


CLERKS REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL MEETING 17th May 2023

Actions from March Meeting

- All responses to planning consultations were submitted prior to deadlines
- Various Highways flooding concerns were submitted to Dist.Cllr.Schwieer in line with discussions at March meeting

Financial/Budget

1. **Precept.** The first instalment of £5500 has been paid by BDC to the council.
2. **Payroll/PAYE administration.** J&M Payroll Services have commenced work on behalf of the council. They have identified that the Clerk is also due a Home Workers Allowance of £25pm, which will be paid quarterly in line with the salary. 
3. **Railtas Accounting Package.** Support from Rialtas for the year end accounts has been good so far, and the process of populating the annual return (AGAR) has been faster than the old excel spreadsheets the council previously used. The cost of the service has increased but as your Clerk I would prefer to continue using this software as it provides greater safeguards for me, as well as for the council. Additionally, the remote support is extremely helpful.
4. **Annual Return.** I have now completed all the statutory forms and will be meeting with the council's internal auditor on Friday 11th May. With the impact of the Lottery funding and playground expenditure the council will again be subject to a Basic Level Review due to the higher levels of income and expenditure. This is a more in depth review which attracts a higher External Audit fee of £315!.
5. **Playing Field Project.** The final invoice payment to Earth Wrights of £6343.20 has been withheld until the playing field and play area surface has been repaired. It is hoped that this work will take place on Saturday 12th May but there are some last minute arrangements being made by the contractor so this date may slip. I have completed a Risk Assessment since the minor works were completed, following the ROSPA safety inspection. This assessment was completed prior to the opening of the playground on Monday 8th May.
6. **Council Insurance.** The council's insurance policy has been updated to allow for the new playground equipment, which has resulted in a larger than usual increase in the policy premium upon renewal (business item). There will also need to be a further amendment to the policy once the playing field pathway has been installed, which may result in a further increase. However, you do still receive a discounted rate due to your Foundation Status. Also worthy of note is that at £327 the policy premium is still lower than it was back in 2010 at £450+!

Local Council Award Scheme

Both Cllr.Harris & I attended a recent webinar with EALC/NALC regarding re-application to the scheme for Foundation Status. The council's current award expires this year. It is envisaged the council could re-apply in time for the September assessment.