

**Minutes of a meeting of the
FINANCE COMMITTEE
held on
Monday, 29th September 2008 in the Committee Room
Freight House, Bradley Way, Rochford**

Councillors present: Chairman R Mitchell, Mrs E Chippette, J Dickson, Mrs H Glynn, K Holmes, V Leach, D Weir & Mrs M Weir.

Also Present: Cllrs Mrs A Heath & R Patient.

- 1. To receive apologies for non-attendance at meeting:**
Cllr Mrs M Dorrell (prior appointment). Members noted and accepted the apologies tendered.
- 2. Declarations of Interest:**
Cllr J Dickson declared a prejudicial interest on item 9.
- 3. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of 14th July 2008 and to approve the destruction of the manuscript notes in respect of that meeting:**
Members accepted the Minutes of 14th July 2008 as a true record and agreed to the destruction of the manuscript notes.
- 4. Action Points:**
The Clerk went through the action list update.
 - He reported item of expenditure under 4037 in 301 (£9695) was in the correct year but in the wrong account.
 - He reported subscriptions for RCCE and Essex Playing Fields Association were renewed.The Chairman asked Members if they were content. Cllr Mrs Glynn proposed to close the items and Cllr Mrs Chippette seconded.
- 5. Financial Report:**
The Clerk went through the accounts and advised there was a slight overspend as a consequence of the temporary employment of Sam Abrams. The Chairman asked Members if they were content and Members accepted the Financial Report.
- 6. Internal Audit Report 2007-08 (note issues raised in report):**
The Clerk drew Members attention to the Internal Auditors Recommendations. Cllr Patient referred to R4 and asked if investments opportunities were something the Council should investigate. Cllr Mrs Glynn asked how much of the reserves should be invested. Cllr Holmes was concerned about the potential accessibility of monies invested and asked the Clerk to look back at the general reserves position as to how much was likely to be used to avoid withdrawal penalties. The Clerk confirmed to Members the figures of £54,004 in General Reserves and £25K as Earmarked Reserves. Cllr Mrs Glynn asked where the reserves were being held presently. The Clerk informed Members that the current account was held with the minimum balance necessary to smooth operation, a Business Premium Account was held with no withdrawal limitations and a Tracker Account limited to 12 withdrawals per year. Cllr Mrs Glynn proposed that no reinvestment be made at the present time due to the financial climate. Cllr Holmes requested an

amendment that no reinvestment be made at present but in the interim the Clerk investigates other sources of Bond and brings the information to the next Finance Meeting for review. Cllr Dickson seconded the proposal with the amendment. The Chairman asked Members for a show of hands, 5 showed and the motion was carried.

Members queried R1. The Clerk responded that the Council decided against an ordering system. He went on to say 90% of purchases were routine and any unusual purchases were always covered by a letter of authority and this was more appropriate than the ordering system. Cllr Dickson confirmed the regulations stated the Committee listen to the recommendations of the Responsible Financial Officer. Cllr Dickson asked the Clerk if he felt, in his view, the system was sound and the Clerk confirmed it was. Cllr Holmes stated it had been previously minuted that Members accepted that letters of authority were adequate. The Chairman asked Members if they were content and they agreed.

7. Request from GP Committee re. New Christmas Lights (vire in budget):

The Clerk went through the prices of the lights chosen as £1K each times 4 for Golden Cross and £2,850 for British Legion totalling £6,850, excluding any prices for a new set of lights for the Christmas tree or the front of Golden Cross or White Hart shops. Cllr Leach reminded the decision was made to purchase 2 sets of lights for each end of Golden Cross at Full Council and he went on to express a 'mechanical' concern in fitting 2 displays each end due to the down pipe being offset. He felt this was impractical and 1 display at each end would suffice. Cllr Mrs Glynn said it had been realised that the style of light chosen for Golden Cross would not fit. She proposed the Committee ask for a maximum of £6K from reserves to purchase Christmas lighting and revisit the matter on Monday 6th October 2008 for Members to pick out suitable lighting and seek approval from Full Council. Cllr Mrs Chippette seconded. The Chairman asked Members for a show of hands, 4 showed in favour and 3 against. The motion was carried.

8. Letter from E-On re. rise in energy prices:

The Clerk advised that the budgets were set prior to the recent increases in energy prices and due to this there was a need to address the utility budgets. Cllr Leach asked if the Clerk had been approached by the Village Hall for office utilities and the Clerk confirmed the Council had been paying per internal meter for 2-3 years. Members noted.

9. Poppy Appeal:

Cllr Dickson had declared a prejudicial interested and left the meeting for another appointment.

Cllr Mrs Glynn proposed to purchase 2 wreaths (1 to be laid at Rayleigh and 1 at Hawkwell) and to make a donation the total cost of which was £75. This was seconded by Cllr Holmes and Mrs Chippette. The Chairman asked for a show of hands and the motion was carried.

10. Agreement to write donation cheques following summer fayre:

- a) 2nd Hawkwell Scouts (£40)
- b) FSNBF (£30)
- c) ATC (£50)
- d) St. John Ambulance (£50)

Cllr Mrs Glynn proposed the Council make a donation of £50 to each of the above. Cllr Mrs Chippette seconded. The Chairman asked Members for a show of hands, 4 showed in favour and the motion was carried.

11. Subscription Renewal – RHALC (£63):

Cllr Holmes proposed the Council continued to remain a Member of RHALC if the Clerk felt it was valuable. The Clerk confirmed it was and Cllr Mrs Glynn seconded the proposal and the motion was carried.

12. Summary of decisions:

- The Clerk to close the 2 items on the action list.
- No reinvestment of general reserves at the present time but the Clerk to investigate other sources of Bond and bring the information to the next Finance Meeting for review.
- £6K to be taken from reserves to purchase Christmas lighting and revisit on Monday 6th October 2008 for Members to pick out suitable lighting and seek approval from Full Council.
- Purchase 2 wreaths (1 to be laid at Rayleigh and 1 at Hawkwell) and make a donation at a total cost of £75.
- £50 each to be donated to:
 - 2nd Hawkwell Scouts
 - FSNBF
 - ATC
 - St. John Ambulance.
- The Clerk to renew subscription to RHALC.

Chairman