

# HALSTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

## MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 19 JULY 2012 AT 18.00 IN THE PAVILION, STATION ROAD

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Blundell, Chairman of the Finance Committee  
Cllr. David Taylor, Chairman of the Parish Council  
Cllr. Jeff Baldwin  
Cllr. Terry Brooker

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Clerk

The meeting convened at 18.02

### 1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr. Taylor proposed Cllr. Blundell there were no other nominations, carried unanimously.

**RESOLVED: Cllr. Blundell was duly elected Chairman for the ensuing year**

### 2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

It was agreed there was no requirement for a Vice Chairman at this time.

### 3 APOLOGIES

All Members were present and signed the attendance register

### 4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS - Nil

### 5 SECTION 137 REQUESTS

#### i. St Margaret's Church already circulated.

This request was for £340 for maintenance and repair to both lawn-mowers used for cutting the church amenity grass areas. The Committee discussed this request. It was noted that £450 had been given to St Margaret's towards a replacement boiler in the last financial year, £200 in 2009 and £200 in 2008. It was proposed by Cllr. Baldwin, seconded by Cllr Blundell that a recommendation be made to Council that £100 should be given to St Margaret's Church, carried unanimously.

#### ii. CAB already circulated

Council had been unable to support CAB in 2011.

It was proposed by Cllr. Baldwin, seconded by Cllr Blundell that a recommendation be made to Council that £100 should be given to CAB, carried unanimously.

#### VAWK/VSU - providers of the Youth Zone Bus.

The Bus visited Halstead at Easter and a S137 payment of £100 was made. Further requests have been made for the next two visits. The Committee discussed this request and agreed that the budget was extremely tight for this financial year and no further support could be given at this time. The Clerk will advise Mr Waite from VAWK of this.

### 6 PAVILION

#### Damage to the panic bar on the double doors fronting the Recreation Ground.

A verbal estimate had been received for £250 to supply and fit a new panic bar. A panic bar was been purchased for £94.85 and Cllr. Brooker had fitted this free of charge.

It was agreed that the damage was accidental and probably due to wear and tear. Cllr. Brooker was thanked for his work.

### 7 CLEANER

Miss Fisher had formally given her written resignation on 18 July.

Two people who had indicated interest in the job had declined. The Clerk had met with a local cleaning business 'Elements', cleaners of the Primary School. A quotation had been received but was beyond Council's budget.

It was agreed that the Clerk would advertise the position on the noticeboard and on the website.

It was agreed that the Clerk would ascertain the cost of electric hand-driers instead of the expense hand-towels.

It was agreed that the Clerk would ascertain whether 'Elements' which provided all cleaning materials included hand-towel and toilet rolls in this.

The Clerk has two more people to interview and another company to meet. Currently the Clerk is cleaning the buildings.

### 8 INFORMATION

#### 8.1 Consultation on Payment Procedures of Parish & Community Councils.

The proposal is for Councils to be able to use electronic banking to make payments and purchases without following the usual process of at least two councillors signing cheques. The Consultation indicates that the proposal will release Council from the restraints of the current procedure and make financial savings.

A system of internal control would need to be introduced to cover any changes to protect both Council and the Clerk.  
Council banks with NatWest Bank: there are no bank charges; Council cannot have a credit card but a card is available on the account to be used only for electronic banking where by the Clerk would provide a list of payees and work from these.  
Online purchases would still have to be made by the Clerk and reimbursed, therefore any discount on internet prices are passed to Council  
There is no requirement to change from the cheque system with two from seven signatures already in operation.  
The Committee believed that the system used is working and Halstead Parish Council should retain it.  
It was noted that the proposed changes could benefit large councils.

8.2 Tax-base setting procedures.

Documents were circulated for information

8.3 Thames Water - Parish Room

A representative from Thames Water had visited site and after turning off the water to the Parish Room agreed that there was a leak between the property and the meter. The meter is also faulty, has a cracked housing and runs continuously: this will be replaced.

8.4 The Clerk advised that her computer was ten years old and she requires new software, scanner and processor/tower to bring her working systems up to date. These items will have to be purchased in the very near future.

It was agreed to put to Council that this be depreciated quarterly over a given period as with the last computer.

The Meeting closed at 19.30