

**MEETING OF THE STAFF, POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**held in the Oakfield Room, Blaby Civic Centre, 22-24 Leicester Road, Blaby**  
**at 7pm on Tuesday, 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023**

**PRESENT:** Mr G Harding (Chairman),  
Mr P Akroyd, Ms L Bolton, Mrs M Broomhead, Mr G Harding, Mrs S Skeemer,  
Miss M Small, Mr M Wareham, Mrs S Clifton (Deputy Manager) & Mrs V Jepson (Manager).

**S/P.460 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – None.**

**S/P.461 2. TO RECEIVE MEMBERS DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE OF CONDUCT**  
None.

**S/P.462 3. STAFFING MATTERS**

**a) Staff Training**

**Brush Cutter & Strimmer**

At the last committee meeting members considered brush cutter and strimmer training for the two full-time grounds staff, the senior grounds man has reported he doesn't feel the need for either of them to attend the Brush Cutter & Strimmer training course.

**Full-Time Groundsman**

- PA1 – Safe Use of Pesticides Foundation Module - £212.00
- PA6a – Safe Use of Handheld Application - £260.00

The full-time grounds man has been booked onto the above training course as agreed at the last committee meeting.

- Chainsaw Maintenance & Cross Cutting

At the last committee meeting members wished to re-consider the chainsaw maintenance and cross cutting training course for the full-time grounds man.

The Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross cutting Level 2 training is a two-day course to prepare the trainee to take the City and Guilds Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting practical assessment.

The cost of the Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting Level 2 course is priced at £511.00.

**RESOLVED:** The full-time groundsman is to attend the Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross Cutting course priced at £511.00.

**b) Office Working Hours**

The manager and deputy manager left the meeting at this point.

The office staff have requested a change of working hours, currently the manager and deputy are contracted to work 37 hours per week, Monday – Friday, the request is for

members to consider the office staff working 9 days instead of 10 days over a two week period meaning they both get 1 day off every two weeks (both staff members wouldn't have the same day off) the 7 ½ hours of the 10<sup>th</sup> day will be made up over the 9 working days.

After a lengthy discussion and a vote being taken for the change of hours as follows:-

- Yes = 4
- No = 2
- Abstain = 1

**AGREED:** The vote is carried for the manager and the deputy manager to work a two-week rolling rota of 9 days working and 1 day off and the hours from the 10<sup>th</sup> day will be made up over the 9 working days.

**AGREED:** This is a trial for 3 months.

**AGREED:** Add this item to the next Staff, Policy & Finance committee agenda for further discussion.

**AGREED:** Due to loan working no members of the public are allowed into the office if there is only 1 member of staff in the office. All visitors are required to make an appointment prior to visiting.

#### **c) SLCC Practitioners Conference**

The Manager attended one day of the SLCC Practitioners Conference on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023.

#### **d) Staff Reviews**

All members of staff had a staff review on Thursday, 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

These reviews were carried out by the Chair of Staff, Policy & Finance, Mr Harding and the Vice-Chair of Staff, Policy & Finance, Miss Small, for the ground staff reviews the Chair of the Estates & Community committee, Mr Wareham was also in attendance.

A verbal report was given by the Chair of the Staff, Policy & Finance committee.

**AGREED:** The next staff reviews are to be held during the Easter half term holidays with the same committee members being present.

### **S/P.463 4. TO CONSIDER THE COUNCILS BANKING PROCEDURE**

At the December full Council meeting members discussed the councils bank account issues and the bank mandate, it was queried if the council could discontinue issuing cheques and just use internet banking as it is more convenient and less time consuming and it would also assist with reducing bank charges.

It is confirmed other Councils have discontinued writing cheques and make all payments via BACS, they have agreed this in their financial regulations and all payments are approved at the full council meeting in our usual way.

Members have been issued with a copy of the Councils current financial regulations with the following suggested amendment under item number 6.3 :-

**6. Instructions for the making of payments**

*6.3 - All payments shall be affected by BACS, cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of council.*

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL:** Members of the Staff, Policy & Finance committee wish to move away from writing cheques and agree that all payments will be made by BACS or by using the Council's commercial card, all transactions will be approved at the relevant full council meeting with a proposer and a seconder in the usual manor.

**S/P.464 5. TO CONSIDER THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME FUND VALUATION 2022**

Blaby Parish Council currently pay 26.5% contribution rates, but is recommended that as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 this is reduced to 21% for the next 3 years as our pot of money is up to 133% which is fully funded and only really needs to be at 120%, by reducing the percentage this should bring the Council into line.

This will then be re-looked at in 3 years' time when it is reviewed again.

**RESOLVED:** Accept the proposed recommendation from the council's pension provider to reduce the Councils pension contribution rate from 26.5% to 21%.

**S/P.465 6. TO CONSIDER QUOTATION RECEIVED FOR RIALTAS CLOUD MOVE**

All members have been issued with an update report from the November agenda item where members considered and approved the quotation for a new computer backup system.

Since this decision was made a cost has been received from Rialtas who provide the Councils Cemetery and Accounts package for their 'Rialtas Cloud' priced at £129.17 per month.

Due to the extortionate cost from Rialtas and several conversations which have taken place between the manager and the council's IT company the following options are proposed for members consideration: -

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
<p>Move to Microshade Hosted Platform – Microshade Costs £100 initial &amp; £57 pcm. Lakul Costs £800 Initial &amp; £90 pcm</p> <p>IT say from what I can understand looking at the quote, that would be a total change to your entire IT system. I believe they are</p>	<p>Replace Server with Modern Equivalent, 5 Year Warranty and Upgrade Backup System</p> <p>Lakul Costs £3,500 Initial &amp; £160 pcm (we currently pay £140 pcm the additional £20 pcm is because Lakul will</p>	<p>Keep Current Server, 12 Month Extended Warranty (next business day) and Upgrade Backup System</p> <p>Lakul Costs £1,450 Initial &amp; £170 pcm (we currently pay</p>	<p>Keep Current Server, No Warranty Extension, Reducing Server Reliance and Upgrade Backup System</p> <p>Lakul Costs £1,250 Initial &amp; 160pcm (we currently pay</p>

<p>suggesting you move not only Rialtas, but everything over to their servers. This would mean you would need an Internet connection to do anything at all (even open a word document on your computer). If your Internet wasn't good enough or went down you wouldn't be able to do anything. I wouldn't say it is a setup that is used very much in my experience, but it is a way of allowing older software to be 'hosted' by actually hosting everything. It would also totally change how you work with us, and you would find yourself with a 4 groups of people to report problems to (Rialtas, Microshade, Internet company and us). We would happily work some kind of deal out for you to reflect the change, if you wanted to continue to work with us, but we would only be able to support you with your computer hardware problems, local network and email, because most of your systems would be out of our control.</p>	<p>need to maintain our new backup server alongside our current server).</p> <p>Your systems would stay as they are but with a modern server and backup system installed behind the scenes.</p>	<p>£140 pcm the additional £20 pcm is because Lakul will need to maintain our new backup server alongside our current server).</p> <p>Your systems would again stay as they are, with your current server covered by an extended warranty. We would install the upgraded backup system in the background.</p>	<p>£140 pcm the additional £20 pcm is because Lakul will need to maintain our new backup server alongside our current server)</p> <p>We would reduce your reliance on your current server and move some systems away from it, so you would only be using it for Rialtas systems.</p> <p>In the event of a server failure you would be without Rialtas until we restored your data onto a local PC or onto Rialtas cloud.</p>
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**RESOLVED:** Accept quotation number 4 to keep the Current Server, No Warranty Extension, Reducing Server Reliance and Upgrade Backup System at a cost of £1,250 Initial plus £160 per calendar month (instead of £140 per calendar month).

**S/P.466 7. TO REPORT PAT TESTING UPDATE**

Members have been issued with a copy of the completed PAT testing sheets for the Parish Council and the tenants of the Civic Centre.

The Cemetery and Oakfield Park are still to be completed and will be done by the end of February.

**AGREED:** Quotations are to be sourced and considered for the 2024 PAT Testing as to whether it is more cost effective for the work to be outsourced than carried out by our senior grounds man.

**AGREED:** Add the PAT Testing quotations to the November 2023 Staff, Policy & Finance committee agenda for members consideration.

**S/P.467 8. TO CONSIDER THE CIVIC CENTRE REFUGE**

On Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023 the office staff were presented with overflowing rubbish bags in the first-floor kitchen, the cleaner hadn't been in over the weekend due to her being on annual leave. This is not the first time the bins have been left in this state, after issues with excessive rubbish overflowing and the bins not being emptied until the cleaner comes in at the weekend, so an additional waste bin had already been provided.

**To Consider the Commercial Waste Bins at the Civic Centre**

The waste bins in the Civic Centre car park are increasingly being filled with the Tenants commercial waste. The bins are not part of the commercial waste contract currently in place.

Members considered the following Cemetery waste collection quotations: -

<u>Quotation 1</u>	<u>Quotation 2</u>
2 x 1100 Litre container bin collected weekly from the Cemetery (this is 2022 charge)	2 x 1100 Litre container bin collected weekly from the Cemetery
<b>£2,598.96</b>	<b>£1,331.20 + VAT</b>

**RESOLVED:** Accept quotation number 2 for 2 x 1100 Litre container bin collected weekly from the Cemetery at a total cost of £1,331.20 + VAT.

Members considered the following Civic Centre waste collection quotations: -

<u>Quotation 1</u>	<u>Quotation 2</u>
3 x 240 Litre refuse bins shared Tenants and Office, collected weekly from the Civic Centre	1 x 660 Litre mixed waste container shared Tenants and Office bin, collected weekly from the Civic Centre,
<b>£1,000.00</b>	<b>£559.52 + VAT</b>

**RESOLVED:** Accept quotation number 2 for 1 x 660 Litre mixed waste container shared Tenants and Office bin, collected weekly from the Civic Centre at a total cost of £559.52 + VAT.

**S/P.468 9. TO CONSIDER THE CIVIC CENTRE INTRUDER ALARM ANNUAL MAINTENANCE QUOTATION**

All members have been issued with a quotation for the annual maintenance charge of the Civic Centre intruder alarm:-

<b>Quotation 1</b>
Yearly maintenance charge Civic Centre intruder alarm
<b>£131.00 + VAT</b>

**RESOLVED:** Accept the quotation received from the intruder alarm contractor for its annual maintenance priced at £131.00 + VAT.

**S/P.469 10. TO CONSIDER THE 2022 HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT**

All members have been issued with a copy of the Health & Safety Assessment / Inspection document dated the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

Some members present requested that the Chairman of the Staff, Policy & Finance committee and the manager work on this item together and then report back to members at the next full Council meeting with their recommendations. Cllr Miss Small wished for it to be noted that she feels this agenda item should be dealt with at this evenings committee meeting and not to be deferred to a later date.

**AGREED:** Add this agenda item to the March Full Council agenda for members consideration.

**S/P.470 11. CORRESPONDENCE**

**a) Blaby Civic Centre – Electrical Works**

The fluorescent light fittings have been changed in the ground floor kitchen of the Civic Centre due to them being old and dangerous, the 3 lights have been replaced with 3 x new LED lights which are cheaper to run than the old fluorescent ones, the cost of the works is £156.49.

**RESOLVED:** Pay the invoice for the replacement Civic Centre kitchen lights priced at £156.49.

**S/P.471 12. CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED AFTER ISSUE OF AGENDA: FOR INFORMATION ONLY – None.**

**S/P.472 13. CHAIRMAN'S TIME**

Thank you all for attending.

**MEETING CLOSED: 8.33PM**