is to be looked into.

Water rates for allotments are high due to summer usage.

Cllr L Belgrove explained that the first 3 years of the handyman's wages are paid by a grant from EALC.

It was commented that the LED replacements are saving a lot of money on electricity costs, Cllr L Belgrove added that we have already got £1,125.61 back in savings. Also, they are far more reliable with no failures as yet.

Cllr F Belgrove explained that along with the costs of purchasing and installing bins, the council also has to pay for them to be emptied, so there are ongoing costs.

Cllr F Belgrove, Cllr Osborne and Mrs Baxter will go into Colchester to set up the new bank account when we are permitted to ensure that the council reserves are protected under the government guarantee.

21/009 Meeting closes

The meeting closed at 3.12pm.

Minuted by Angela Baxter – RFO & Assistant Clerk
Contact rfoapcessex@outlook.com

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