



LITTLE MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE LITTLE MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL FROM THE PARISH CLERK (Mrs Ann Harris).

By way of background to this report: the last time that the Parish Council formally met was on Wednesday 15th January 2020. Thereafter the meeting that was scheduled for 18th March could not take place, being inquorate due to certain Councillors self-isolating in response to COVID-19. Thereafter, two meetings were scheduled to take place in The Round Church tomorrow, Wednesday 20th May. These were the Annual Parish Meeting and the Annual Parish Council Meeting, both of which have now been cancelled in order to comply with Government and with Public Health England requirements on "Social Distancing".

A separate notice relating to business that would normally have been tabled at these two meetings has been posted on the Parish Council Notice Board and the LMPC website.

The report that follows takes the place of the verbal report that, under normal circumstances, I would have submitted to the Council meeting scheduled for tomorrow, Wednesday 20th May.

1. Financial Report:

1.1 2020/21 Budget: An updated version is attached to this report showing the variances from the original document prepared in January 2020, when the level of the precept was agreed by the Councillors.

1.2: Bank Balance: As at 30th April the balance of monies in the LMPC bank account was £7,555.34. A summary of payments in and out of this account between 16th December (date of the last report to the Council) and 30th April is attached.

1.3: Reserves: There will be an updated report on the "Ring Fenced" and Uncommitted Reserves to the next Council meeting which is presently planned for Wednesday 15th July 2020.

2. Audit and Annual Return:

2.1: Internal Auditor Mike Letch, approved by the EALC, has agreed to undertake the Internal 2019/20 Audit for LMPC at a fee of £125. This arrangement is for one year only.

2.2: Annual Return: Under normal circumstances the Internal Auditor's report would have been submitted to the Annual Parish Meeting to be held in May and the Annual Return, together with the application for exemption from a full audit (since revenue and expenses in the year are both less than £25,000), would also have been approved at this meeting. These actions do not now have to take place until the end of August, therefore the paperwork will now be tabled at the Council meeting planned for Wednesday 15th July.



LITTLE MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

3. Grants:

3.1: Playing Field Footpath: The Council does not have any Grant applications pending at present. A proposal had at one time been made to consider making an application to a source of grant funding to enable the Playing Field footpath to be completely replaced rather than simply repaired; the cost of this and the availability of funds could be reconsidered after the current health emergency.

3.2: CIF 2019/20: The Council did receive a grant of £1,000 to cover work to be undertaken in the playing field. The current status on this is that the Council has spent £320 with Mortimer's Tree Surgery on tree pruning work as suggested by the Playing Field Inspector and a further £380 with CS Works on painting the swings and the seesaw. Cllr Crudginton will advise on the further work to be undertaken at a later date.

4. Insurance:

The renewal date is 1st June 2020. After a review of the market which I undertook last year the Council decided, in order to achieve some security over rising insurance premiums, to enter into a three year arrangement with brokers Came and Company. Under this arrangement the only year on year cost increase (other than that resulting from a claim made by LMPC) would be the index linking of items covered by the policy, which this year is 4%. The 2020/21 premium therefore rose by this amount to £346.38 and this figure is reflected in the revised budget referred to in item 1.1 above.

5. Street Cleaning Agreement with BDC:

The terms of this Agreement would have been tabled for approval at the meeting scheduled for 18th March and so I now need to seek the Council's approval to enter into this agreement (terms and conditions unchanged from last year) under which BCD will pay to the Council £815.01 to arrange for, among other matters, litter picking and fly tipping monitoring. I have sent a copy of this document to Cllr Piper and Cllr Holloway for review and information. I am not sure that the Council has ever submitted an Activity Report and am not aware that this has ever been requested. Once approved by Councillors Piper and Holloway I will sign the agreement with BDC and issue the invoice for the above amount.

6. Grass Cutting Agreement with EEC:

This also would have been tabled at the 18th March meeting to advise the Council that under this (annual) agreement with the EEC, LMPC will be paid £1,295.07 for the maintenance of the grass verges by means of a Spring and also an Autumn cut to be undertaken for the Council by John Doe, which is arranged by Cllr Holloway. I will also prepare an invoice for this amount.



LITTLE MAPLESTEAD PARISH COUNCIL

7. VAT Refund:

For information: on 8th April I submitted a claim to HMRC for a refund of VAT payments made by LMPC between June 2019 and the end of March 2020. This time the amount claimed is £1,015.60 and is normally paid directly into the LMPC bank account within two weeks of the making the claim. Since at the present time HMRC are under considerable pressure I waited four weeks before I chased them up (and finding a contact to speak to was quite a challenge!!) but it would now appear that this claim has been "lost". HMRC are investigating and will be in touch with me on this matter asap! FYI I do have a complete copy of the claim and the HMRC confirmation of submission reference number!

8. Planning:

8.1: There is a new "Material Amendment" consultation to an existing application at School House Farm, details of which I have already circulated to the Councillors for consideration and comment if any.

8.2: There is also Non-Material Amendment to permission 20/00131/HH granted 17.03.2020 for Single storey rear & side extension and dormer window at Tanglewood Oak

8.2: I have so far been unable to access the BDC web site or make any phone contact regarding the status of any other outstanding planning applications eg Ethel's Cottage, which was to have been considered at the BDC Planning Committee meeting on 12th May.

9. Future Council Meetings:

As mentioned elsewhere in this report the next scheduled Parish Council meeting is due to take place on Wednesday 15th July. There are certain matters relating to the Audit and Annual Return which will need to be tabled for consideration and approval at that time having been delayed from the cancelled 20th May meeting. I will inform Councillors as soon as I know what the arrangements for this may be.

Ann Harris.
Parish Clerk
Tuesday, 19 May 2020