East Dean & Friston
Parish Council

Date:	**01 April 2021**
Title:	**Report Item 6 – Business in Progress**
By:	**K Larkin (Parish Clerk)**
Purpose:	**To provide an update on progress since the March meeting**
Recommendations:	**a) To note the progress report** **b) To approve an amended Hire Agreement for the Cricket Club** **c) To approve the appointment of Peter J Consultants as Internal Auditors for the financial year 2020/21** **d) To accept the recommendation of the Council Guard insurance broker to move to The Military Mutual as the new scheme provider from 1st June 2021.**

The following items are matters for decision:

- **Cricket Club Hire Agreement 2021** – an amended version is appended to this report with amendments highlighted in yellow. The council requested these amendments at the meeting held on 4th March 2021 [Minute C.368]. The changes are intended to allow the Club to pay a reduced hire fee (normally £700 for a full season), calculated at the end of August on the basis of how much of the season has actually been playable.
- **Appointment of Internal Auditor for the year 2020/21** – due to the fact that no Annual Parish Council Meeting was held in May 2020, the council has not yet formally appointed an Internal Auditor for the forthcoming Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21. Peter J Consultants are willing to continue, and the council is requested to formally appoint them as its Internal Auditors for 2020/21. The External Auditors are appointed externally for the council and will be PKF Littlejohn, as last year. It has just been confirmed that the deadline for submission of the Annual Return to the External Auditor will be Friday 2nd July, with no extra time allowed this year (unlike 2020). The Internal Audit will need to be done remotely. A list of items which Peter J Consultants would check is given in Appendix B.
- **Choice of Council Guard scheme insurer** – the council's insurance broker WPS Hallam has re-tendered the Council Guard facility to the UK insurance market and has selected The Military Mutual as the new scheme insurer. Currently the parish council has a long term agreement on its Council Guard policy, which will renew automatically on 1st June 2021 for one more year. The parish council has the option of remaining with Royal Sun Alliance as at present, or moving to The Military Mutual as the new scheme provider for the year from 1st June 2021 to 31st May 2022. WPS Hallam recommends moving to the new scheme provider. Background correspondence is attached in Appendix C.

The following are matters arising from the March meeting:

- **Online meetings –** some town and parish councils are arguing that remote meetings will not become unlawful on 7th May. Part of the argument is that the Covid-19 flexibility regulations have clarified that 'attendance' and 'presence' and 'place' and 'open to the public' can be lawfully achieved in an online meeting; therefore, the expiry of the regulations does not automatically mean that 'attendance' and 'presence' and 'place' and 'open to the public' are suddenly not achievable online. A few town and parish councils have stated their intention of continuing with some element of 'online' post-6th May, in the expectation of becoming a test case. When this is resolved, there will be a need to review SOs. In the meantime, it is recommended that the parish council proceeds as planned at the March meeting [Minute C.367].

- **Bench 'in memory of HP who loved the downs'** – an appeal for information has gone out through the website and the Residents' Alerts emails. At the time of writing there has been no response.
- **Tree safety survey and insurance** – Climpsons have been asked to do a safety survey on the trees on Friston Green, including those on the remaining fragments of the Green north of the A259. The adequacy of the current insurance cover can then be checked with the insurers prior to renewal of the Council Guard policy for a third and final year under the current long term agreement on 1st June 2021.
- **Opening the pavilion on 16th – 18th April for use by planting teams** – Environmental Health at WDC have advised that it should be possible to provide access to the toilets under the restrictions expected to be in place in mid-April. The pavilion caretaker is standing ready to do a spring clean once the water is turned back on (expected imminently).
- **Great British Spring Clean** – the council's litter picking kits are to be loaned to the Residents' Association for the use of community volunteers.
- **Refill scheme –** local businesses will be reminded about the scheme when they re-open

APPENDIX A

AGREEMENT FOR THE USE BY THE EAST DEAN CRICKET CLUB

OF THE PAVILION & CRICKET PITCHES ON THE RECREATION GROUND

1. The agreement commences on 1st January 2021 and will be renewed annually on the same terms provided that none of the conditions have been breached. Nevertheless should the costs of maintaining the pavilion or mowing the outfield increase significantly the Council reserves the right to ask for an appropriate increase in the fee.

2. Either party can give notice to terminate the agreement by 30th November in respect of the following year. Nothing in the agreement shall represent a leasing or tenancy agreement.

3. In this agreement the words 'Council' and 'Club' mean 'East Dean & Friston Parish Council' and 'East Dean Cricket Club' respectively.

4. A fee will be paid by the Club to the Council to cover that part of the cricket season when coronavirus restrictions may be lifted. The fee will be calculated by the council at the end of August on the basis that £700 should be payable for a full season, and a lower *pro rata* amount for the actual playing season. Payment is to be received by 30th September 2021.

5. The Council will notify the Club by 1st November each year of any dates in the following season when the cricket facilities will not be available for use by the Club.

6. The Club will email the Parish Clerk as soon as possible after lockdown restrictions are lifted with the dates on which the Club wishes to use the facilities for the coming year. Should any additional dates be required after the list has been agreed the permission of the Council must be obtained and such dates will be accepted as part of the block booking

7. The Council will not be responsible for any loss or damage incurred by the Club as a result of their hire of the pavilion and cricket facilities, and will expect the Club to have third party liability insurance.

8. The Council will endeavour to arrange for the outfield to be mown at 14 day intervals during the growing season and preferably on Thursday or Friday subject to the conditions of the Council's mowing contract. The Club may maintain the pitches as it deems necessary and at its own expense.

9. Subject to the agreement of the Club the Council can allow other teams to use the cricket pitches, from time to time, when the Club is not playing. If requested by the Club, the Council will advise the hirer that a pitch preparation fee will be payable to the Club, and the club will be responsible for the collection of any such fees. If the club is approached by another club or group to use the ground or pavilion they must be referred to the Council.
The Club may store equipment in pavilion out-buildings as agreed.

10. Any water metred by the water company and charged to the Council in excess of 20 cubic metres in any one period of account will be due and payable by the Club who will receive an account from the parish council detailing the supply.

11. The pavilion is not licenced for public entertainment. For any event at which it is intended to sell or consume alcohol on the premises the permission of the Council in writing must be granted and any necessary licence obtained.

12. Smoking is prohibited within the pavilion at all times.

13. Before leaving the pavilion all food must be removed and the premises left in a clean and tidy condition. All windows and doors must be secured and all heaters and lights switched off. The barrier gate of the recreation ground must be locked open (insurance requirement) during a match and locked shut on departure.

Signed Name for the Council date

Signed Name for the Club date

APPENDIX B

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2020/21

Proposed list of items to be reviewed by Peter J Consultants:

Part 1

1. A copy of the AGAR page 5 Accounting Statement - (this can be done before being signed-off by Council)

2. A copy of the AGAR page 3 (Internal Audit Report) – I will return this to Council once completed

3. AGAR page 3 – it is anticipated that Box L will appear again this year. I need to confirm that last year's Public Rights Notice was displayed on a Website. Kindly provide a link for me to check

4. A copy of the AGAR External Auditors' Report page re 31/03/2020 – please provide comments on any matters raised by the External Auditors

5. A copy of the Cash Book Totals re Receipts/Payments or Income/Expenditure

6. AGAR page 5: where there is a difference between Boxes 7 & 8, please provide details

7. A list of Bank Balances and Investments that make up the AGAR Box 8 – to include outstanding items as at the year end

8. Copies of Bank Statements and Investment Reports - only as at 31/03/2021

9. A copy of the Asset Register Totals – only if the figures have changed since 31/03/2020

10. A copy of any PWLB statements – to agree with the AGAR Box 10

Part 2

1. The date of the last Review of the Financial Regulations & Standing Orders

2. Insurance Schedule: if this has changed in 2020, please send copies of the relative Sections

3. The date of the last VAT Return

4. If an Employee has changed over the last year, kindly confirm whether an Employment Contract and/or Letter of Appointment and/or Job Description have been raised

5. Bank Reconciliations: please confirm that these are checked by a Councillor or Nominee and signed off

6. Minutes: please confirm that the final Page is signed by a Chairperson (each Page numbered & initialled)

7. Book-keeping information & Minutes: please advise the arrangements for backing up

8. Cheques issued and/or Internet Banking: please advise who signs these off

9. Risk Register: please confirm that all Issues identified are annotated Low/Medium or High Risk

10. Declarations of Councillors' Interests: please confirm that these are all up to date

APPENDX C

Council Guard

Katrina Larkin
East Dean & Friston Parish Council
The Old Cottage
Lewes Road. Laughton
Laughton, Lewes East Sussex
BN8 6BQ

24/02/2021

Dear Katrina

Re: Your CouncilGuard Insurance Scheme

Firstly, and foremost I do hope that you, your family and your colleagues are all safe and well. Who would have known 12 months ago that we would still be in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. Hopefully the light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccine rollout will soon become brighter and we can all return to some sort of normality later in the year.

It is appropriate for us to update you with some significant changes to your insurance scheme.

As you will know, WPS hallam have provided insurance solutions to the Local Government sector for over 20 years and we strive to make sure that we are providing best value in terms of depth of policy coverage, rating competitiveness, technical, claims and administration support and security of provider. However, the insurance world has entered challenging times not just because of Covid but due to a number of differing factors. These all lead to reduced insurance capacity, increased insurance premiums and potentially restrictions to policy coverages.

With this in mind, we took the decision some 9 months ago to re-tender the CouncilGuard facility to the UK insurance market. We were conscious of course that we only undertook such a significant exercise just 3 years ago but these are unprecedented times and we must ensure best value for our Council clients.

As you can imagine, re-tendering such a large and varied client sector to a wide insurance market in the midst of a pandemic was a challenge to say the least but this has now been completed and we are delighted to report that we have selected The Military Mutual as the new scheme insurer. This new facility will be in place and effective from the 1st March 2021.

I have attached a letter from the Chief Executive of The Military Mutual which I hope you will find of interest.

Our arrangements with The Military Mutual are exclusive and we are confident that we have addressed the key criteria of "best value". This is truly an exciting new chapter for the CouncilGuard scheme.

As your policy comes up for renewal we will of course fully explain your options to either remain with Royal and Sun Alliance under any long term agreements or move to the new scheme provider and the benefits in doing so.

With kindest regards,

Colin Raffell Cert CII

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The Military Mutual Limited
54 Fenchurch Street
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CouncilGuard Scheme

16th February 2021

Dear Scheme Members

First and foremost I want to say that I hope you, your families and your colleagues are safe and well in these very challenging times. A degree of normality is hopefully not too far away now. I must also say how pleased I am to have this opportunity to write to you as existing CouncilGuard scheme members and to share my excitement at the prospect of working together with WPS Hallam on your behalf.

We have spent a great deal of time working in partnership with WPS Hallam building on their extensive sector knowledge to create an exclusive council proposition with a bespoke product and dedicated scheme claims service, recognising that each council can have your own unique needs. We have designed our scheme processes to ensure our underwriters are visible and responsive to your needs and at the same time we can offer more competitive pricing thanks to our mutual status.

As a mutual member owned business I also believe our values and purpose align very well not just to the military family community but to the wider public sector. As such this scheme aligns perfectly to our long term strategic direction. We are absolutely committed to ensuring the scheme is an even greater success and we know that critical to this is our quality and efficiency of service.

The mutual has established a unique position in the military sector providing cover for leading charities such as the RAF Benevolent Fund, Royal Naval Benevolent Trust, Walking With The Wounded and Confederation of Service Charities. We also provide cover for many major regimental associations including The Rifles, Gurkha's, Royal Artillery and Royal Engineers and can count the military academy at Sandhurst as a member. We are trusted to protect many treasured heritage assets including over 20 Victoria Cross, the RAF Memorial on Piccadilly and Royal Marines Memorial on Pall Mall, London.

As a business with a purpose we have provided free legal representation at a Courts Marshall to over 250 serving members of the armed forces who could not otherwise afford legal support and we sponsor a range of organisations that help military veterans find work or start a business on leaving service. We are very open to working with councils through this scheme on similar shared initiatives.

We hope to bring this purpose and these values to underpin our support for this scheme in the council sector. To this end I will retain a personal oversight of the scheme at every stage and on an ongoing basis. I very much look forward to engaging with you and your representatives as things progress and as we emerge from the current Covid constraints.

Best Wishes,

Lee Mooney
Chief Executive Officer
The Military Mutual Limited