

WOOTTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes and Communications Committee of Wootton Parish Council held on Wednesday 10th February 2010 at the Memorial Hall, Bedford Road, Wootton.

Present: Councillors R Wallace(Chairman), D Price, J Wheeler, W Hall, M Woolfenden, T. Corby, P Quirk, J. Cunningham, and P Prescod.

In attendance the Clerk and Mr G Pavey (Country Players).

FG10/01. Apologies
Cllr C Bennett.

FG10/02. Declarations of interest on any items on the agenda
None.

FG10/03. Open Forum
Graham Pavey was in attendance to ask on the progress of the electrical problems recently experienced in the Changing rooms by the Country Players. The Clerk was able to advise Mr Pavey that investigative work had begun and it was suggested by the Chairman that Mr Pavey be contacted direct by the contractor carrying out said works to enable the two to meet on site and allow the contractor to gain better access to the changing rooms with the movement of costumes from the area. The Clerk was asked to pass Mr Paveys mobile telephone number to the Councils contractor in due course.

FG10/04. Minutes of the meeting of Committee held on 25th November 2009
The minutes were agreed and duly signed by the Chairman.

FG10/05. 2009/2010 Accounts
The Chairman was pleased to advise the Members that the external audit for the Council, carried out by BDO LLP for the year 2009/2010, had now been completed with no recommendations or comments.

FG10/06. Internal Audit
Cllr Corby presented a report on the recent internal audit as completed by her and Cllr Bennett. A number of recommendations were made to help organise the work of the Clerk and assist in processing payments / receipts etc. It was noted that the current procedures followed by the current Clerk were those learnt from the previous Clerk, and any failures in Council procedures were in no way a reflection on the work of the current Clerk. It was agreed that the recommendations as proposed by Cllr Corby and Bennett be actioned as soon as possible and that any 'new' procedures be monitored for three months to test their effectiveness and usefulness. The Clerk was to ensure the list of recommendations be sent out to all members along with minutes of this meeting. It was further

agreed that an additional 'internal audit' be arranged to measure the Councils procedures further.

The Clerk was asked by the Chairman to contact Louise Ashmore at the Bedfordshire Association of Town and Parish Councils and request a copy of her 'auditor list'. It was suggested that names be selected from the list, passed to Cllr Price who would in turn make contact with individuals and secure the assistance of a suitable auditor to carry out another internal audit for the Council. Cllr Price was given authority to spend no more than £175 in securing the services of an outside 'internal auditor'.

FG10/07. Governance

The Chairman updated the Members on the need to test and review the Councils procedures in terms of Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Insurance, and risk and asset registers etc.

It was agreed that for the April meeting of this Committee a copy of each of the above be sent to all Members for consideration and review.

The Clerk was asked to include an RFO report for the same meeting.

FG10/08. Training

The issue of 'whole Council' training was suggested by the Chairman and it was agreed that a session be arranged by the Clerk via Louise Ashmore at the BATPC for a Wednesday evening in the autumn (October / November 2010). It was thought the best type of training could include a general Councillor Induction / team building session.

In addition Cllr Prescod was keen for Members to consider alternative training methods, aimed specifically at volunteers to help Councillors in the future, and which are organised by Officers at the Borough Council. After discussion the Chairman asked that Cllr Prescod make enquiries to what was available and bring his findings to the next meeting of this Committee with a view to arranging a session as appropriate.

FG10/09. Wootton News - Next and Future Editions

It was agreed by the Members that the Wootton News in its current format had for sometime now looked in need of a review. Cllr Wallace was pleased to be able to pass the responsibility for the production of the Councils community newsletter over to the Clerk for compiling and collating information for inclusion. It was further agreed that Cllr Paul Prescod liaise with the Clerk and that the Clerk obtain three quotes from prospective printers / setters to look at 'a new and up to date' format. Once this has been achieved the new format should be presented to Full Council for their own ratification.

Members agreed to change the arrangement regarding invoicing for the adverts included in the publication. It was suggested that the Clerk send invoices out to those companies who advertised in the November 2009 and February 2010 editions, and enclose a letter advising potential businesses who would like to advertise that as from the May edition,

payments for adverts will be for the year (ie four adverts) and paid in advance.

The Clerk was asked to 'chase' late payers from the last two editions of the Wootton News.

In addition Cllr William Hall was pleased to be able to volunteer his services to the Parish Council in offering to proof read future editions to ensure their correctness etc. The Members were pleased to accept his offer of assistance.

FG10/10. Website

Cllr Wallace was pleased to be able to confirm he had recently updated the Councils own website and had updated the minutes of meetings for 2009. This being completed the instructions for updating the system were passed to the Clerk for her to complete in future.

FG10/11. Budget Update & Capital Project Funds Status Report

This item having been deferred from the beginning of the meeting was deferred once again as after discussion as it was felt not sufficient time had been allocated to the importance of the issue. It was agreed that the Chairman and the Clerk work together to achieve a better format.

The Clerk was asked to contact RBS and investigate the option of 'budget setting' using the Alpha software solution.

FG10/12. Matrix

Was deferred to the next meeting of this Committee.

Chairman_____

Date of next meeting 28th April 2010