

**MEETING OF THE STAFF, POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**held at Blaby Civic Centre, 22-24 Leicester Road, Blaby**  
**at 7.00pm on Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019**

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

**S/P.259 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence are received from Cllr Mrs Broomhead and Cllr Mr Akroyd, the reasons for which are approved.

**S/P.260 2. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT -**

None.

**S/P.261 3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

**AGREED:** Due to the recent death of Cllr Mr Sheikh, Cllr Miss Small is elected Vice-Chairman for the remaining 2019/20 financial year for the Staff, Policy & Finance committee.

**S/P.262 4. 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 BPC51).

**a) Probationary Reviews**

Probationary reviews were carried out on Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019 for the following employees:-

- Assistant Manager
- Events/Funding/Admin Clerk
- Full Time Groundsman

**b) Events / Funding / Admin Clerk – Permanent Employment**

Our events/funding/admin clerk, Mrs Collings joined the Parish Council on the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019 and her 6-month probationary period ended on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

Members considered Mrs Collings permanent employment and the report is noted.

**RESOLVED:** Mrs Collings is to be established as a permanent employee of Blaby Parish Council for her role as Events / Funding / Admin Clerk with immediate effect.

**c) To Consider Christmas Working Hours**

**AGREED:** The office & ground staff will be on annual leave after the Carol Service on Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> December 2019 until Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2020.

The security gate at Oakfield Park will remain open during the Christmas holidays from Tuesday, 24<sup>th</sup> December 2019 until the evening of Thursday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2020 due to annual holidays.

**d) Employee Benefits**

Members considered employees benefits and the report is noted.

Holiday Entitlement

Members considered employees annual holiday entitlement with regards to increasing the minimum 20 days per year to 23 days per year, the reason for this is as the Parish Council closes during the Christmas period each year and all employees have to use 3 days of their own annual leave entitlement to cover the Parish Council Christmas shut down.

**AGREED:** With immediate effect all employees of Blaby Parish Council will receive an additional 3 days annual leave per year.

Loyalty Scheme

Reward for long service boost staff morale and members considered a long service rewarded scheme.

**AGREED:** All employees of Blaby Parish Council will receive the following loyalty scheme additional holidays with immediate effect:-

- 10 Years' Service – Additional 5 days holiday
- 15 Years' Service – Additional 5 days holiday

**e) Pension Contributions**

All members have been issued with the following correspondence received from Leicestershire County Council's Pension department:-

- 2019 Valuation Employer Results Report
- Draft – Funding Strategy Statement
- Draft – Pension Investment Strategy Statement

**RESOLVED:-** Increase the Employer Pension Contribution rate from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 to 26.59%.

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

**S/P.263      5. STAFF TRAINING**

a) PAT Testing

Our full-time groundsman, has recently attended and passed a PAT (Portable Appliance Testing) course. Before the end of the year all electrical items at the Civic Centre, Cemetery, Northfield Park & Oakfield Park will be PAT tested.

b) IOSH Managing Safely

There is an IOSH Managing Safely course which is ideal for anyone who has day to day responsibility for activities with implications for the health, safety and well-being of themselves, colleagues or anyone affected by their organisation's activities.

**DECLINED:** Members' agreed that the Manager does not need to attend the course as the Parish Council already have a Health & Safety company in place.

c) Equipment Checklists

All ground staff have completed their Equipment Safety Checklists for the equipment that they use. These will be reviewed annually.

**S/P.264 6. TO CONSIDER ELECTRICAL WORKS QUOTATIONS RECEIVED**

At the last Staff, Policy & Finance committee meeting members considered the annual Health & Safety site visit report and have been issued with quotations for the works required to be carried out.

**Civic Centre:**

- Supply and install 1x Led emergency bulkhead light at the Civic Centre

**Cemetery:**

- Supply and install 1x twin spot emergency fitting with self-test mode
- Supply and install 1x mains smoke alarm

<b><u>Quotation 1</u></b> <b>£200.00 Inc VAT</b>	<b><u>Quotation 2</u></b> <b>£270.00 Inc VAT</b>	<b><u>Quotation 3</u></b> <b>£533.66 Inc VAT</b>
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**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.

**S/P.265 7. TO REPORT UPDATE ON THE COUNCILS INSURANCE COMPANY**

Following the acquisition of Stackhouse Poland Limited, by the Gallagher group of companies, the Council's insurance have been working to integrate their business.

The next stage of this process will be that, effective 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019, the insurance activity of Came & Company Local Council Insurance clients, will start to be arranged and administered under the Gallagher legal entity.

**S/P.266 8. TO CONSIDER CORRESPONDENCE FOR LIFT – ALARM/PHONE CONNECTION**

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

We have investigated having the telephone line in the lift rectified but have been unsuccessful as at first, we contacted the lift supplier who told us to contact BT. After contacting BT, we were told to contact our service provider, Talk Talk, who then told us to contact the lift company.

**AGREED:** Cllr Mr Wareham to recommend an appropriate company to resolve the issue.

**S/P.267 9. TO CONSIDER ACCOUNTS & CEMETERY SUPPORT & MAINTENANCE FEES**

Members have been issued with a letter confirming fees and charges for 2020/2021 for our accounts and cemetery computer package support fees.

<b>Software Module</b>	<b>Support &amp; Maintenance Fee (Per Computer)</b>
Omega Accounts	£260.00 x 1
Cemetery & Memorials	£193.00 x 1
Making Tax Digital	£59.00 x 1
Year End Closure and Annual Return Preparation	£560 per day plus 45p mile mileage.

**RESOLVED:** Members approved the cemetery and account support fees for 2020/2021.

**S/P.268 10. TO REVIEW THE COUNCIL’S LEVEL OF INSURANCE – FIDELITY GUARANTEE**

The Council’s Fidelity Guarantee covers all members and employees against fraud or error, and it is currently set at £300,000.00.

The figure is based upon the following calculation: -

Half the total Precept 2019/20	£156,583.50 (£313,167)
Council Reserves	<u>£98,826</u> (End March 2019).
	<b>£250,409.50</b>

**RESOLVED:** The Fidelity Guarantee Limit is to remain at £300,000.

**S/P.269 11. TO CONSIDER RISK MANAGEMENT**

All members considered the 2019 risk management document.

**AGREED:** Members approved the risk management document; the manager and chairman signed and dated the document.

**S/P.270 12. TO REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL AUDIT**

The Staff, Policy & Finance Committee is to carry out an Annual Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Audit. This review is the responsibility of the Council and may not be delegated to the Responsible Financial Officer.

The Council’s Financial Regulations were reviewed on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018, minute ref: S/P.214k) & 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2019, minute ref: S/P.271).

The Assets Register has been considered by each Committee during the fiscal year; the Policies are updated upon receipt of any new/replacement items.

The appointment of an Internal Auditor for the 2019/20 Financial Year was made at the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019 Full Council meeting, minute ref: 1125e).

The review must be balanced to the council’s internal audit needs and usage. It should be designed to provide enough assurance for the council that standards are being met and that the work of internal audit is effective.

**An assessment of each of the following is to be made: -**

- The scope of internal audit
- Independence
- Competence
- Relationships
- Audit planning and reporting

**Evidence of Achievement**

- Internal audit work is planned
- Understanding the whole organisation its needs and objectives
- Be seen as a catalyst for change
- Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives
- Be forward looking
- Be challenging
- Ensure the right resources are available

**Internal Audit Review Checklist**

Members completed the Internal Audit Review Checklist Parts 1 & 2.

**Approve Internal Audit Review Part 1 Meeting Standards & Part 2 Characteristics of Effectiveness**

All Members have been issued with a copy of the Internal Audit Review (Parts 1 & 2).

Members completed the Internal Audit Review Checklist Part 1 – Meeting the Standards and Part 2 – Characteristics of Effectiveness: -

The Council appointed its Internal Auditor on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019, Min. 1125e).

The following reviews have been conducted during 2019/20.

<b><u>Meeting the Standards – Part 1</u></b>		
1.	Scope of Internal Audit	Yes (11 <sup>th</sup> June 2019)
2.	Independence	Yes
3.	Competence	Yes
4.	Relationships	Yes
5.	Audit Planning and Reporting	Yes (11 <sup>th</sup> June 2019)

**Characteristics of Effectiveness – Part 2**

- Internal audit work is planned Yes
- Understanding the whole organisation its needs and objectives Yes
- Be seen as a catalyst for change Yes
- Add value and assist the organisation in achieving its objectives Yes
- Be forward looking Yes
- Be challenging Yes
- Ensure the right resources are available Yes

**AGREED:** That the Internal Audit Review Checklist Part 1 – Meeting the Standards and Part 2 – Characteristics of Effectiveness, as completed, is approved.

**AGREED:** The Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit is to be reviewed by the Staff, Policy & Finance Committee each November.

**S/P.271 13. TO REVIEW & CONSIDER COUNCIL POLICIES**

**a) General Polices 1 – 27**

**AGREED:** Members considered and approved the Councils general policies from 1 – 27 with no amendments required.

**b) Employment Polices 1 – 14**

**AGREED:** Members considered and approved the Councils employment policies from 1 – 14 with no amendments required.

**c) Standing Orders**

**AGREED:** Members considered and approved the Councils Standing Orders with no amendments required.

**d) 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.

**e) 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.

**f) Financial Regulations**

Members have been issued with a copy of the Councils current financial regulations along with a copy of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) model financial regulations 2019 for consideration.

**AGREED:** Members considered and approved the financial regulations and agreed to continue with the Councils existing ones with no amendments required.

**S/P.272 14. TO CONSIDER 2020/21 BUDGETARY REQUIREMENTS & POSSIBLE NEW PROJECTS**

**RESOLVED:** Members agreed the budget figures for the 2020/21 financial year and these will be discussed further at the precept meeting due to be held in January 2020.

**S/P.273 15. TO CONSIDER SUBSCRIPTIONS: -**

**a) SLCC**

The managers Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) membership is due for renewal priced at £348.00.

**RESOLVED:** Renew the manager's SLCC membership priced at £348.00.

**S/P.274 16. TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS: -**

**a) Marie Curie Donation**

All members have been issued with correspondence from the Marie Curie charity and have requested a donation from the Parish Council for funding towards their nurses who support the local community of Blaby.

£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.

**S/P.275 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AFTER ISSUE OF AGENDA: FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**a) Citizens Advice Leicestershire**

Citizen Advice Leicestershire is seeking our continued support to continue to provide free, independent, impartial and confidential advice that the people of Blaby rely on to solve their problems.

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

**b) Blaby District Council – High Street Support Co-Ordinator**

The new Blaby District Council High Street Support Co-Ordinator visited the office to enquire if there was a spare desk for her to use as she wished to work from the Parish Councils office on Tuesday's & Thursdays.

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

**S/P.276 17. CHAIRMAN'S TIME**

Thank you all for attending.

**MEETING CLOSED: 8:45pm**