

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held in the Village Hall on Thursday 24th June 2021 at 7.30 pm.

Present Mr I Lamont, Chairman

Mrs M Morrey, Mrs I Mitchell, Mr R Macro, Mr M Chick.

3 members of the public.

Public Forum – nobody wished to speak

Apologies had been received from Mr Sheppard

Declarations of Interest – none

Election of Vice-Chairman

Two Councillors thought that perhaps the election of a Vice-Chairman should be postponed, but the majority was in favour of filling the position in order to support the role of the Chairman.

When asked if he would be willing to be nominated Mr Macro declined as he did not feel he had the time to devote to the role at present.

Mrs Mitchell indicated that she would be willing to be nominated. There were no other nominations. Mr Macro proposed, Mr Chick seconded that Mrs Mitchell be elected Vice-Chairman. Carried.

Mrs Mitchell was of the opinion that this role should rotate annually, giving each Councillor in turn the opportunity to serve. She would not accept nomination next year.

Approve Annual Governance Statement 2020/21 - Section 1

A blank copy of the Annual Governance Statement, together with a copy of the Accounting Statements completed and signed by the Clerk, had been circulated to all Councillors.

The statements on the Annual Governance Statement were considered by the members who agreed that all requirements, except Assertions 4 and 5, had been complied with and would be given a 'Yes' answer. Assertion 4 was to be marked 'No' as the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20 had noted that the Parish Council had failed to make proper provision during the year 2020/21 for the exercise of public rights, since the period for the exercise of public rights did not start on or before 1 September 2020. The Notice of Public Rights for 2020/2021 is given as proof that proper provision has now been addressed.

Assertion 5 was marked 'No' also, due to Covid restrictions and the inability to hold meetings face to face the Council had found it difficult to conduct a review of the Risk Assessment. This failing had been covered by the Internal Audit Report and noted by the Council. A review and update of the Risk Assessment is in progress in line with recommendations made in the Report.

It was proposed by Mr Macro, seconded by Mr Mrs Mitchell, that the Parish Council approves the Annual Governance Statement as completed above. Carried.

The Chairman and Clerk/RFO signed and dated the Annual Governance Statement

Approve Accounting Statements 2020/21 - Section 2

Proposed by Mr Chick, seconded by Mr Macro, the Parish Council approves the Statement of Accounts. Carried.

The Chairman signed and dated the Accounting Statements.

Both Sections will be published and displayed on the Parish Council website and notice board, together with information in respect of the period for the Exercise of Public Rights which will run from Thursday 1st July 2021 to Wednesday 11th August 2021.

Consideration of Internal Audit Report

Copies of the Hellis & Lodge Internal Audit Report had been circulated to all Councillors. The following recommendations must be acted upon and any actions minuted.

Recommendation 1: Standing Orders and Financial Regulations are in place but have not been reviewed in this year of audit 2020/2021. Some work has already been carried out, amendments for consideration will go out to Councillors with review to be carried out at the August meeting. Action taken must be minuted.

Recommendations 2 & 3: Include reference to GDPR in the Risk Assessment and register with the ICO for Data Protection. Mr Macro and Mr Chick to research, in particular whether a nominated Data Protection Officer is required.

Recommendation 4: To ensure that the annual review of the Risk Assessment and Internal Controls is carried out during the year of audit. The Risk Assessment review will be listed as an agenda item at the August meeting.

Recommendation 5: Clerk to check Fidelity Cover with NFU Mutual.

Matters to be brought to the attention of the Parish Council

An election has been called for Thursday 12th August and Babergh Electoral Services have asked if the Parish Council requires poll cards to be issued, answer needed by 30th June. The cost had previously been quoted at around £1,000. As poll cards are delivered to every elector in the parish and give information as to how postal/proxy votes can be applied for it was thought that these were necessary in order to ensure that nobody was excluded, in particular if anybody was likely to still be shielding or isolating on the election date. Because of printing deadlines these would have to be printed before it was known whether or not the election was contested. It was hoped that at least the postage could be saved if the cards were not required.

Proposed by Mr Chick, seconded by Mrs Morrey, the Parish Council requires polling cards for the Election timetabled for 12th August. Carried. 2 abstained.

The meeting closed at 9 pm.