

## HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

### POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

A.M Cooke (*Chairman*)  
S. Walsh (*Vice Chairman*)  
A. Bashar  
R. Cromie \*\*  
P. Lucraft  
A.M Lucraft  
A. Murray  
A. Rees

\* Absent \*\* Apologies

Also present: Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and two representatives from Mid Sussex Radio (part of meeting).

**36. Apologies**

R. Cromie due to ill health.

**37. Minutes**

The minutes of the extra-ordinary meeting held Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

**38. Substitutes**

None.

**39. Public Forum**

None.

**40. Members' Declarations of Interest**

In relation to item 11 – Clair Hall. Cllr Cooke declared that she was the Cabinet Member responsible for Clair Hall at Mid Sussex District Council.

**41. Lists of Payments and Receipts, and Income and Expenditure Report for the Period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) presented the Lists of Payments and Receipts, and Income and Expenditure Report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023. The RFO then welcomed questions. It was confirmed that the running budget totals were set against payments to the date of the payment lists provided. The amount of the gas expenditure was questioned as the budget had been spent. It was stated that the bill paid was an estimated bill and should come down. The expenditure on insurance was questioned as the budget had been also been spent. It was noted that the fee was paid annually at the beginning of the financial year with only changes to the Council's cover requirements potentially effecting the insurance cover budget within year. It was then suggested that the cost may rise as more staff were being employed. This was confirmed as the insurer asks for the number of staff and payroll total when quoting, this would be looked into in the new year. Obviously as the posts were not agreed or proposed when the insurance agreement was renewed it needed to be reviewed. It was also asked what was happening regarding the resolution to invest monies with CCLA. It was noted that monies were being transferred across and the account was open but issues with Natwest and the complications they posed with the mandate changes had delayed all of the money being transferred in one payment. With this;

Members **RESOLVED** the **lists of payments and receipts, and the income and expenditure report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**42. Bank Balances and Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023**  
Without comment.

Members **RESOLVED** the **bank balances and the reconciliation statement as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.**

**43. Grants**

Members noted the pressure on the grants budget as highlighted in the covering report, which potentially, with what was to be considered, could result in little funding being left to award in the January and March meetings of the committee. Where this was not a reason to not make awards, the matter was just presented as an advisory. Members had six grant applications to consider. As representatives of Mid Sussex Radio were present the application was heard first. It was noted that the radio station had around 12,000 listeners and had expanded their operations, due to their rebrand from Burgess Hill Radio to Mid Sussex Radio, by broadcasting to Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and surrounding Parishes. It was stated by the Town Clerk that the organisation supported the Town Council's Christmas Carol event and also attended the Greater Hayward Heath Bike Ride and the Mid Sussex Marathon. With this Members unanimously agreed to make the full award of £500. It was felt that on the grounds that Home Start Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex offered vital services that residents of the Town could access that the request for £500 was supported for running cost. Haywards Heath Division Guides' application for £500 running costs was supported due the excellent work they undertake with the community. Northlands Wood Primary School the grant was supported at the requested £500 level. With regards to The Yews Community Centre, noting that there was a considerable amount of Section 106 Community Building monies allocated to the Centre that an award of £250 towards the security lighting be made to show Town Council support for the project and that officers speak to the Centre manager to make her aware of the monies that were available and how to access them. As the 4Sight Vision request of £4.510 was outside of the grants criteria, Members awarded £350 to recognise the percentage of Haywards Heath residents who used the county wide services. At the conclusion of debate on the grants applications it was asked that where possible that officers present the other sources of funding that the applicants have secured or were seeking to enable them to gauge principal authority and parish support along with third party grant organisations to ensure that there was support across the District for projects that had large running costs and/or provide services across the District and County.

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

- a) **a grant of £500 to Home Start Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex towards running costs.**
- b) **a grant of £500 to Mid-Sussex Radio CIC towards running costs.**
- c) **a grant of £500 to Haywards Heath Division Guides towards running costs.**
- d) **a grant of £500 to Northlands Wood Primary School towards funding a trip to the O2 arena for the school choir.**
- e) **a grant of £250 to The Yews Community Centre towards the installation of new security lights.**
- f) **a grant of £350 to 4Sight Vision towards providing support costs to residents in Haywards Heath.**

**44. Town Hall, Allotment Rents and Burial Charged**

Members agreed to an inflationary rate to all Town Council services. During debate the matter of how the Town Council markets its hiring facilities and its wedding services at the Town Hall was discussed. It was felt that more could be done within this area of work. It was noted that the new website would be a good vehicle for such with updated pictures and descriptions and that with extra staffing resources the Town Council will have further opportunities and time for marketing the Town Hall as a wedding venue specifically. It was also felt that undertaking an analysis of the usage of the rooms at the Town Hall would be a useful exercise so that the quieter periods could be identified and be focused upon. With regards to wedding fees there was debate on the recommendation to freeze wedding fee. Those in favour of a rise saw that the Town Hall was a nice and reasonably priced venue with a number of Members feeling that there was scope to charge more. An initial suggestion was a rise from £400 to £450 with a compromise of a £25 rise being agreed to make such cost £425 for 2024/2025. With the Town Hall, Allotment and Cemetery fees being agreed as suggested and resolved by Members,

Members **RESOLVED** to

- (a) Increase the hire costs for the Town Hall, by 7% for community hirers and 7% for commercial hirers, for the 2024-2025 financial year.**
- (b) Increase the annual percentage rise to Cemetery fees by 7%, for the 2024-2025 financial year.**
- (c) Increase the annual percentage increase in allotment rental fees by 7%, for the 2024-2025 financial year.**
- (d) To raise Wedding fees to £425.**

**45. Staff Recognition Budget**

Members were supportive of the continuation of the staff recognition budget and that it be clearly presented in the Town Council budget moving forward. It was asked if the budget would need to be raised to allow for the two new members of staff that were in the process of being employed. The Town Clerk stated that the matter would be put forward for consideration in the budget setting process within the Member/staff allowances and payments report that precedes the consideration of the full Town Council budget.

Members **RESOLVED** to **the continuation of an allocation of monies in the Town Council budget for staff recognition at £400, under a separate budget heading for 2024/2025. The amount of the allocation would be reviewed for 2024/2025 in January during the budget setting process under Member/staff allowances and payments.**

**46. Clair Hall Working Group**

Members were minded to form the working group so that the Town Council would be well positioned to respond to any consultations or requests for the view of the Town Council, which were forthcoming from Mid Sussex District Council. It was stressed that the working group would respond to such requests not be a forum to develop policy or plans for Clair Hall. It was agreed that the Town Council would use the working group to work productively with Mid Sussex District Council in line with the Town Council policy on the matter resolved in the Town Council's Green Paper. In forming the group, it was felt, due to a number of Members being twinned with Mid Sussex District Council Members, that where possible those who were Town Councillors only should be given the opportunity to sit on the working group. To this end it would have to be a cross Committee working group once Full Council has accepted the formulation of the working group. In setting the group, the Leader of the Town Council was placed on the working group with two others and the Town Clerk was asked to seek two further Councillors. It was agreed that the working group would be called only when required and would sit dormant until a request or consultation was forthcoming.

Members **RESOLVED** to form a working party of five Councillors to consider matters relating to Clair Hall, which will report to the Policy and Finance Committee, and Full Council if required, made up of Cllrs Walsh, P. Lucraft, A. Bashar and two further Councillors to be advised by the Town Clerk.

**47. CCTV Costs For Haywards Heath**

It was noted that the previous Town Council administration had been warned of the pending rise in costs for the transmission charges for the cameras in Haywards Heath, so the report presented simply provided the actual costs. Members aired their concerns regarding the rising costs of the CCTV contract and noted that unfortunately in this instance that there was no recourse for action or ability to challenge the matter as the costs had already been incurred. It was noted that Mid Sussex District Council and the District's other two Towns were also within the contract and facing the same substantial rise in costs to their charges so they were to be liaised with. The rise in costs were due to what was a failure of the Sussex Police to secure and renegotiate the contract for coverage costs before the end of the existing contract that the Councils were tied into by being the owner of CCTV cameras. The Leader of the Town Council also volunteered, as Mid Sussex District Councillor, to ask the Community Safety team about the issue and what the proposed way forward was to be regarding a new contract that the Sussex Police would have to procure. It was also requested that the matter be brought to the attention of Police and Crime Commissioner.

Members **RESOLVED** to note the overspend for the provision of CCTV cameras in Haywards Heath as advised by Sussex Police from £3,745.31 to £5,571.65 (Maintenance (£215 per camera at £1,075 and transmission costs at £4,496.65) and that the monies be paid from the CCTV reserve budget.

**48. Community Award Scheme**

Members were supportive of the proposal and thanked the Events and Community Officer for having the idea and presenting it to the Committee. Members looked forward to receiving the proposed categories and criteria at the next meeting of the Committee with a view to the awards being launched in advance of the 2024 Town Meeting on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Community Awards Scheme.

**49. Items Agreed as Urgent by the Chairman**

It was noted that there had been discussions between Members and the Haywards Heath Foodbank with regards to their need to purchase a new van to save on hire costs. It was suggested that and agreed the Town Clerk makes contact with the trustees to see where they were with the project and return any information and requests to Full Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2023 for consideration,

**The meeting closed at 21:09pm.**