

**MINUTES OF A MEETING (20) OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE OF CAWSTON PARISH COUNCIL**

**MEETING HELD REMOTELY ON TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2021 AT 7.30 PM**

Members in attendance:	Councillors R. Bishop, (Chairman) and M. Cool.
Guests in attendance:	None
Minutes:	R. Nash (Clerk)
Officers in attendance:	Mrs V. Moody (Facilities & Communication Manager)

Cawston Parish Council, Scholars Drive, Rugby, CV22 7GU

**F20-105 Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sam Bestwick.

**F20-106 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations at this time.

**F20-107 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (19) held on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2021, were considered.

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (19) held on 9<sup>th</sup> February, 2021 are confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**F20-108 Finance Reports**

A report setting out payments arising during the month of February had been circulated and was considered.

Payments requiring approval totalled £12,068.30 including payments of £1454 to Rugby Borough Council and £6513.33 to the Public Works Loan Board. The current account and Community Hall bank reconciliations and bank statements for February had also been circulated and were considered. The Committee was advised that in relation to long-term debtors that there remained no change to the number reported at previous meetings, that the position would continue to be monitored and the Committee advised if write-off approval was needed.

The Clerk advised that a payment of £223.25 due to Rugby Borough Council for commercial waste collection from the Community Hall had been challenged in view of the closure of the Hall during the Coronavirus Pandemic. A response from the Borough Council was awaited.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that current account payments arising in the sum of £12,068.30 are approved;
- (2) that the bank account reconciliations for the period to 28th February are received and approved
- (3) that the position in respect of aged debtors is noted.
- (4) that payment of the invoice for collection of commercial waste in the sum of £223.25 is approved, subject to a satisfactory response being received from Rugby Borough Council.

**Action: Clerk**

**F20-109 Cawston Community Hall**

The Facilities and Communications Manager reported that the Community Hall was now being used by Warwickshire County Council for supporting pupils with special needs and that a receipt in the region of £2,000 was anticipated.

The Hall remained closed to all other users consistent with Government guidelines. In view of the health and safety implications for wider community use, a measured approach would need to be taken to reopening during the period of the Government recovery roadmap commencing on 12<sup>th</sup> April. A proposal on the staged re-opening of the Community Centre would be prepared for consideration at the next meeting.

Quotations had now been received for the replacement of heating manifolds utilising the Council's preferred contractor in view of the complexity of the work involved. The cost was £1,855 (exclusive VAT).

With regard to modification of the rear doors and shutter mechanisms at the Hall, detailed replies from Architects were still awaited. In view of the level of response received, additional quotations would be needed and contact would be made with locally based builders who may be interested in taking on this project.

Linden Homes had responded favourably to the request to assist with erecting a new Noticeboard near the play area of the Cawston extension, including financing the costs associated with the installation. However, the provision of a "welcome to Cawston" sign and raised planter at the South West entrance was on land to be passed to Rugby Borough Council and therefore a formal application would need to be made to the Borough Council in due course.

**RESOLVED**

- (1) that the report of the Facilities and Communications Manager is noted;
- (2) that quotation in respect of repair of the heating system in the sum of £1855 is accepted and the relevant work authorised;

**Action: FCM**

- (3) that the options for enhancements to the external fire doors and shuttering mechanisms at the Community Hall continue to be investigated and reported upon conclusion of discussions with local Architects/building contractors.

**Action: FCM**

- (4) that a report is prepared for the next meeting setting out a timescale for reopening the Community Hall, having regard to the Government recovery roadmap;  
**Action: FCM**
- (5) **to RECOMMEND the Council** that a new Noticeboard is provided at Cawston extension (Linden Homes) with the cost of erection being met by the developer; and  
**Action: Clerk**
- (6) that approval of Rugby Borough Council is obtained for the construction of a raised planter at the entrance to the Cawston extension off Coventry Road.  
**Action: Clerk**

#### **F20-110 Investment opportunities with CCLA**

Following the decision approved at the last meeting, discussion had now taken place with a representative of Corrigans, Independent Financial Advisers. The Committee had sought an initial opinion on the assessment of the suitability of the CCLA Property Fund as an investment vehicle for its accumulated cash balances.

Members of the Committee had been circulated with the response of the Adviser which had identified the following matters:

- volatility in the present property market represented a risk to the Council and it might wish to consider investment in a diverse portfolio to include all asset classes of investments (Property, Equities and Fixed Interest Securities)
- In the event that the Adviser recommends an alternative product to the CCLA property fund, would the Council consider commissioning the alternative report?
- Has the Council considered early redemption of the current outstanding loan and the reinvestment of any balance of its cash reserves in a diverse portfolio in which charges would be lower than for an exclusively property based product?

The Clerk reported that following the above discussion, he had contacted the Public Works Loan Board to establish the early redemption charge on the loan. If this were to be paid in full, the premium payable was £151,636 on the outstanding balance of £268,160. The Council would therefore have an early repayment liability of £421,395.

It was noted that whilst the early repayment settlement was a significant sum, this should be contrasted with the accumulated interest payments that the Council would be paying over the remaining 44 years of the loan.

**RESOLVED** that further consideration of the Council's investment strategy is deferred to the next meeting to permit analysis of the early loan repayment options including possible renegotiation of the term of investment.

**Action: Clerk/Cllr Bishop**

#### **F20-111 Appointment Process – Parish Clerk**

The Clerk reported that, in response to the resolution at the last meeting, a quotation had now been received from Local Council Consultancy (LCC) for assistance with the appointment process for a new permanent Clerk. A

quotation had also been obtained for the work necessary to review the grading of the Post. A copy of the quotations had been circulated prior to the meeting.

It was agreed that the proposal put forward in the respective quotations represented value for money and that acceptance should be recommended to the Council at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March. It was also agreed that the opportunity should be taken to review the grading of the post of Facilities and Communication Manager in conjunction with the Post of Clerk.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND Council**

- (i) That Local Council Consultancy (LCC) is procured to undertake an evaluation exercise of the grading of the Posts of Clerk and Facilities and Communications Manager;
- (ii) That LCC is procured to provide professional support to the appointment process for a permanent Clerk as detailed in the quotation dated 3<sup>rd</sup> March.

**Action: Clerk**

**F20-112 Councillors' reports and items for future agendas**

Councillor Bishop referred to the recent migration of email accounts and data to MS 365 which had generally been successful. However, he had been unable to send emails through his preferred email client without recourse to using private email accounts. This was however an issue that was unlikely to affect other Councillors using the default email server.

**F20-113 Date of next meeting:**

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021, commencing at 7.30 pm.**

The meeting ended at 8.36 pm.