

Minutes of the Axe Brue Finance and Governance Sub Committee held on Tuesday 26 January 2016 at 10:30hrs at Bradbury House, 33-34 Market Street, Highbridge. Chairman: Cllr A Gilling

Action

- 1 **Attendance & Apologies for Absence:** as per register appended. Alan Franks (AF) attended the meeting on behalf of Martin Watts.
- 2 **Items Additional to the Agenda:** Anthony Dowden (AD) – funds for desilting.
- 3 **Declarations of Interest:** Cllr Gilling – all matters pertaining to planning or Ashfords Solicitors
- 4 **Minutes of the F&G Sub Committee Meeting held on 06 October 2015:** Item 7 Ref 3 should read “review financial policy matters with regard to grant aid activity”. With this amendment the Chairman signed the minutes as a true and correct record of the meeting held.
- 5 **Matters Arising:** None
- 6 **Budgets:** - appended. Stephen Gee (SG) explained the 2 proposals. Version 1 – no increase in the penny rate and Version 2 – a 1.99% increase in the penny rate. The calculations have taken into account the rise in the precept of 2%. If the rate is not increased it will raise £173,000 if the 1.99% increase is approved this will raise £177,000 in drainage rates. The dairy quota was removed in 2015 and will be removed from the DRS for 2016/17. The dairy quota was not shown separately on the Upper Boards records resulting in some confusion. Jeff Fear (JF) said that due diligence has been used and that the reduction has been shared across all the areas of the current board. Iain Sturdy (IS) reported on work for the year and advised that if the rate was not increased it would affect the programme of works. £200,000 has already been raised to take forward, but there is more work than money available. He gave a brief outline of works required and again commented that the increase of 1.99% would enable work to be carried out. He added that no increase would mean no allowance in years needs, nothing for SRA budgets. If withdrawal of maintenance by the Environment Agency (EA) takes place then Public Sector Co-operation Agreement (PSCA) would need to be entered into. Ray Adlam (RA) recommended that the 1.99% increase as future years could mean higher rates if more work is carried out by the IDB. **Proposed: Ray Adlam, Seconded: Wendy Welland “that Version 2 of the draft budget is recommended to the full board for approval”. ALL IN FAVOUR**
- 7 **Governance: - Revised Terms of Reference –** appended.
Scheme of Delegation: - appended. Nick Stevens (NWS) outlined the Scheme of Delegation that is in the current members pack and pointed out that the Reserved Matters differed from those in the Parrett members pack. Items not covered in particular are agreements with other bodies. He circulated an updated scheme and asked members for their view. JF suggested that item 6 should read Chairman or Vice Chairman not and. NWS then advised that a procurement and procedures policy document has been drafted for boards to follow, he will give more detail at the next meeting. **Proposed: David Tratt (DT), seconded: Pam Thorne (PT) “that the amendments to the Scheme of Delegation are approved by the full board”. ALL IN FAVOUR**
Financial Regulations: - appended. SG reported that the external auditors had asked that the Financial Regulations should be reviewed on a 5 year basis. These have been reviewed and a copy given to members to take away for their perusal to discuss at the next meeting.
- 8 **Policy and Strategy:** - appended. NWS explained the changes that had been made in particular the section on staffing and Health and Safety. The Board uses the services of Liz Bennett who works for a company called Habilis and is available for any consultation. RA asked whether contractors working on behalf of the board have to have their own H&S measure in place. IS explained that when contractors are taken on a pre-works information pack is provided. The contractor has to provide his construction plan. The IDB must draw their attention to any hazards and they must demonstrate they are able to deal with those hazards. Larger contracts are regularly reviewed.
- 9 **Any Other Business:** - SG – collection of rates by Direct Debit. Debit/Credit cards, cash, cheques and bank transfers are the methods of payment currently accepted by the board. The cost of debit/credit cards is approximately £25-30 per month. Together with courts costs and bank charges this amounts to £1500 per year. The cost of collection by Direct Debit would be in the region of £300 per year (after an initial set cost). It would also cut down on administration staff time. Approval is required from both boards. A formal paper will be prepared for the next meeting.
NWS - Meetings, format of agenda. NWS asked if the minutes of the previous meeting and the matters arising items of the agenda could be moved to the end of the meeting. Members agreed to this request.
AJD – Colin Pople had requested de-silting of Green Drove in Burtle, from Black Ditch into South Drain. He had visited the site with Mathew Wall and agreed this work was required. AJD also requested de-silting on West Hay Moor Drove, from the tilting weir to the top of Lewis’ Drove, the cost would be in the region of £1200-£1500. SMG advised there were funds available. Members agreed to these request.

- 10 **Date of next meeting:** - Members asked for a revised calendar of meeting dates to be forwarded as there were some errors on the draft version.
PT asked if SG could number his sheets to make the figures clearer to members.
AF asked for the amount of rates still outstanding. SG said approximately £7000 was still outstanding which was a better figure than the previous year, there are still some queries on land ownership.

There being no other business the Chairman thanked members and officers for their time and contributions.
The meeting was closed at 12.30pm

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CHAIRMAN

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DATE