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Minutes of **FINANCE COMMITTEE of RENHOLD PARISH COUNCIL** held on **Thursday 1st October 2015** at 9.00am in the Committee Room of Renhold Village Hall.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: - Parish Councillors Mr. Harrison (Chair), Mrs. Dean, Mr. Gurney and Mr. Slater.

NON COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: - The Clerk Mrs. Barnicoat & 0 members of the public.

1. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE COMMITTEE AND APOLOGIES TO BE RECEIVED:-**

It was proposed by Cllr. Dean that Cllr. Harrison be elected as Chair of the Committee, seconded by Cllr. Slater, unanimously agreed by those present and resolution passed.

Cllr. Harrison signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

It was unanimously agreed by those present that if the Chair is absent from a meeting than the Committee to elect an individual for that meeting, resolution passed.

Cllr. Harrison welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending; no apologies for absence had been received.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for the next item.

2. **OPEN FORUM:-**

No statements received.

The Chairman reconvened the meeting.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST:** - There were no declarations of interest received for the meeting.

4. **FINANCE:-**

Transaction report circulated to all members.

a) Review of Committee Terms of Reference the document had been circulated to all prior to the meeting, it was noted the one update to be made to the document was the removal of initials at the footer of the page. The remaining content was agreeable and it was resolved to approve the document.

b) External audit feedback consideration – following the feedback received by the full Council the Clerk had forwarded to all committee members copies of a letter sent from Wilstead Parish Council to HMRC regarding the use of a company to provide a clerking service. The response from HMRC to Wilstead Parish Council was noted as confirming this arrangement is agreeable in relation to the individual company therefore being liable for any tax or NI payments. The document pack also included a copy of the letter Wilstead Parish Council had sent the external auditors, BDO LLP. The Councillors present felt the information supported the full Council's comments and gave further reassurance of the Council's actions.

c) Review of financial documents to include: Asset Register, Financial Regulations, Internal Audit Control documents and Financial Risk Assessment – these documents had been circulated to all ahead of the meeting, except for the asset register which the Clerk was to forward to all committee and full Council members. Each document was reviewed in turn and the following was noted. Within the Financial Regulations document it made specific reference to the use of a clerking service inline with the feedback from HMRC, as discussed in the previous item. The

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Councillors had reviewed the original model document and discussed tailoring to Renhold Parish Council's needs. It was agreed within item 3.2 a reference to be made to January, the figures referenced in the document were felt to be appropriate, and 5.1 to be removed as felt not applicable. As per 6.4 the bank mandate would need to be reviewed as a future full Council item, and it was confirmed the recommendation remain as two cheque signatories, so remove 'one' and the Clerk not to be a counter signatory. Items 6.12, 6.15 were felt not to be appropriate as they referred to internet banking which is not a facility the Council have nor do they have a prepaid direct debit in place.

It was agreed with the amendments to be made to the document the Committee would recommend to the full Council the Financial Regulation document be approved. The Clerk also to bring the bank reconciliation to each full Council meeting for a Councillor to sign.

The internal audit control documents were reviewed and there needs to be rewording of item 4. in the Audit Plan to independent, and under the Terms of Reference item 5. there to be inserted 'varied from time to time' as it was felt best practice to vary the individual carrying out the independent internal audit so a fresh pair of eyes reviews the documents periodically.

The Risk Assessment was discussed and it was noted this has been updated in line with the new Financial Regulations so the documents are fully aligned, it was agreed to recommend this to full Council for approval.

d) Financial monitoring of actual income/expenditure against the budget – the Committee considered the up to date documentation, and noted that all items within expected expenditure levels at present, and none likely to exceed the budget headings which is pleasing. It was noted that as the Good Neighbours Scheme has indicated that they will not require a grant for 2014/15 and had not claimed this budget allocation should be removed when looking ahead to 16/17. It was noted that the payments for the clerking service were for a six month period and are inline with the budget. For the 16/17 budget it was agreed a separate Councillor training and expenses budget should be created so this can clearly be an individual item in future budgets, and it was agreed that a Councillor expenses policy to a full Council future item.

At this point of the meeting it was noted that Mr Norman would like to step down from his role as maintaining the Green End bus shelter and the War Memorial, so it was agreed that Cllr. Gurney to seek quotes for an alternative contractor to undertake the War Memorial maintenance. It was noted that Mr Norman would continue with his work up until December so it would be tidy for the remembrance service in November.

In terms of the Green End bus shelter cleaning it was discussed that there does need to a replacement bin placed here, as the current facility is very old and no longer practical. It was agreed that an application to be made to the Borough Councillor Ward Fund for a new green or black litter bin, like the facility installed at the Ravensden Road/Hookhams Lane junction, the Clerk to follow up. Cllr. Gurney agreed to look into the removal of the existing bin once a replacement has been sourced.

There was discussed an approach by a local resident who had expressed taking on the bus shelter cleaning at Green End as a volunteer. They had registered with the Borough Council as a local Street Champion and the Clerk to check with the Parish Council insurers if there are any appropriate assessments or items that need to be in place to satisfy the insurers. The Clerk to feed back and ask the volunteer if they would be happy to carry out this role from the end of this year for a six month period. Cllr. Gurney agreed to meet the individual at the shelter to go through any items that needed to be.

e) Application for Grants – supporting information from the organisations had been circulated to all Councillors prior to the meeting. Each organisation was considered in turn, the Renhold Sports Club grant was discussed and it was noted they had further reduced the insurance premium cost down. It was agreed by the Committee to award a grant of £500 to the Renhold Sports Club.

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The Churchyard maintenance was discussed and supporting information, it was felt that a contribution of £500 be made towards the annual maintenance as well as a one off £250 towards the required tree work which the Committee approved. It was noted that when reviewing the quotes for the tree work, the preferred tree surgeon was not local.

The Village Magazine supporting information was reviewed by those present, it was noted that the grant being requested is for 2015, not over the Council's financial year. The request was for £1,737, the Councillors felt on review of the information provided and that this would be a reduction in the grant provided in the previous year, it was agreed to award a grant of £1,737. The Committee asked the Clerk to highlight when responding to the Village Magazine that their efforts for collating this publication every month are greatly appreciated, and that it is pleasing to see a reduction in the printing costs of the magazine. The Councillors were also mindful with the future workings potentially of a village website facility that this would bring a potential increase from an advertising perspective so this may need to be a future consideration for the Magazine in terms of the advertising rates they charge.

It was also discussed that as it would shortly be time for the full Council to review and set a precept/budget for 16/17 in January that in the interest of being fair in the next magazine article information to be included on how village organisations or groups can apply for financial assistance, highlighting the application form and accompanying accounts information that needs to be provided to the Parish Council.

f) Invoices to be paid - the following invoices were presented and unanimously agreed to be paid as were already included within the budget for the year: British Legion Poppy Appeal, remembrance donation of £25.00, A R Worboys grass cutting invoice for £461.45, and Barnicoat Ltd clerking service for September for £557.36.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: - To be arranged.

Meeting closed at 10.30pm.

Signed

Dated