



Chairman: Councillor Barry Frenchman

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Minutes of Spratton Parish Council Resources (Staffing and Strategy) Committee

Held on **Weds 9th July 2014** in the St Andrew's Church Community Room (aka Café Doris) at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr Michael Heaton (Chairman), Cllr Rachel Baillie, Cllr Barry Frenchman, Cllr Jay Tindale and Lynne Compton (Responsible Financial Officer)

- 1.14 PUBLIC FORUM** members of the public and press are invited to address the Committee at its Open Forum (15 mins) – there were no members of the public present.
- 2.14 RESOLUTION TO APPROVE ACCEPTANCE OF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/DISPENSATION REQUESTS**
There were none.
- 3.14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATION REQUESTS** for items on the agenda
There were none.
- 4.14 INTERNET BANKING – Proposed revisions to Financial Regulations to allow internet banking – previously circulated for background NALC Model Financial Regulations (where extract was taken from) to discuss and make resolution.* NALC = National Association of Local Councils**
After lengthy discussions, the following amendments were proposed by Cllr Heaton, seconded by Cllr Frenchman and resolved to be approved by SPC:-
 - a) Internet Banking Addition to Financial Regulations (to be inserted after 5. Banking Arrangements and Cheque)
 - 1.1. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by internet banking, using BACS or “Faster Payments” methods, provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or “Faster Payments” shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every year at the Annual Meeting.
 - 1.2. Evidence is to be retained showing which members approved the payment.
 - 1.3. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
 - 1.4. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Clerk [RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The Bank Mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will

state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

- 1.5. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under "favourites"), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 1.6. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by [two of] the Clerk [the RFO] and [a member]. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.

5.14 SPC FINANCIAL REGULATIONS – additional proposed amendments. The proposed amendments (circulated prior to the meeting) were reviewed and discussed. Cllr Heaton proposed recommendation of the following:-

2. Annual Estimates

2.1 REMOVE:- Each Committee INSERT The RFO and Resources Committee

2.3 Line 1 REMOVE 'estimates' and replace with 'budget'.

Line 3 REMOVE 'estimates' and replace with 'budget'. REMOVE October and REPLACE With November

3. Budgetary Control

3.2 No expenditure may be incurred which will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget. ADD 'without the approval of the SPC Resources Committee'

3.3 Additional Clause 'No expenditure may be incurred which will exceed £500 above above the amount provided in the the revenue budget without the prior approval of Full Council.

3.3 move to 3.6

3.4 INSERT at the beginning 'Notwithstanding Clause 3.2

3.6 REMOVE 'regularly' and INSERT 'monthly (except August), when practicable'

4. Accounting and Audit

4.4 ADD after sentence 1 'An internal scrutineer shall be appointed from SPC Resources Committee at the Annual Meeting of Parish Council'

5. Banking Arrangements and Cheques

5.2 Last sentence REMOVE 'If more appropriate the detail may be shown' INSERT 'The schedule should also be reported in'

5.4 Last sentence ADD 'and the invoice'

6. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

6.1 First sentence, after cheque, ADD 'by any agreed internet banking procedure'

7. PAYMENT OF SALARIES

7.1 ADD new sentence (after final sentence) 'Calculation and preparation for payment may be undertaken by an external payroll agency previously agreed by Council'

9. INCOME

9.8 MOVE to new heading

10. VAT

10.1 MOVED from 9.8

'The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.'

10. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES - RENUMBER now 11.

11. CONTRACTS – RENUMBER NOW 12.

11.1 (b) REMOVE 'provided that these regulations shall not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

- (i) for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
- (ii) for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;
- (iii) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
- (iv) for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;
- (v) for additional audit work of the external Auditor up to an estimated value of £250 (in excess of this sum the Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council);
- (vi) for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and/or are only sold at a fixed price.'

(h) ADD Footer explaining Standing Orders 61,63 and 64

- (i) REMOVE 'When it is to enter into a contract less than **£3,000** in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below **£1,000** and above **£500** the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10 (3) above shall apply.'

The above motions were unanimously resolved to be recommended for recommendation at the next practicable Full Council meeting.

6.14 NALC PRACTITIONERS GUIDE, Safeguarding Public Money (circulated prior to meeting)– SPC Resources Committee noted and did not have any recommendations to make.

7.14 GRANT POLICY – proposed revisions to help assist applicants. Cllr Heaton proposed the following amendments (for approval by Full Council), seconded by Cllr Frenchman

1. Sentence 1 – REMOVE 'to' replace with 'will' REMOVE 'twice a year in November and April. Closing dates for applications will be at the end of October and March' REPLACE with 'as and when submitted
3. REMOVE 'The Parish Council is to consider the applications at a Resources Committee meeting held in April and November each year.' REPLACE with 'The SPC Resources Committee will consider and make recommendations ahead of Parish Council (if practicable)'
4. after 'Committee' ADD 'and/or Parish Council'

Guidelines for Grant Applications

ADD new point 2 'The Parish Council will not award grant aid for the ongoing costs of an organisation'

RENUMBER as applicable.

7. (previously 6) REMOVE 'Any grant awarded must be spent in the financial year it was awarded for.'

REPLACE with 'Any grant must be spent within 12 months of the award'

9. (previously 8.) REMOVE 'which they consider to be inappropriate or against the objectives of the Parish Council'

10. (previously not numbered) INSERT after the end of '12 months from when it was awarded'

8.14 RISK ASSESSMENT previously circulated Titchmarsh Risk Assessment and SPC Risk Assessment – to compare, contrast, review and make resolution as to amendments. After discussion, Cllr Heaton proposed recommendation to Full Council of replacing the SPC Risk Assessment with the adapted Titchmarsh policy, unanimously resolved by SPC Resources Committee. **Attached Paper A. The RFO recommended (as per recent SLCC training day) that the Risk Assessment should be a working document, updated whenever a new project was planned and that a new column should be added entitled "What are the Risks" from 2015.**

9.14 3 YEAR PLAN/BUSINESS PLAN (NALC Recommendation) Example Business Plan (Keswick Town Council) circulated prior to meeting. **To discuss and make recommendation for discussion by Full Council.** After some discussion, Cllr Heaton proposed recommending to Full Council that a 3 year plan should be produced in conjunction with the Mission Statement and that this should be in place by 1st April 2015 (the start of the next financial year), unanimously resolved by SPC Resources Committee.

10.14 INTERNAL CONTROL PROCEDURES (Titchmarsh PC) to discuss and make resolution. After some discussion, SPC Resources Committee resolved that these were a duplication of points already included in Financial Regulations and Standing Orders.

11.14 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a) **Data Protection Issue** – The Clerk had accidentally copied email addresses into the body of an email, on immediately realising the error had recalled the message but this had been un-successful. A complaint had been made and the Clerk had apologised but the complainant had asked for a further response and assurances. SPC Resources Committee drafted a response to the complainant which was subsequently approved by Parish Council. The complainant had accepted the response.

Meeting Closed: 9.40 pm

Chairman Signature.....

Dated:.....

If members of the public would like to receive a copy of the papers for this meeting, please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk. Thank you

Committee Members:

Cllr Michael Heaton (Chairman)

Cllr Barry Frenchman

Cllr Jay Tindale