

MEETING OF THE STAFF, POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
held at Blaby Civic Centre, 22-24 Leicester Road, Blaby
at 7.00pm on Tuesday, 17th March 2020

PRESENT: Mrs S Skeemer (Chairman),
Mrs M Broomhead, Mr G Harding, Mr M Wareham, Miss M Small, Miss L Withers (Assistant Manager) & Mrs V Jepson (Manager).

INVITED BUT NOT IN ATTENDANCE: Mr P Akroyd.

S/P.277 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence are received from Cllr Mr M Harbot, the reason for which is approved.

S/P.278 2. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT –

None.

S/P.279 3. STAFFING MATTERS

RESOLVED: Standing Order No.24 is to be invoked. That under Section 100a (4) and Sch.12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that the items involve the likely disclosure of exempt or confidential information. (Confidential Report BPC55).

a) Assistant Manager – Permanent Employment

Our Assistant Manager, Miss Lauren Withers joined the Parish Council on the 1st September 2019 which means her 6-month probationary period ended on the 29th February 2020.

Members considered Miss Withers' permanent employment and the report is noted.

RESOLVED: Miss Withers is to be established as a permanent employee of Blaby Parish Council for her role as Assistant Manager with immediate effect.

b) To Consider Groundstaff Probation

In January & February 2020 members considered the full time groundsman's employment with the Parish Council and the report is noted.

c) Full Time Grounds Person / Handy Person

A job vacancy advert for a replacement full time grounds person / handy person has been advertised.

The successful candidate has been appointed and will start his probationary period on Monday, 23rd March 2020.

d) Events / Clerk Admin Clerk

Members have been issued with a report which is noted.

e) To Consider Office Working Hours

Members considered the working hours of the full time office staff.

AGREED: All members agreed the change to the full-time office staff's working hours to be Monday – Thursday 8:30am – 5:15pm and Friday 9am – 1pm.

f) Work

Due to the situation we are currently in with the coronavirus, options are being viewed to enable the office staff to be able to work from home if necessary.

RESOLVED: Members' agreed to purchase a second-hand laptop at a cost of £175.00 to allow for members of staff to be able to work from home, should the need arise.

g) Coronavirus – Pay

Members considered staff salaries, should they need to self-isolate, work from home or the Government announce a lock down.

AGREED: Members will be led by Government advice.

h) Future Committee & Council Meetings

Members considered if to continue with future committee and council meetings.

AGREED: All future committee and council meetings will be cancelled until further notice. Correspondence can be dealt with via email.

RESOLVED: Standing Order No.24 is to be revoked.

S/P.280 4. TO REPORT UPDATE ON STAFF TRAINING

a) Granting, Exercise & Transferring Rights of Burial

The manager and assistant manager were due to attend a Granting, Exercise & Transferring Rights of Burial training course on Thursday, 2nd April at a cost of £40.00 per delegate but due to Covid-19 this has been cancelled until further notice.

S/P.281 5. TO CONSIDER ROOM HIRE

a) Room Hire

As of Tuesday, 17th March 2020 all room bookings for the Northfield Room and the Acorn Room were cancelled until further notice due to the Covid-19 virus.

b) Barnardo's

Members have been issued with correspondence from the Family Group Conference Facilitator of Barnardo's – North Region regarding allowing Barnardo's free room hire, on an as and when basis.

AGREED: Members agreed that Barnardo's can hire a room free of charge at the Civic Centre if it does not conflict with other bookings.

c) Local Area Coordinator - Blaby

Members considered the report with regards to allowing the Local Area Coordinator to continue to use the Civic Centre meeting rooms free of charge, as she has not been attending her pre-booked room bookings.

AGREED: Members agreed the Blaby Local Area Coordinator can use the room, but these must not be pre-booked. All future bookings will still be free of charge.

d) Existing Tenants

Due to the Covid-19 virus, members considered the existing tenants rent situation and whether there was anything the Parish Council could do to help them.

AGREED: A one month rent reduction could be agreed with the tenants, if necessary.

S/P.282 6. TO CONSIDER THE CLOSURE OF HSBC BANK

Members are informed the HSBC Bank in Blaby will be closing in July 2020.

Members were asked to consider increasing the current petty cash limit from £60.00 to £100.00.

RESOLVED: Amend the financial regulations to show the petty cash increase from £60.00 to £100.00.

AGREED: The manager is to apply for a HSBC Business Deposit Card.

S/P.283 7. TO CONSIDER CORONAVIRUS – ADVICE & INFORMATION

Due to the coronavirus, the manager has made the decision to close the Civic Centre building to the general public until further notice. The office staff will continue to work for as long as possible to help the community, but we must consider the safety of the staff, residents and our tenants and feel this is in line with government guidelines.

AGREED: The staff will continue to work for as long as possible, or until the Government states otherwise.

Members considered correspondence received from De Carle Physiotherapy with regards to the impact on her business this building closure will have.

AGREED: Patients of De Carle Physiotherapy must enter and exit from the physio's rear room door only, there will be no access to any common areas of the Civic Centre.

LRALC

All members have been issued with advice and information from LRALC with regards to the managing of risk of councils being unable to make decisions and authorise expenditure as currently there is no allowance in law for expenditure to be approved anywhere other than in a formal council (or committee) meetings.

AGREED: In response to the Covid-19 outbreak in the UK and in the event that it is not possible to convene a meeting of the council in a reasonable time, the Manager shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the council where such decision cannot reasonably be deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decisions made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations. This delegated authority ceases upon the first meeting of the council after the council meeting at which the delegation was put in place.

S/P.284 8. TO CONSIDER APPLYING FOR THE LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME

All members have been issued with a copy of 'A Guide to the Local Council Award Scheme'.

AGREED: All members agreed they would like the Parish Council to apply for the Local Council Award.

RESOLVED: Pay £50.00 for the registration fee

RESOLVED: Pay £80.00 for the accreditation fee.

S/P.285 9. TO CONSIDER QUOTATIONS FOR EMERGENCY LIGHT & FIRE ALARM TESTING

All members considered the following quotation for the servicing of the emergency lights and fire alarms.

- £180.00 (Blaby Civic Centre)
- £70.00 (Cemetery Workshop)
- £70.00 (Northfield Park)
- £70.00 (Oakfield Park)

RESOLVED: Accept the total quotation of £390.00 + VAT to have the emergency light and fire alarm testing carried out at the four above locations.

S/P.286 10. TO CONSIDER QUOTATIONS FOR ELECTRIC GATE SERVICE

All members considered a quotation of £115.00 + VAT to carry out a service to the Civic Centre electric gates.

RESOLVED: Accept the quotation of £115.00 + VAT for the electric gates annual service.

S/P.287 11. TO CONSIDER QUOTATIONS FOR FIRE EXTINGUISHER TESTING

All members considered the following quotation for the annual service of the fire extinguishers.

- Blaby Civic Centre: £59.50 + VAT
- Blaby Cemetery: £34.00 + VAT
- Oakfield Park: £34.00 + VAT

As per the agreement at the Staff, Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on the 17th September 2019 (S/P.255) a quotation has been sourced for a fire extinguisher to be installed at Northfield Park. The cost of this will be £70.00 + VAT.

RESOLVED: Accept the quotation of £127.50 + VAT to have the current fire extinguishers serviced and the quotation of £70.00 + VAT to have a new fire extinguisher installed at Northfield Park.

S/P.288 12. TO CONSIDER QUOTATIONS FOR INTRUDER ALARM TESTING

All members considered a quotation of £96.00 + VAT for the annual intruder alarm testing.

RESOLVED: Accept the quotation of £96.00 + VAT for the intruder alarm annual test.

S/P.289 13. TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE FOR LIFT – ALARM/PHONE CONNECTION

At a previous Staff, Policy & Finance committee meeting members were informed the passenger & goods lifts does not have an alarm/phone connected to it and it was agreed to obtain quotations for rectifying the lift phone line.

Unfortunately, we have been unable to resolve this issue and members are asked to consider how they wish to proceed.

AGREED: Members agreed no further action is required to be taken.

S/P.290 14. TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS: -

a) The Turner Educational Foundation

All members have been issued with correspondence from The Turner Educational Foundation. They are asking if the Parish Council would be willing to make a small donation to allow the work of the charity to continue.

AGREED: The application has been withdrawn due to no accounts being provided.

AGREED: Add this item to a future agenda once the last audited accounts have been received.

S/P.291 15. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AFTER ISSUE OF AGENDA: FOR INFORMATION ONLY

a) **To Report Update from the last Staff, Policy & Finance committee meeting**
Agreed Actions

Members were issued with a report of AGREED actions from the previous staff, policy & finance committee meeting.

TO CONSIDER ELECTRICAL WORKS QUOTATIONS RECEIVED - CIVIC CENTRE:

RESOLVED: Accept quotation number 2 at a cost of £270.00, including VAT for electrical works to be carried out at Blaby Cemetery & Blaby Civic Centre.

- This work was completed before Christmas 2019.

TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE FOR LIFT – ALARM/PHONE CONNECTION

AGREED: Cllr Mr Wareham to recommend an appropriate company to resolve the issue. Contact details were given, BPC made contact, but no further action has been taken as the company never replied back.

- This has been discussed further at tonight's meeting with no further action to be taken.

TO REVIEW & CONSIDER COUNCIL POLICIES

Powers / Functions Delegated to Committees

AGREED: Members considered and approved the council's powers / functions delegated to committee policy and wish to remove the Staffing and Appeals committee section from this policy.

- Staffing & Appeals committee has been removed from this document.

Code of Conduct

AGREED: Members considered and approved the existing code of conduct until the new National Association of Local Councils (NALC) document has been received. Once received members will then consider if they wish to adopt the new code of conduct or remain with the Council's existing one.

- NALC new document has not yet been received; this will be added to a future agenda once document has been received.

TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS: -

£20 pays for a Marie Curie nurse to look after someone in their home for 1 hour.

AGREED: Request a copy of the Marie Curie's last audited accounts, once received add this item to the next Staff, Policy & Finance committee agenda for further consideration.

- A copy of the latest financial accounts from Marie Curie have been requested but not yet received.

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AFTER ISSUE OF AGENDA: FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Citizens Advice Leicestershire

AGREED: Members' are happy to continue to support Citizens Advice and continue to offer them the use of Northfield Room free of charge.

- Citizens Advice are happy to continue using the Northfield Room every Monday afternoon.

Blaby District Council – High Street Support Co-Ordinator

AGREED: The Chairman, Manager, and Cllr Mrs Skeemer will meet with Ms O'Doherty from Blaby District Council to discuss this matter.

The Blaby District Council's High Street Support Co-Ordinator will utilise the Northfield Room free of charge every other Tuesday from 9.30am – 2.30pm.

AGREED: Add an 'AGREED ACTIONS' agenda item to all future committee agendas to report their progress.

b) Events

Oakfield Park Summer Fun Day

AGREED: Cancel the event on 27th June 2020 and reschedule for 5th September 2020.

Christmas Light Switch On 2020

AGREED: No amendments to be made at present.

S/P.292 16. CHAIRMAN'S TIME

Thank you all for attending.

MEETING CLOSED: 8:35pm