



# DEEPIING ST JAMES PARISH COUNCIL

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Parish Clerk: Julie Fortnum

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on Thursday 17 September 2015 at 8.30 pm in the Meeting Room at The Institute.

Present: Councillors Bowell, Dilks, Donley, Pelling, Shinkins, J.Stevens, and Wallis.

**13.16 To receive apologies for absence.**

Councillors Barber and Gilbert

**14.16 To receive any declarations of interest.**

None

**15.16 To adopt the minutes of the previous meeting held on Thursday 11 June 2015 –copy enclosed.**

Agreed and signed

**16.16 To receive a report of matters arising from the minutes not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda.**

1. The Clerk has checked the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations regarding who covers the RFO when absent and no mention of it could be found.

All the committee members agreed that the following wording should be added to the Standing Orders "the Assistant Clerk, with support from the Chair of finance and general purposes and the Chairman of the Council, will cover the RFO duties when absent"

2. The Clerk has contacted LALC for information on car and mileage allowance and they have provided the National Joint Councils allowances although they have advised that there is no requirement for a local council to adopt these. The allowances payable should be decided and agreed by the Council. Full Council have since agreed to leave the rate at 45 pence per mile

3. The Clerk has received a reply from the Charity Commission asking for guidance on what the funds could be spent on and they have quoted point 9 of the Trustees document sealed on 30 June 1969 which states the following:

"Application of income – The said council shall apply the clear income of the Charity as they think fit for any charitable purposes for the general benefit of the inhabitants of the area of the Ancient Parish of Deeping St James for which provision is not made out of rates, taxes or other public funds."

It was unanimously resolved to recommend to council that it should be used for grant aid purposes as that would be the most beneficial way to use it to benefit the most inhabitants of the parish.

4. The external Auditors certificate for the annual return for the financial year ended 31 March 2015 has been received and states that "on the basis of our review of the annual return, in our opinion the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met." Noted.

**17.16 Internal Audit - To consider what is to be checked and when it is to be completed (see enclosed guidance from Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners Guide (England) March 2014) –** Councillor Wallis asked the members for their thoughts on if the internal auditor should undertake a one off year check or intermittent checks and if the latter when. It was felt annually made the task too arduous and quarterly may lead to duplication so it was agreed to ask the internal Auditor to check procedures half yearly and annually.

**18.16 To consider the proposal for HR support -** Cllr. Pelling advised the members that in the past HR advice had been bought on a one off basis and he had been approached by this company so he and Councillors Barber and Gilbert and the Clerk had attended a presentation. The package offered was £610 per annum for the software and all updates

Any member of the public can attend all Council and Committee meetings to see the work of the Council. Full Council meetings are held on the last Thursday of each month which start with a 30 minute public forum for questions and issues to be raised.

and 10 hours of HR support. A discussion took place about whether this package was needed or whether buying HR advice when needed was sufficient. As the software package provided a secure system to store and monitor HR information it was agreed that it would be beneficial although the initial set up could be time consuming. **Councillor Pelling proposed that the Council should purchase this package and request to use some of the 10 hours HR support time (along with further support from some Councillors) to assist the Clerk with the initial set up. This was seconded by Councillor Shinkins and agreed (5 in favour, with Councillors Howell and Dilks abstaining).**

**19.16 To consider banking matters especially in relation to online banking -**

The Clerk advised that the online payments made from the Unity Trust Bank were operating successfully and members needed to decide if all funds should be transferred or if the Barclays account should be kept open. As the Clerk confirmed that there was very little additional work involved in having two accounts Councillor Pelling proposed, seconded by Councillor Howell, that both accounts should be kept as it was important to support the local Barclays branch and there would still be times when an over the counter service would be required. This was unanimously agreed.

**20.16 To review the staff appraisal system**

Councillor Gilbert, who had given his apologies, had requested that this item be put on the agenda; this item was deferred until the next Finance and general purposes meeting.

**21.16 To consider creating a register of documentation held by the council and the security of this information.**

The internal audit report had noted that the secure storage of parish council information, both paper and computerised, needed to be more clearly evidenced. **Councillor Wallis and the Clerk agreed to look at compiling a register of documentation held by the council including where it was kept and if it was public or private.**

**22.16 To receive a report of the Council's Income and Expenditure for 2015/16**

The Clerk introduced the paperwork that had already been circulated and took questions from members to clarify the income and expenditure. The members acknowledged that the reports highlighted no areas of concern.

**23.16 To receive and agree the 2016/17 budget recommendations made by committees -**

The recommendations from each committee were presented as follows:

**Cemetery estimated income for 2016/17**

Item	Budget
Burial fees	2000.00
Memorial fees	500.00
Total	2500.00

**Cemetery expenditure budget for 2016/17**

Item	Budget
Grounds maintenance	7835.00
Miscellaneous repairs	1475.00
Water rates	250.00
New Cemetery land reserves	1000.00
Total	10560.00

### Transport expenditure budget for 2016/17

Item	Budget
Active speed signs	2000.00
Bus shelter clean	750.00
Road safety campaign	500.00
Linchfield Road Bus shelter (2 year project)	5000.00
Total	8250.00

### Youth and Community expenditure budget for 2016/17

Item	Budget
Grounds maintenance	1930.00
Repairs	1070.00
Play Scheme	4000.00
Youth Centre	5000.00
Replacement skate park	5000.00
Total	17000.00

### Allotments, footpaths and open spaces estimated income budget for 2016/17

Item	Budget
Allotment fees	2500.00
Total	2500.00

### Allotments footpaths and open spaces expenditure budget for 2016/17

Item	Budget
Maintenance & misc.	5000.00
Trees, hedges, bulbs & wildflowers	400.00
Riverbank maintenance	1370.00
Jubilee Park	1600.00
FoDSJ bloom planting	750.00
Total	9120.00

The Clerk confirmed that the two income budgets remained the same as 2015/16 as did the Youth and community expenditure budget.

The Cemetery budget had increased by £1230.00 – a 3% increase in grounds maintenance costs and £1000 to cover the installation of a water tap in the new cemetery.

The transport expenditure budget had increased by £6750 - £2000 to purchase a second reactive speed sign and £5000 to purchase and install a bus shelter on Linchfield Road (if permissible)

The Allotments footpath and open spaces budget had increased by £450.00 – an increase of £250 in the contribution towards bloom planting and increase of £200 for improving Jubilee Park.

Councillor Stevens requested the Clerk to obtain a price for a horseshoe/donut shaped seat to be situated at Jubilee Park. If the quotes obtained were acceptable and the consultation outcome was positive the Jubilee Park budget would be increased accordingly.

#### **24.16 To discuss all other budget estimates for 2016/17 in preparation for precept setting.**

The Clerk advised that she was still working on all other budgets (for example staff related costs) for the next financial year and these would be looked at in more detail at the next Finance and general purposes committee on 19 November 2015.

**25.16 Date of next meeting – 7.45pm Thursday 19 November 2015**