

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF BRENCHLEY PARISH COUNCIL
ON MONDAY 13th NOVEMBER 2017 IN MATFIELD PAVILION AT 7.30pm**

Present

Councillors C. Woodley (Chairman) presided, Cllrs. R. Wickham, A. de Guingand, D. Batty, Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk).

1. To accept apologies for absence

None.

2. To approve the Minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee on 24 July 2017 were approved and duly signed as an accurate record by the Chairman.

3. To record declarations of interest on any item on the Agenda

Members are reminded that if any have a *prejudicial* interest in an agenda item, this should be declared at the start of the meeting.

Personal interests could be declared at this point or, alternatively, could be declared at the time a specific item is being discussed if that member wishes to speak on the item in which s/he has a personal interest. In case of doubt about such an interest Councillors have been advised to contact the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

None declared.

4. The Final Audited Accounts for 2016/17

The Clerk advised that the final audited accounts for 2016/17 have been circulated and displayed in accordance with the Public Notice requirements.

RESOLVED to recommend that the Full Council receive and endorse the final audited accounts for 2016/17.

5. The Financial Regulations

Cllr. de Guingand circulated a draft new Financial Regulations based on the NALC template.

After discussion, a number of the sections were removed as they are not relevant to the Council. A statement regarding expenditure under the provisions of the Free Resource S.137 is to be added.

Cllr. de Guingand will incorporate the amendments discussed and circulate a further draft.

6. The Risk Register

A list of outstanding Risk Management Actions was discussed, with minor amendments.

RESOLVED to recommend that the relevant Policy Groups be tasked with taking forward these actions.

7. Matfield Pavilion: consideration of revisions to the letting arrangements

The Clerk circulated a paper setting out comparison of deposit and session fees charged by other local venues.

It was agreed that, at present, there is no need to request a deposit for the use of the Pavilion; however, any request to use the venue for activities which may result in damage to the building, should be declined.

RESOLVED to recommend that the Clerk assumes responsibility to use discretion in accepting bookings for Matfield Pavilion.

The current session-fee structure was discussed, and it was agreed that an hourly-rate of £10.00 (or any part thereof) be applied to bookings made from 1st April 2018.

RESOLVED to recommend that, from 1st April 2018, the current session fee-structure be revoked, and, from that date, an hourly rental-rate of £10.00 should apply. The Terms of Use for Matfield Pavilion should be amended to reflect these changes.

There was a discussion on the review of fees for regular users, Matfield Green Cricket Club, Connections, and The Guides. Cllr. Woodley commented that each of the users should be requested to sign the licence agreement previously approved by the Council; the Clerk would attend to this at the next meeting of the Matfield Pavilion Management Committee, to be held as soon as possible. The current rates are:

MGCC - £220.00
Guides - £330.00
Connection - £100.00

RESOLVED to recommend that the fees for the regular users of Matfield Pavilion remain at the rates of the current year; and that each organization be requested to sign a licence governing their use of the Pavilion.

The discretionary free-use by local groups, and other bodies, was discussed and it was agreed that there should be a clear distinction between local groups and those using the Pavilion for commercial purposes, or for private events.

RESOLVED to recommend the continued discretionary free-use the Pavilion by the following organizations: Matfield Women's Institute, the Love Matfield Society, the Tunbridge Wells Area Committee of KALC, and Paddock Wood Community Advice Centre.

8. The Bank accounts

The Clerk confirmed that, as resolved by the Full Council, the funds held in the NatWest Current account, NatWest deposit account and NatWest Pavilion account have been transferred into the Council's Unity Trust bank account.

In response to the suggestion at the last Finance Committee meeting, the Clerk advised that TWBC have declined to pay the precept quarterly as this would incur more frequent bank charges.

8.1 War Memorial Charity bank account

Having obtained a resolution of a meeting of the Trustees, the Clerk has applied to the Charity Commission for the funds held in the War Memorial Charity account to be received by the PC, to be earmarked for spending on the memorials, in preparation for the Armistice Centenary Commemoration in 2018. A decision is awaited from the Charity Commission.

8.2 John Downer Charity

The Clerk confirmed that the funds for this Charity are now in a new Barclays Bank Account.

8.3 Current Bank position

The Clerk provided the Committee with a Nominal Ledger report, together with the Annual Budget report by cost centre. No issues were raised Members. However, it was noted that a number of budget lines, such as Office and Travel, were significantly overspent; this was due to changes in the requirements of the Clerk, for which no budget had been allocated.

The Clerk advised that the Council's auditor, David Buckett, had completed the interim internal audit on 8 November, and that the bank reconciliation had been approved by him. The Clerk advised that, in accordance with the Financial Regulations, a Bank Reconciliation and Summary of Receipts and Payments report would be provided on a quarterly basis and that this should be formally approved by a member of the Finance Committee.

The level of General Reserves was discussed, and it was agreed that it would be given further consideration, in light of the potential funding requirements for a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

9. The Council's Budget 2018-19: consideration of issues for the precept

Cllr. Woodley outlined a proposal for a Three-Year Budget Planning strategy, and this was discussed. It was agreed that, for the present, it would not be prudent to proceed with the proposal. This year's budget has had to absorb significant unplanned expenditure to fund the transition arrangements for the new Clerk, and to meet higher-than-expected costs associated with the maintenance of the Council's estate. It is thus considered that the projected outturn for the year would not provide a sound basis for medium-term financial-planning.

The current year budget items were considered with a small number being removed, as they are no longer required. The Clerk itemised some potential additional items for next year's budget and these were considered, with some being agreed for inclusion.

The Clerk and Cllr. de Guingand would meet before the end of November, to formulate a draft Budget, and to consider the likely precept requirement.

10. Date of next meeting – quarterly tbc