

Upper Rissington Parish Council

Village Hall, Hawker Square Upper Rissington, Gloucestershire, GL54 2NT

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Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting Held on Friday 26th June 2015 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr Caroline Maclean (CM) (Chairman), Cllr Brian Hanks (BH) (Vice-Chairman), Dawn Laird (DL)

In attendance: 3 members of the public, Debbie Hill (Clerk)

The Chairman introduced Debbie Hill, the new Clerk and apologised for the number and timing of meetings. This situation has arisen due to the fact there are currently only three councillors available.

1. Apologies: No apologies received.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensation: None.

3. Public Session: No issues were raised by members of the public present. At the end of the meeting an issue was raised concerning dog litter bins by play park not being emptied and the wrong material being used for chippings in playground.

4. Annual Return:

i) To approve the Income & Expenditure Summary - BH reported that the meeting must approve the Annual Return before 30th June and that the timescale was tight given that the return had only been approved by internal auditor last week. The accounts are prepared on a cash received/paid basis. The net cost of running the Village Hall was £6378; down from previous year £8289. The main change is the impact of charging for hall use for the whole year increasing income by £3.5k. The cost of village maintenance was £20k up from £14k in previous year. The biggest change was the expenditure on trees; £5k vs £0. Administration costs were £15k against £13k, with the main change being an increase in the statutory and legal costs. The total cash paid out last year amounted to £41k (net of VH booking fees). Council received a total income of £52k (Precept £42; Grants £6k, bank interest and compensation £0.5k and VAT recovered £4k). Therefore the Council paid out £11.5k less than it received. At the April Meeting, Council noted that it had committed expenditure of £13120 during the year which will be paid out next year; it also increased earmarked funds by £4155. Taking these two points into account means the Council spent and agreed to spend £5759 more than it received. BH proposed to approve the accounts (appendix 3) and CM seconded. The Clerk will display the accounts on the noticeboards.

ii) To approve Section 1 of the Annual Return – BH explained that this shows the Council's accounts in a format required by legislation. Box 1 is the total reserves brought forward from last year. Boxes 2 to 6 present the receipts and payments previously discussed in a statutory format Box 7 then shows the reserves carried forward at the end of the year 31 March 2015, which amount to £71761. Box 9 shows the value of fixed assets owned by the Council - at £18k it is a big reduction from the almost £600,000 reported last year. The decrease is because the return for last year return incorrectly recorded the assets at insurance value rather than what the Council paid to acquire the assets.

The reserves of the Council are £71k, however of the £71k, £24k is earmarked in respect of specific projects such as the defibrillator and car parking spaces; leaving £47k. As noted earlier there is £13k of expenditure committed during this year but which will be paid next year. This expenditure was not in the current year budget and will be met from the reserves brought forward; taken from the £47k that leaves £34K. In January the Council prepared a budget showing payments of £62k and a precept of £49k. The shortfall of £13k being taken from the Council's general reserves. This means that there are only £21k of reserves that are not 'spoken for'. The guidance is that general reserves should amount to between 3 and 12 months of the council's expenditure and be subject to a risk assessment. A council with very predictable expenditure (for example just the cost of a Clerk) would be nearer the bottom of that range; a council with unpredictable expenditure would be nearer the top. Upper Rissington would probably fall in the latter category, but papers where the level of general reserves was risk assessed in setting the precept have not been viewed. The total amount to be spent in the current year is budgeted at £77k (being £62k plus the £13k committed, plus the defibrillator £2k). General reserves of £21k represent just over 3 months' reserves. Before setting the next precept the Council should risk assess the quantum of reserves required. BH proposed to approve Section 1 and DL seconded.

iii) To review Section 4 of the Annual Return – BH stated that Section 4 is completed by the Internal Auditor and the questions mirror those in Section 2. The internal audit report will follow.

iv) To discuss and approve Section 2 of the Annual Return – BH explained that Section 2 covers the governance process that the council had in place to protect taxpayers money. This section had been difficult to complete as the Clerk and RFO responsible for this return were not in place during the year. Completion of this section has therefore been based on the comments from the internal auditor and the decisions and discussions recorded in the minutes. The responses statements were read out and all were agreed in the affirmative except for questions 2 and 3. With regards to question 2, the Council has documented the controls in the Financial Regulations and considers that they amount an adequate system of internal control. There are instances of those controls not being followed and/or a lack of documented evidence that the Council have considered the operation of controls during the year. A regular update on the operation of the Financial Regulations and controls will be incorporated into future Council meetings. With regards to question3, there are a number of instances during the year where proper practices have not been followed, including signing contracts for the supply of gas and electricity for a building not owned or occupied by the Council. It will be ensured that all Councillors attend a training course and a more regular review of actions will be incorporated into Council meetings in the future. BH proposed the annual governance statement and DL seconded.

5. Date of next meeting: The next monthly Parish Council Meeting will be on Monday 6th July 2015, commencing 7.30pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signature of Chairman upon approval of Minutes.....*Carole Maden*..... Date: 6th July 2015