

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held at Hay Council Offices on 16th October 2020

Present: Cllr T Stedman (TS) Cllr D Landymore (DL)

Cllr F Howard (FH) Cllr R Golesworthy (RWG) N Burdekin (NB)

Apologies: Cllr A Powell (AP)

FIN 449. Elect a new Chair

TS proposed DL, RWG seconded. DL had no objections. *Unanimously approved*

Minutes of meeting dated 10th August 2020

TS proposed that the minutes of the meeting dated 10th August 2020 were a true and accurate record. FH seconded.

FIN450. Matters Arising

No matters arising.

FIN451. Hay Cemetery Update

TS said that Comms Sub Committee had met on 14th October 2020 and, although Comms felt that Fishing & Estates Sub Committee should agree the content of the tender specification, Comms recommended that the tender specification be advertised in the Brecon & Radnor Express in line with Financial Regulations. After the meeting, RWG, SM and NB will be holding a site visit at the new cemetery site in order to finalise the tender specification document.

FH proposed putting the cemetery specification out to tender, RWG seconded. *Unanimously approved.*

Action: NB to put an advert in the B&R Express week commencing 19th October advertising the tender for cemetery infrastructure. Cllrs agreed a deadline of Friday 6th November 2020 for tender returns. Tender specifications to also be advertised on HTC's Facebook page, website, on Hay Community Noticeboard and to local providers.

NB reported that he had been unable to arrange a meeting with TS and Mike Harris as there had been no responses from Mike. FH proposed that Mike is given a deadline for a response to the legal documents once received from Powys CC (Memorandum of Understanding and 200-year lease) explaining that if Mike is too busy to respond within the given timescale, HTC will approach another solicitor. *Unanimously approved.*

FIN452. HTC Income and Expenditure at 30th September 2020

NB took Councillors through HTC's current income and expenditure and had itemised the points from 1 to 69.

NB was asked to amalgamate the Clerk's salary (1) and RFO's salary (2) into one line.

TS said that the Mayor's Allowance should remain unpaid at this stage as the AGM had not yet been held, and it might mean a part-payment.

(20) FH asked why there was a nil balance for Clock winding. NB explained this was because HTC pays for the Clock winding, but then gets the money back from Powys CC. So it is an in/out budget giving effectively a nil balance.

(21) RWG asked if HTC has invoiced the £400 for fishing income. NB said it has been invoiced and payment has been received and banked.

(51) FH asked if the grant for HCWGG for emptying the dog fouling bins was £1,600 (as per the spreadsheet in the meeting) or £1,500? NB thought it was actually £1,500. **Action:** NB to check what was paid to the HCWGG in 2019/2020.

NB explained that one key issue that is highlighted is the cleaner's salary, shown in points (22) (Council Offices) and (66) (Project Account). NB explained that the £235.00 for Council Offices in the Precept for 2020/2021 reflected the fact that HTC had been given notice to leave Council Offices by 4th May 2020. The Precept also allowed for the Cleaner to be paid £1,250.00 at the Sports Pavilion. This figure is approximately half the Cleaner's salary for 2019/2020 and was used to indicate that it was expected that the cleaner's hours would be reduced once HTC moves out from Council Offices. Cllrs discussed this matter and felt that, in the light of Council Offices due to close and having now viewed the Precept figures for 2020/2021, HTC no longer had a need for a cleaner. TS proposed making the cleaner redundant. FH seconded. *Unanimously approved.*

FH asked what the current costs are for staying in Council Offices. RWG said rent/rates and heating. NB said that this was likely to be around £250-£300 a month, particularly with the heating needed during Winter. FH proposed HTC gives Powys CC notice to vacate Council Offices.

Given the importance of the two issues of (i) whether to vacate Council Offices and moves to the Saints Bar; and (ii) to make the cleaner redundant, TS suggested calling a HTC meeting on Monday 19th October at 6.00pm. **Action:** TS to send a meeting request to Town Councillors for a meeting on 19th October.

FIN452. Recommendations

(i) Finance Sub Committee looked at the costs of running the Council Offices at £220 per month rent to Powys CC plus utility costs. On this basis, FH proposed HTC gives Powys CC notice to vacate Council Offices and that HTC moves to the Saints Bar at the Sports Pavilion. *Unanimously approved.*

(ii) Finance Sub Committee looked at the overall figure of £1,485 budgeted for in the Precept for 2020/2021 for the Cleaner's salary. On the basis of HTC closing Council Offices, HTC would no longer need a cleaner under the current contract. TS proposed making the cleaner redundant. FH seconded. *Unanimously approved.*

With the above changes to be made, DL proposed accepting the Income and Expenditure at 30th September 2020. *Unanimously approved.*

FIN453. Bank Reconciliations: April – September 2020

NB explained that he was missing one bank statement for the Project Account for April – May 2020. NB had requested a copy statement from Barclays. Once this has arrived, NB will be able to

complete the bank reconciliations. Other than the Project Account for April – May, NB has completed all the bank reconciliations and they all balance. NB asked for the reconciliations to be deferred until the copy statement has arrived. Once the bank reconciliations are completed, NB will contact DL to sign them off.

FIN454. Salaries/contracts for: Town Clerk; Admin Assistant and Cleaner

NB was asked to leave the room. When NB returned to the room, Councillors informed NB that they had agreed to award him a one-point pay rise on the National Joint Council for Local Government Services (NJC) payscale. This was in recognition of NB becoming the RFO and passing his Town Clerk course.

FH asked if cost-of-living increases have been included in HTC employees' pay for 2020/2021. NB said that there hasn't been a cost-of-living increase and TS added that this is because each year the cost-of-living pay is calculated by the NJC annually. FH proposed giving NB and CW the cost-of-living increase to be backdated from 1st April 2020.

DL proposed that NB be awarded a one-point salary pay rise on the NJC scale, RWG seconded. *Unanimously approved*

DL proposed that NB and CW be given a cost-of-living increase in line with their contracts, to be backdated from 1st April 2020, RWG seconded. *Unanimously approved*

Action: NB to inform Marian Lally, Payroll, of the above two decisions

Action: NB to include staff pay/cost-of-living pay annually as a Finance Sub Committee agenda once the NJC payscales have been published.

FIN455. Welsh Government Claim for Covid-19 losses – award given

NB reported that HTC's claim to the Welsh Government for Covid-19 losses was approved for Quarter 1 (April – June 2020). The total grant awarded to HTC was £7,390.00. £1,250.00 of this was for the sports' clubs contribution to the running costs of the Recreation Facilities for April – June 2020 i.e. a quarter of their contributions. TS said that there might be more funding to come from the Welsh Government for Quarters 2, 3 and 4. The remaining £6,140.00 has been allocated to lost income from the public toilets during lockdown.

FIN456. Hay Community Woodland and Gardening Group (HCWGG) – Grant for 2020/2021 for £1,500 emptying dog fouling bins

TS declared an interest as a member of the HCWGG

NB said that a grant of £1,500.00 (payment awarded to HCWGG for 2019/2020 to be checked by NB) has been precepted for 2020/2021. The HCWGG has not yet been awarded its grant for 2020/2021 for the continued emptying of dog fouling bins by volunteer(s). FH proposed awarding HCWGG the same amount as was given in 2019/2020. RWG seconded. *Unanimously approved (TS did not vote).*

FIN457. Barclays Bank – Internet Banking meeting in Brecon

NB explained that he had called Barclays Bank to try and arrange a meeting to discuss on-line banking. NB was unable to arrange a meeting as only an authorised signatory (TS, FH, AP and RWG) can arrange a face-to-face meeting. RWG asked what the purpose of the meeting would be. NB said that it would be very helpful to meet with a bank manager to discuss all HTC's online banking accounts and how to access these electronically. TS added that salaries could be paid online which would mitigate the need for employees to be paid by cheque and have to visit banks

to pay in, which is even more of an issue in the current pandemic. This would also ensure employees are paid on a set date. DL suggested the date should be the last day of the month, notwithstanding weekends or bank holidays. TS added that direct debits could also be set up with local companies.

FH said she has a contact in Hereford Barclays Bank and agreed to try and arrange a meeting between HTC and Hereford Barclays Bank. **Action:** FH/NB to arrange a face-to-face meeting with Hereford Barclays Bank.

FIN458. Software package quote(s) ScribeAccounts

TS and NB had taken part in a remote demonstration of the ScribeAccounts software. The software is tailor-made for Town and Community Councils and gives, for example, financial reports, bank reconciliations, Section 137 monies and so on. TS has looked at other software programmes such as Quick Books and Sage, but they are generic programmes. NB said that the cost for ScribeAccounts annually is £468.00.

FH proposed that ScribeAccounts carries out a demonstration on-line for HTC. **Action:** NB/TS to arrange a demonstration with ScribeAccounts.

FIN459. Paid parking at Sports Pavilion

Prior to the meeting, NB had circulated to Councillors three different options for drop-down bollards for the proposed paid parking at the Sports Pavilion, as well as an initial briefing note.

RWG said that the bollards need to be colour coated to make sure that they can be seen in the dark. RWG also said that the bollards, if left dropped, could present a trip hazard. RWG suggested putting up signs saying "Caution, bollards."

RWG also raised the issue of how much it would cost to extend the parking available to the rear of the Sports Pavilion for the sports' clubs use and said he was raising these issues to ensure that the funds projected to be raised by the new paid parking scheme up was not outdone by the cost of implementing the scheme, and to ensure the practicalities of doing so were thoroughly considered.

CIIs agreed that the yellow colour coated bollard from Option One was the appropriate bollard to use (750mm x 50mm square). Bollards quoted by Barriers Direct.

FH said that Barriers Direct is also able to carry out the installation. **Action:** NB to contact Barriers Direct for a quote for 35 bollards and the cost of installing them. TS added that the cost on the website showed a reduction in cost when buying 20 or more bollards.

The draft proposal included a cost of £300.00 per parking space per annum.

RWG added that a quote is needed to install a partition in the middle of the car park. FH added that perhaps this area would also offer the potential for van owners to buy spaces as two bollards could be dropped to create one larger space.

RWG suggested starting only in one area of the car park i.e. along the walls. However, FH said that if HTC did this, there would be conflict between those paying for parking and those not. NB

suggested getting the plan fully costed and then gauging the level of interest for the spaces before carrying out the works.

The initial proposal suggested offering the spaces to residents within a close proximity of the car park first. RWG opposed this as he didn't think it was right to give preferential treatment. All Cllrs agreed that the offer for a paid parking space would be offered to everyone on the electoral roll of Hay at the same time. FH suggested sending flyers to the Almshouses and nearby informing them of when the offer would go live, but not giving them first option.

Phase One: Councillors agreed that in the first instance, the offer of a paid parking space would be offered to all residents on the electoral roll in Hay, and that only one space would be offered.

Phase Two: If all the spaces are not taken up in Phase One, then the offer would be opened up to businesses in Hay as Phase Two.

Publicising paid parking opportunity – FH suggested that the offer be put on HTC's Facebook to gauge levels of support / take up. **Action:** TS to put an article on HTC's Facebook page asking for people's interest.

FIN460. Financial Risk Assessment – amended

NB said that FH and he had gone through the Financial Risk Assessment from 2019 and highlighted proposed changes for Councillors to discuss/approve.

Cash collection – now collected by two people. *Agreed by Councillors*

Wrong salary paid – Admin Assistant added. Annual cost-of-living added. Salary payments to be made on the last day of the month added. *Agreed by Councillors*

VAT payment – now to be claimed annually. *Agreed by Councillors*

Financial Assistance – amended to read that Cllrs should be given financial training/reminders of financial regulations every 6 months. *Agreed by Councillors*

Council Offices changed to Sports Pavilion. *Agreed by Councillors*

Assets – annual inspection of Christmas Lights – *To be determined – depends on whether HTC keeps the lights or gives them to the Chamber of Commerce*

Staff – Loss of key personnel – Clerk – through ill health...amended to include Sub Committee and Full Council to prioritise and monitor workloads and for Chairs of Sub Committees to be updated regularly on other Sub Committees' workloads. Admin Assistant to be given adequate training/information to be able to cover office essentials if the Clerk becomes ill – *Agreed by Councillors*

Land owned by Council – amended to include any contractors appointed to leave site/premises in the condition they found it once works are completed. *Agreed by Councillors*

On the issue of training, TS explained that there is currently free training available from OVW on finance for Mayors and Chairs of Finance. **Action:** TS to send DL the link to the finance training module.

DL and IK also need to go on the Code of Conduct training course.

FIN461. Fixed Asset Register 2020/2021 – amended after Full Council on 10th August 2020

NB reported that the Fixed Asset Register had been deferred in the Full Council meeting on 10th August 2020 because the new computer and lap top had not been included. NB has now added these items to the Balances Carried Forward.

Hay-on-Wye Town Council - Fixed Asset Register 2020/2021				
		31st March 2019	Additional	31st March 2020
			Purchases	
	Asset	Estimated Value		
		£		
1	Christmas Lights	29226		29226
2	Playground Equipment	9348		9348
3	Compaq Computer	100		100
4	Epson Printer	0		0
5	Toshiba Computer	100		100
6	Oki Printer	100		100
7	Screen	100		100
8	Town Crier's Bell	200		200
9	Mayoral Chain	1000		1000
10	10 benches	3798		3798
11	Bus Shelter	1		1
12	15 Litter Bins	15		15
13	Town Crier's Outfits	150		150
14	1 mace	50		50
15	Mayor's Consorts chain	50		50
16	6 tables	300		300
17	Canon Printer	124		124
18	Coin Sorter	145		145
19	Citizen of the Year Board	200		200
20	Tools(wheelbarrow and shovel)	74		74
21	4 dog fouling bins	997		997
22	1 computer, 1 lap top	N/A		1134
23	7 Wooden Sculptures Old Railway Line	N/A		4200
24	1 metal Miles Without Stiles sign land	N/A		1000

	Land		
L1	Land at Warren Close	1	1
L2	Picnic Area by Bridge	1	1
L3	Railway Line	1	1
L4	Black Lion Green	1	1
L5	Land at Bottom of Wyeford Road	1	1
L6	Fishing Warren Cottage to Dulas Brook	1	1
L7	Land at The Meadows	1	1
	TOTAL	46085	52585

FIN461. Recommendation

(i) That the above Fixed Asset Register be approved by Hay Town Council

FIN462. Valuation Office Agency – update

NB said that the VOA had contacted him in response to HTC's initial application to revise the business rates at the Sports Pavilion. HTC has asked that the Sports Pavilion's facilities are split into different areas for the sports clubs. VOA has asked for follow up information in order to determine whether the facilities can be split up which would allow the sports clubs to claim up to 80% rate relief. **Action:** NB to put together the additional information requested by the VOA.

FIN463. Public Conveniences – Booths offer to sponsor toilet at Oxford Road

FH said that Booths have offered to sponsor one of the toilets at Oxford Road. Councillors agreed to defer this item to Full Council on 2nd November 2020.

FIN464. Hay Bowls Club – Recycling Grant request from February 2020

Prior to the meeting, NB had circulated Hay Bowls Club's request for a Recycling Grant. Councillors agreed to defer this item to Full Council on 2nd November 2020.

FIN467. Chamber of Commerce – Christmas Lights contribution – general grant December 2020

NB said that HTC has precepted £1,000 for a donation to the CofC for Christmas lights for 2020. NB added that the CofC has asked if HTC will be making a donation this year. FH suggested giving the Christmas lights to the CofC, but still giving the general grant of £1,000 as per the precept. Councillors also discussed the possibility of taking the putting up of Christmas lights up back in house with HTC organising this and keeping the lights. RWG and FH were in favour of bringing the lights back in house. On the basis of this, two recommendations were made.

FIN467. Recommendations

(i) That HTC gives a £1,000.00 donation from general grants to the Chamber of Commerce for

Christmas lights December 2020.

OR

(ii) That HTC takes the Christmas lights back in house and arranges for the lights to be installed on an annual basis moving forwards.

FIN468. Cheesemarket – request for funding towards social distancing signs and hand sanitisers

FH explained that the Cheesemarket had purchased social distancing stand-up signs for Hay at the start of the pandemic. They have also purchased hand sanitisers for the Cheesemarket. FH said that the Cheesemarket has asked if HTC would like to make a contribution. If so, HTC would be able to make partial use of the social distancing stand-up signs.

TS asked if FH knew how much the Cheesemarket was asking for. FH thought it was just a contribution, but was not sure if there was a set figure in mind. FH to check with the Cheesemarket and then come back to HTC. Item deferred.

FIN469. ILCA course for Christine - £99.00

NB explained that Christine has requested to go on the ILCA course (“Introduction to Local Council Administration”). The course is run online by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) which is the same organisation that NB took his CiLCA course through. NB confirmed that the cost is £99.00 and the course is approximately 20 hours. The course covers 5 main areas of local council administration: Core Roles; Laws and Procedures; Finance; Management; and Community. RWG proposed that CW goes on the course, FH seconded. *Unanimously approved.*

FIN470. Quote from Healthmatic

NB had prior to the meeting circulated a quote from Healthmatic for a variety of items that need repairing across both sets of public conveniences. The quote came to £1,500 plus VAT. However, the quote it not itemised. **Action:** NB to ask Healthmatic for an itemised quote.

Some items were identified by RWG as urgent, including the 4 blocked ladies’ toilets at Oxford Road and two damaged/broken flush handles. **Action:** NB to find a plumber a.s.a.p. to fix the most urgent repairs.

FIN471. Legionella quote

NB had circulated a quote from Alcumus giving a quote for renewing legionella risk assessments across HTC properties. TS and FH needed to leave the meeting before this item was considered. Item deferred until next Finance Sub Committee meeting.

FIN472. A.O.B.

TS said she still has some money outstanding from the £500 emergency cash withdrawn by HTC at the start of the pandemic. TS asked Councillors if they would prefer the money to be returned, or whether to keep hold of it for now in case of further support needed for the community. Councillors agreed that TS should keep the balance of the cash for the present.

FIN473. Time and date of next meeting – NB to arrange