

LUDGERSHALL TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the February Finance meeting held on 25th February 2021 at 7.00pm, held remotely using Microsoft Teams.

Present: Cllr B Cordery (in the Chair), Cllr J White, Cllr C A Allan, Cllr J Langley, Cllr B Dance, Cllr P Burgon, Cllr M Giles

Public: No members of the public attended the meeting

AGENDA ITEM

064-20/21: 1. Apologies – none.

065-20/21: 2. Declaration of Interest – Cllrs C Allan, B Dance & B Cordery declared an interest in point 9.

066-20/21: 3. Minutes of previous meeting – held 3rd February 2021 – the minutes had been circulated and were ratified at FTC on 9th February 2021 - there were no observations.

067-20/21: 4. Finance *a) Financial Statement to end month 10* – the accounts had been circulated; the Clerk explained at month 10 expenditure should be at 83.3% so at 64.3% we are still well within budget. There were no other comments and no questions. *b) CCLA Communication update* - had been circulated there were no comments.

068-20/21: 5. *Committee Reports* – Cllr CA Allan reported that there were no monetary or policy items to bring to Finance & Policy. Cllr J White, reported regarding RLE committee, and confirmed that there will be 3 more bus shelters added to the ones that have already been refurbished. She also reported that repairs to play and gym equipment have been agreed by RLE for £1614 & £344 excluding VAT. Also, admin has received a quote for welding at Pretoria Play Park £295 and this has gone out to RLE committee for approval. The committee have also agreed the quote of £675 plus VAT from Tree Technique to complete the necessary tree works as identified in the Tree Survey.

069-20/21: 6. *Bills for Payment (Received to date)* – totalled £7445.63 inclusive of VAT, the Clerk stated she would need to pay for 2 regular invoices that were due at the end of February. Full details will be given at the next FTC, after which the remainder of the payments will be made.

070-20/21: 7. *Correspondence – a) S137 expenditure limit for 2021-2022* – The appropriate sum for the purpose of section 137(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1972 (the 1972 Act) for parish and town councils in England for 2021-22 is £8.41. This is the amount as a result from increasing the amount of £8.32 for 2020-2021 by the percentage increase in the retail index between September 2019 and September 2020, in accordance with Schedule 12B to the 1972 Act. *b) Legal Topic Notes - Guidance from NALC* has been received on changes to Legal Topic Note LTN 87 PROCUREMENT. This agenda point is just for notification a copy of these legal topic notes was presented to the committee.

071-20/21: 8. *Cleaning Contractors Tender Evaluation* – All information had been circulated; 8 companies were considered, and the ITT was put on LTC's website as per the Transparency Code, 4 did not reply, 1 was unable to take on any more clients, 2 could not commit to the open and shut times and therefore only 1 quote has been received. The Current contractor is not continuing after

the end of March and the Clerk read out an email from him thanking LTC for providing the work for the past 11 years. All the requirements have been met by Camille Cleaning the contractor whose quote has been received and the costs added together for all work are slightly lower than the current contract the total over 2 years is quoted as £20,000.64. The Committee discussed and felt that as the contractor is new to LTC that a monitoring system should be brought in at the beginning of the contract, to ensure that LTC is happy with the work. The Committee agreed to put this forward to FTC.

072-20/21: 9. Grants – a grant request from the Memorial Hall has been circulated, the request was for £500 more than has been precepted for. The committee discussed and asked the Clerk to go back to the Hall secretary and ask him to reword the email and request the precepted amount, this would then be ratified at the next FTC and payment would be the day after. If anymore funds from a grant are needed, then the Hall committee will have to fill in a grant request form. The Clerk will also forward one of these to the Hall secretary. All agreed to these terms.

073-20/21: 10. Review of Policies –*Social Media Policy* – this policy has been completely revised and covers both staff and Cllrs, the Committee discussed Cllr M Giles proposed that this revised policy be accepted, Cllr CA Allan seconded all agreed the review. FTC To ratify. The Clerk asked how to ensure that all Cllrs read this policy, so that full compliance was understood, Cllr CA Allan suggested that paper copies be given to each Cllr for them to read with a signature section to confirm that they have read it. All agreed, Clerk will prepare.

074-20/21: 11. New Policy – *Compassionate Leave* – The Clerk has researched further and has been given the ACAS version to use via WALC, she will also liaise with Peninsula and will come back next month with the revised policy.

075-20/21: 12. Possibility of Returning to Face-to-Face meetings - The regulations that allow local authorities to hold meetings remotely apply to local authority meetings that are required to be held, or held, before 7 May 2021. This means that, without any further action from the government, all local authorities including local councils must return to face-to-face meetings from 7 May. NALC is working with a number of national bodies to press the government to extend these regulations beyond this date and will continue to stress the urgency and importance of this issue. However, at this time government has no plans to extend these regulations and so councils should start preparing for the real possibility of face-to-face meetings from May. NALC's position remains that all local councils should continue to meet remotely while the regulations are in force. NALC has given councils guidance which has been written to help local councils prepare for the scenario that remote council meetings cannot lawfully take place from 7 May 2021. There is still much uncertainty around how legislation or COVID-19 risks may change over the coming weeks and months. NALC will update this guidance as the situation evolves. Each council will have to decide which course of action will best fit their needs and manage risks. The Clerk went through what LTC can do to utilise the ability to have remote meetings prior to 7th May and what could happen after if the law is not extended. Discussions were made regarding what might be needed to facilitate a face-to-face meeting with social distancing. More information will be coming, and she will update at the next FTC.

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the following agenda items will be closed to the public due to its confidential nature.

076-20/21: 13. Staffing *a) Salaries* – the clerk confirmed the salaries for February were basic hours and that the hours earned from evening meetings are now being emailed to Cllr M Giles on a Monday, to confirm what has been accrued and what has been taken. *b) Training* – Karen had a 30 mins HR webinar to keep up to date with legal requirements for staff working hours and home working. She has restarted her CILCA and completed 2 units. Karen is booked in with DCK Accounting regarding training on Omega (LTC's accounting package) and starts this next week. *c) Office*- nothing to report. *d) The Admin Assistants appraisal has been completed* and the Clerk went over with the committee and stated that she has consistently performed more than effectively in most aspects of each task. 17 months ago, LTC had asked that she work towards being able to fully

deputise for the Town Clerk, unfortunately because of Covid-19 the RFO part of the job has not been accomplished. However, she has taken on fully 2 more committees and can deputise for the Clerk section of the job. The Clerk asked that from 1st April 2021, LTC acknowledge the extra work that has been given to her by changing her title to Assistant Clerk and agreeing to a spinal column upgrade of 2 points taking her up to SCP 8. The payroll budget for the Admin Assistant has been budgeted at SCP 10, because LTC had asked for her to Deputise for the Clerk, SCP 8 is halfway there and only fair. Cllrs M Giles & B Cordery as Chair and Vice Chair of FTC have discussed this with the Clerk prior to this meeting and agreed. The committee discussed and felt that in the current climate giving a pay rise would look bad on the council, because of the impact Covid-19 has had on some households, they felt that no other professions would be getting a rise this year. The Clerk explained that this was not an 'inflationary rise' but because of the extra work and responsibility that the position now holds. The committee agreed that she has taken on the work and extra responsibility and worked hard but just could not agree to the rise at this time. Cllr CA Allan proposed that no increase of salary be given at this time, Cllr M Giles seconded all agreed, Cllr CA Allan proposed that the title change to Assistant Clerk, Cllr M Giles seconded all agreed. The Clerk then asked for help, part of the appraisal asks what makes the job difficult to perform, we both had put that Cllrs not engaging with the office when decisions are made outside of meetings, we are at a loss to what to do about this and ask for your help, communicating better with the office.

077-20/21: 14. Agenda points for next meeting –

- Trees a) Find out about how LTC could put a TPO on a tree (specifically 2 Turkish Hazelnuts) these are on Asters land, clerk will investigate and bring back in March.
- Trees b) LTC to start a Tree Policy and join the Tree Charter.
- Contract for play areas and small works review/renewal
- Moving back to office – 1st stage

Meeting closed at 20.16hrs, next meeting 31st March 2021.

Signed..... Date.....