

## **FERNHURST PARISH COUNCIL**

A meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee took place at Fernhurst Village Hall on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2012 at 6.30 p.m.

**PRESENT:** Mr. R. Chapman (Chairman)  
Mrs. H. Bicknell  
Mr. J. Cottam  
Mrs. M. Timms  
Mr. G. Walls

### **APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE:**

Mrs. S. Ogilvy

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr. D. Bleach (Clerk)

#### **1. Election of Chairman**

It was proposed by Mrs. Timms and seconded by Mr. Walls that Mr. Chapman be re-elected as Chairman. There being no other nominations, Mr. Chapman was duly elected.

#### **2. Election of Vice Chairman**

It was proposed by Mr. Cottam and seconded by Mrs. Mrs. Timms that Mr. Walls be elected as Vice Chairman. There being no other nominations, Mr. Walls was duly elected.

#### **3. Consideration of Final Internal Audit Report for 2011/2012**

Mr. Walls asked whether the monthly budget report could be improved by the accounting system being able to provide a forecast of future income and expenditure and was advised by the Clerk that the Alpha system currently in use could not provide that information. Mr. Walls offered to look into the possible use of the Omega accounting system, produced by the same company, as an alternative.

Mr. Walls asked why the overall reserves were at such a high level and was informed that much of the general reserve had arisen due to the sale of Parish Council land a number of years ago. It had always been intended that some of that reserve would be used to make improvements to the village, such as improving the paths and general appearance of the Crossfield area. That scheme is still being investigated by the Parish Council and West Sussex County Council.

Mr. Cottam added that the Parish Council was being prudent in increasing its precept by £10k per annum in case the need should arise to take on services that the District or County Councils could no longer provide due to their reducing budgets. As the £10k for the previous year had not been needed it had been used to help support the current year's budget.

The audit report referred to the intention to examine and update if necessary the Council's Standing Orders and it was agreed that this work should take place in November/December 2012.

It was proposed by Mr. Walls and seconded by Mr. Cottam that the Internal Auditor's report be accepted.  
Carried.

#### **4. Risk Assessment**

Mr. Cottam asked that the risk assessment policy should be reviewed prior to the completion of the annual audit return.

Members considered each aspect of the risk assessment policy and considered that it remained valid apart from a need for bi-annual inspections of the War Memorial. The Clerk was asked to arrange for such inspections to be carried out by the Council's safety inspector in early spring and early autumn.

It was proposed by Mr. Walls and seconded by Mrs. Bicknell that the Risk Assessment Policy be confirmed with the addition of the war memorial inspections. Carried.

#### **5. Consideration of Annual Accounts 2011/2012**

It was noted that there was an error in the names of the Councillors listed at the beginning of the Final Accounts.

Subject to that being amended, it was proposed by Mr. Walls and seconded by Mr. Cottam that the accounts are recommended to the Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June for approval and adoption and signing. Carried.

#### **6. Consideration of Annual Audit Return for 2011/2012**

The figures on the audit return were compared with those provided by the Council's accountants and were found to be correct.

There was discussion with regard to question 8 of the annual governance return as to whether the Council had considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions were likely to have a financial impact on the Council and it was considered that there were no such risks.

It was proposed by Mr. Cottam and seconded by Mr. Chapman that the Committee would recommend to the Council meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> June that the Audit Return for 2011/2012 be approved and signed. Carried.