

## **20/10/2020 Finance Committee Clerk's Report**

Note that updates on the status of the Audit Action Plan and Actions from the previous meeting are provided in separate reports.

### **Facilities**

#### **Rhymes Pavilion**

As reported to the Council Meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> October, “**Penny's Pantry**” is now well established and is reaching residents with a genuine need to the satisfaction of its organizers.

There have been a few other booking enquiries, indicating a slow return to pre-lockdown levels. I have allowed a small discount on bookings where there is an obvious case for this to be granted.

We have agreed to allow **Batheaston Primary School** to use the playing field every Monday morning, free-of-charge.

#### **Riverside Toilets**

These have been re-opened. A wall-mounted hand sanitiser dispenser has been provided.

#### **All-weather Pitch**

A final demand for payment of charges for the electricity to the floodlights was hand-delivered to the Rhymes Pavilion recently. I was not aware of any outstanding charge for this and have no record of the contract. I am in the process of getting access to the account to settle the outstanding sum, which is apparently £465. I will review the basis on which this is supplied, to consider more economical alternatives. I will update the Committee at its next meeting.

### **Insurance Renewal**

As agreed at the September Committee meeting, I have approved the renewal of the Council's Insurance Policy, on a similar basis to the previous arrangements. A copy of the schedule is provided with these papers. Note therefore that:

- 1) The policy insures both the Council and the Batheaston Leisure Association. The latter is retained pending a decision as to whether it would be advantageous for it to take a leading role in the refurbishment of the Elmhurst Playground. Having taken advice from Deborah White (ALCA), the key determinants seems to be, in favour of doing so:
  - There are some grants that are available only to charities
  - It might be helpful to locate the work in a dedicated organisation, so as not to overburden Council and its Committees

And against:

- There is an administrative and governance overhead to doing so.

I suggest that a firm decision, either way, is taken as soon as we have a clear picture of the plans for the Playground.

In accordance with the guidance from the Committee at its last meeting, I have not undertaken a full review of the policy to ensure that our cover reflects the requirements of the Council. This can be done at any time when we have resources available.

### **Internal Auditor**

As agreed by the committee, I have requested that the Internal Auditor, Mrs Bridget Bowen, provides us with ½ day of consultancy and advice on 1<sup>st</sup> December. Councillor Gregory will also attend. I will inform the Committee of the subjects covered and the recommendations that arise from it, for consideration at its January meeting.

At her request, I propose that the Council contract the Internal Auditor, Mrs Bridget Bowen, to undertake the Internal Audit for the current year, in April 2021, at a cost of £300. The Committee is asked to **approve this proposal**.

### **Update on progress to implement the new business system, “AdvantEdge”**

With the assistance of Rachel Orme (Booking Clerk), I have compiled the relevant documents for the supplier to load the system with our start-of-year data. Once they have completed this, we will undertake training and then upload the transactions for the period since April and be able to start to use the system. I expect to be able to do this by the end of December.

### **Website and Email System**

I am working with the new Communications and Engagement Group to progress the implementation of the new website, with associated communications capabilities. This is to be presented to November Council meeting for approval.

I have been using the new Microsoft Email system, together with the drive, in pilot mode for a month. I will be rolling this out soon.

### **Administration of Salary Payments**

At its September meeting, the Finance Cttee approved the setting up of a standing order for staff salaries, to overcome problems of late payment. These are now in place, reflecting the base salaries of each member of staff.

I was requested to “provide appropriate measures for it to exercise oversight of the operation of this within Financial Regulations”.

I propose that the standing payments are presented as follows:

- a copy of the instruction issued by email to the Payroll Company (eSlip);
- a copy of the Payroll Report that they generate;
- a record of the transaction on the bank statement, as part of the approval of monthly transactions.

For all variations, including overtime, I will also provide a record of the overtime logged by staff; and a brief rationale, referencing approval by the Committee where this is relevant.