



**HAYWARDS HEATH
TOWN COUNCIL**

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4th October 2023

To all Councillors on the Policy and Finance Committee and others for information

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby requested to attend an **Extraordinary** meeting of the **Policy and Finance Committee** to be held on **Monday 16th October 2023** at **6.30pm** at the Town Hall in the Council Chamber when the following business will be transacted.

Yours Sincerely
Steven Trice
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee held on Tuesday 11th September 2023. (Pages 2 – 6)
3. To note Substitutes.
4. Public Forum - *Members of the public are invited to ask questions or raise issues which are relevant and are the concern of this Council. A period of 15 minutes is allocated for this purpose. Notice of intention to address Council should be given to the Clerk by noon of the day of the meeting.*
5. To receive Declarations of Interest from Members in respect of any matter on the agenda.
6. To consider the creation of two new posts of Committee Clerk and Project Officer. (Pages 7 – 11)
7. To consider exclusion of Public and Press.

Committee Members: Policy & Finance Committee: AM Cooke (Chair), S Walsh (Vice Chair), A. Basher, R. Cromie, AM. Lucraft, P. Lucraft, A. Murray A. Rees.

*'During this meeting the public are allowed to film the Committee and officers only from the front of the public gallery, providing it does not disrupt the meeting. **Any items in the Exempt Part of the agenda cannot be filmed.** If another member of the public objects to being recorded, the person(s) filming must stop doing so until that member of the public has finished speaking. The use of social media is permitted but all members of the public are requested to switch their mobile devices to silent for the duration of the meeting.'*

Town Mayor Cllr Stephanie Inglesfield

Town Clerk Mr Steven Trice

**HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 11th September 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)

15. Apologies

None.

16. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 27th June 2023 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

17. Substitutes

None.

18. Public Forum

None.

19. Members' Declarations of Interest

In relation to item 11 – Bentswood Hub. Cllr Cromie confirmed that she was no longer a Trustee of the Bentswood Community Partnership, but she stated that she had been in conversations with the Bentswood Hub and Clarion Futures.

In relation to item 8 Appendix 2 – Grants. Cllr AM Lucraft stated that she was a Member of Haywards Heath and District U3A so declared a personal interest.

20. Lists of Payments and Receipts, and Income and Expenditure Report for the Period 1st April 2023 – 31st May 2023

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) presented the Lists of Payments and Receipts, and Income and Expenditure Report for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2023. The RFO then welcomed questions, which there were none.

Members **RESOLVED** the **lists of payments and receipts, and the income and expenditure report for the period 1st April 2023 – 31st May 2023.**

21. Bank Balances and Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30th June 2023

Without comment.

Members **RESOLVED** the **bank balances and the reconciliation statement as at 30th June 2023.**

22. Grants Criteria

Members had before them the grants criteria as requested at the last meeting of the Committee, which included the four existing grant categories and the levels of funding associated to each. It was noted that the application form was in the remit of the Events and Community Officer and Members were asked to review the policies that underpinned it. Member's initial attention was drawn to running costs in light of the

current huge inflationary rises, which had put pressure on groups and organisations. It was felt that the maximum of £250 for running costs needed to be raised to £500 as it was too low an amount of money especially with the added issue of the winter months pending. It was then asked how long the maximum level of grant award for each criteria had been in place for? The Town Clerk responded by saying there had been no change for over ten years even though there had been material changes to the criteria wording. This response led to discussion on the implications of simply increasing the running costs amount of funding or looking at all four criterias that were available for award. It was asked if the running costs could be set at £500 but the other three criteria be left flexible to each application if Members felt more money was worthy of award. The Town Clerk advised against such as it would break Council policy on grant award levels and set a dangerous precedent for future applications. To this end, it was suggested that each of the four criterias be increased by £250 each. Leading on from this decision, before resolving such, Members considered the impact of the suggested rises on the overarching grants budget of £8,500 as Members had concerns the rises would put pressure on the budget with some hard decisions having to be made towards the end of the Council year if demand outweighed the funding available. With this in mind, it was moved that the Grants budget be raised to £10,000 for the rest of the financial year alongside a rise of £250 per grant criteria to absorb higher awards, which was seconded and unanimously agreed. The matter of organisations who had received awards already this year was raised in terms of whether they could top up their grants through re-application. The Town Clerk stated that only three awards were made at the June meeting of the committee with two being locked in prices for one off purchases so there was no need to revisit those. The other was for running costs from a large organisation so this could be looked into. Members were reminded that organisations can only apply once a year. It also was confirmed that any changes could be implemented straight away and could be applied to the grants being considered under the next item, with this;

Members **RESOLVED** to increase the Town Council's grants budget to **£10,000 from £8,500. The cost of the extra £1,500 would be met from unrestricted reserves. In addition, the following increase in grant funding per category was resolved.**

- a) **Start-up grant (for newly established groups, defined as those in existence for less than 12 calendar months), can include applications for running costs and equipment) - maximum £1,000 (from £750).**
- b) **Running costs - maximum £500 (from £250).**
- c) **One off cost (eg purchase of equipment) - maximum £750 (from £500).**
- d) **Capital costs (eg costs associated with building projects or alterations to premises) - maximum £1,000 (from £750).**

23. Grants

Members had six grant applications to consider if all being approved, where appropriate, the new funding levels resolved under the previous minute would apply. The awards were made with the following comments. With regards to the stated membership of the Family Support Network it was confirmed that the figure quoted for membership in the application was made up of people engaged with by the organisation. It was felt that this was a reflection on the cost-of-living crisis and the needs of many families. Members made the award with a statement that praised the organisation for working with families and vulnerable people by connecting them to appropriate people and services, whilst also providing outings for children. It was also noted that the organisation had struggled with administrative costs and staffing over the last twelve months for so extra funding in line with the new grant funding levels would be welcomed. It was then noted that U3A provided excellent services in the Town and had a good working relationship with the Town Council. The Community Cinema at Ashenground Community Centre was welcomed and it was noted that the latest delivery of a cinema was a more professional approach after lessons being

learned from previous attempts to provide a much-needed cultural offering in the Town. No comments were made regarding the applications for Air Ambulance Charity Kent, Sussex and Surrey and Kangeroos and awards were made acknowledging the services they offer. In relation to Haywards Heath Town District Guides the amount requested were questioned so the Town Clerk referred to the application and confirmed the amount was correct as a cost £424.80 had been omitted from the report. Members asked that the Town Clerk seek further information to see if more information and costings can be added the grant applied for, circa of £250, to help with other set up costs, for instance uniforms for new members on the basis that the children were not provided with uniform. This information and agreement of the extra funding was delegated to the Town Clerk who would update Members once the matter was resolved. With this;

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

- a) a grant of £500 to Family Support Network towards running costs.
- b) a grant of £239.95 to Haywards Heath and District U3A to purchase a new Gazebo.
- c) a grant of £750 to Ashenground Community Centre to contribute towards equipment for a community cinema.
- d) a grant of £750 to Kangeroos towards the purchase and hire of equipment for a community event.
- e) a grant of £500 to Air Ambulance Charity Kent, Sussex and Surrey towards running costs.
- f) a grant of £748.94 to Haywards Heath Town District Guides towards startup costs for a new guide unit. In addition to this Member delegated authority to the Town Clerk to see if the unit needed further funding towards the costs to the total award level of £1,000. The Town Clerk would the agree if the release of a further £250 was necessary.

24. Investment Opportunities for the Town Council

On request of the Committee the Town Clerk presented a report outlining recommendations for the investment of Town Council monies so to attract an improved return on the funds that it holds currently, which were not realising a substantial rate of interest with NatWest Bank. It was noted that the recommendation was to invest with CCLA Investment Management Public Sector Deposit Fund (CCLA) on a variable yield funding basis with instant access to funds when required on authorisation by two of the four Members signatories. It was asked what due diligence had been taken on the fund by officers in terms of any risks associated with making such an important decision around the investment of tax payer's money. The Town Clerk stated that the fund was used by Principal Councils (including Mid Sussex District Council), parochial churches and was recommended by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Council Clerks. It was also noted on research quickly undertaken at the meeting that the Church of England also invests, who would have undertaken forensic due diligence on CCLA and their ethical status. Furthermore, Town Clerk had spoken to fellow Clerks across the Country who invest with CCLA who provided positive responses and that he had looked at other options such as Unity Trust Bank and Close Brothers who both work within the Town/Parish sector. Each investment option was as risky as each other and that of Natwest Bank. Members then considered the risk element from investment and rereferred to the fact sheet to see where monies were invested in terms of UK vs global opportunities. It was noted that the UK was the biggest proportion as stated in appendix 1 as presented. It was suggested that to protect the Town Council that monies there should be future consideration splitting monies into different institutions. This was noted and felt to be sensible but something that would need to be progressed in the future with the potential for a further £250,000 being placed elsewhere with the possibility of fixing that proportion of monies in a longer-term fixed arrangement.

It was asked how the recommendation of £300,000 of investment was arrived at on the basis that there was £850,000 in the current account, which was considerably over cash flow needs.

The Town Clerk stated it was a best estimate looking at the reserves of the Town Council. Members felt on the grounds of the instant access and the excellent rate of interest coupled with the second half of the annual precept arriving imminently that £500,000 would be in order. This was moved and seconded along with the wish that the interest be re-invested into the fund to gain compound interest. It was then unanimously agreed,

Members **RESOLVED** to invest £500,000 from the Town Council's current bank account at Natwest into the CCLA Investment Management Public Sector Deposit Fund and agreed that.

- a) the monthly dividend being re-invested into the fund.
- b) the signatories on the fund account be taken from those who were appointed as payment signatories, namely Cllrs Walsh, Ellis, Cooke and Murray, by Full Council on the 15th May 2023.
- c) the Town Clerk is authorised to access information regarding the account.

25. Bentswood Hub Funding

Members welcomed the news that the Bentswood Hub, under the auspices of Clarion Futures, seemed to be heading in the right direction for re-opening in the forthcoming few weeks. However, there was concern that the process had been rather slow and that the Hub was not back up and operational for the start of the academic year to support the children and younger people and indeed the wider community. It was felt that September was a crucial time for children and younger people who were transitioning between schools, moving into the areas and facing friendship issues. It was reported that the delays were with DBS checks, the issues of re-employment due to Clarion Future's processes, which in hindsight should have been completed over the summer months. It was therefore agreed once the right people were in place the monies should be awarded with caveats that would give a clear message on the importance of youth services at the Hub, ensure money was not diverted to administrative costs and set against measurable targets. It was also questioned what other funding was being pursued by the Hub and if Mid Sussex District Council had been approached, or indeed made an award outside Warmer Place grants made last year? It seemed that nothing had been granted and the Hub raised its running costs through the centre manager last year, but services over and above were funded from larger organisation including Coca Cola and Waitrose. Members on the understanding that Clarion Futures would be funding the operational running of the Hub, felt that ratifying the £6,000 earmarked and adding a another £6,000 was appropriate as that would ensure the future of the Bentswood Juniors and allow funding to be sourced for the seniors and other services separately. The award was the formally agreed with the following conditions;

- That the funding be specifically used for running of the running of Bentswood Juniors.
- The funding be paid in two instalments with £6,000 when needed immediately and the further £6,000 six months after.
- That the release of the second £6,000 be subject to satisfactory information being provided to the Town Council through a Service Level Agreement.

Members **RESOLVED** to ratify the earmarked allocation of £6,000 to part fund the Bentswood Hub Junior Programme from the Community Warden budget underspend and a further contribution of £6,000 to £12,000 to pay for the whole of the annual running costs from unrestricted reserves. The second payment be subject to satisfactory service level, which was delegated to the Town Clerk to review and agree.

26. External Audit Report

Members welcomed the report and noted the comment regarding petty cash and felt that the report was commendable and thanked the Responsible Finance Officer. It was noted that Internal Auditor stated that the Town Council didn't have petty cash but in fact it did, which was confirmed by the Responsible Finance Officer on questioning by the External Auditor. Members felt that everything was in order so it was strange and then it was confirmed only £150 was held

Members **RESOLVED** to **note and formally agree the report of the External Auditor for the year ended 31 March 2023 along with matter regarding petty cash as raised in the report.**

27. Internal Audit Arrangements

Members were comfortable with the formal extension of three years and were happy to enter into the agreement. It was felt that Mulberry & Co were a competent Auditor and the support of training opportunities was welcomed. It was asked what the previous hourly rate was, the Town Clerk stated he would need to check and come back to Members. Notwithstanding this, Members felt the rate was very competitive for a qualified Internal Auditor and then;

Members **RESOLVED** to **appoint Mulberry & Co as the Town Council's Internal Auditors for a further three years.**

28. Items Agreed as Urgent by the Chairman

It was asked if the Town Clerk would outline the budget setting process. It was noted that the process in place was that undertaken by the previous administration and stated that if Members wished to change or adapt the process, they were welcome to.

The Town Clerk explained that there would be a number of Committee Chair's meetings starting in September, where the Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer would get a steer from Members on what they wished to progress in the next financial year with regards to projects and initiatives and officers would add any needs they required for operational matters. On this basis the Responsible Finance Officer would then also start working on the knowns/fixed cost and then roll the figures into a budget proposal. In turn, the Environment and Purposes Committee would consider its budget in December, which then would lead to consideration of the full budget by the Policy and Finance Committee in January with Full Council sign off for submission to Mid Sussex District Council by the deadline of the 31st January. There would also be some forward budgeting work undertaken alongside this process.

It was then asked if the Town Council had a disaster recovery plan. The Town Clerk says the basis of one exists and there are a number of plans in place, but the document needs to be formalised.

The meeting closed at 20:41 pm.

Committee Meeting: Policy and Finance/Full Council

Report of: Town Clerk
Date: 16th October 2023
Subject: Town Hall Staffing

Purpose of Report:

1. The purpose of this report is to consider future staffing requirements.

Summary:

2. The following reports seeks agreement for the introduction of two new part time posts within the Town Council's administration staff based at the Town Hall. These posts are being recommended due to the increased activities of the Town Council and its future wishes and aspirations.

Recommendation(s):

Members are recommended to RESOLVE to create the following two posts, as outlined in the report in Appendices 1 and 2, employed on a National Joint Council terms and conditions contract of employment with the offer of a Local Government Pension Scheme.

- 1) **Committee Clerk (18.5hrs per week), NJC Spinal point (6-9) at £11,946.50 pro rata (full time equivalent £23.893 per annum).**
- 2) **Project Officer (18.5 hours per week), NJC Spinal point (6-9) at £11,946.50 pro rata (full time equivalent £23.893 per annum).**

And,

- 3) **That the total budgeting cost for both posts be £29,866 which will accommodate salaries and on costs at circa 25% for pensions and employers National Insurance contributions.**
- 4) **That the financial implication as outlined in points 13 – 17 are agreed.**
- 5) **The job description for the Committee Clerk in Appendix 1 and Project Officer in Appendix 2 are agreed.**

Background:

3. During the Town Clerk's appraisal and the Chair's preliminary budget meeting, discussion turned to the Town Council's staffing resources in terms of what current projects and initiatives were outstanding coupled with the new administration's wish to do more in the community by bringing forward new initiatives and projects.
4. This is by no means to say that the staff are not currently performing well. Indeed, they are exceeding expectations, but working well over full capacity. As a result, there has been an ongoing struggle to manage the work that is being driven forward by the Town Council whilst maintaining the day-to-day administration of the Town Council and fulfilling its statutory duties and requirements. What has been achieved previously and since May has been done so with only three full time and three part time members of staff and has relied on flexible and weekend working.
5. Some initiatives and projects have been delayed due to the lack of resources, such as the Town Council's Environment work and the relaunched Active Haywards Heath. There will also be an increase of events next year. Furthermore, the Town Council's Green Paper also needs the support of more resources and the progression of the Town Council's biggest ever project to deliver Hurst Farm. It is also acknowledged that the Town Council operates at the same level as its peers with far less human resource and precept funding.

Areas of work that need to be addressed.

6. The first stress area on workload is around the Community and Events section of the Town Council. The Council is directly organising and/or supporting more and longer events and having to seek more sponsorship from local businesses. There is the added pressure of the success of Active Haywards Heath and the pending Environment work and Dementia work. The Town Council is also looking to increase its grants award programme along with a wish to bring forward a new website in the coming months.
7. The second area of concern is around the time available for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to plan for the future, undertake statutory projects and the pending work required to bring forward Hurst Farm.
8. This stress on resources also has a knock-on effect on all staff as they support each other and find themselves, especially around events, having to divert their time to help leading up to and on the day. This results in toil building so more hours lost in the office.
9. There is also pressure on the Town Council with the volume of calls, visitors and management of hirings, which is edging back up towards pre-pandemic levels. It is noticeable the disruption to officers when short staffed in reception.

Staffing Proposal

10. To this end, this report presents a proposed increase of two posts, both part time at 18.5hrs per week - so an increase of resource equivalent to a full-time post of 37 hours per week is suggested.

The posts are as follows;

- **Committee Clerk:** to support Full Council, Committees, Working Groups and adhoc meetings with agenda preparation, minutes and task logging. There would also be a front of house and reception role plus office administration. See Appendix 1. This post would require attendance at all Council meetings.
 - **Projects Officer:** to support the Community and Events officer with event organisation, leading upon South and South East in Bloom, Active Haywards Heath, support for liaison with the Police and administering the Environment work of the Council. See Appendix 2.
11. Obviously, the employment of two new staff Members will have a knock of effect on the rest of the team so the proposed staff structure in Appendix 3 has been produced and whilst being sensitive to the pay bands of all staff. The posts suggested will be on the same scale pro-rata as the Administration Officer as they are admin posts.
 12. Both posts are able to be accommodated in the office as there is room for another desk in the back office and the Assistant to the Town Clerk does not work on Monday and Administration Officer not working Wednesday and the Mayor's PA/Marketing/Communications Officer only being in the office two days per week.

Financial Implications:

13. As both posts are proposed to be part time at 18.5 hours per week, cumulatively the two posts will be equivalent to one full time post.
14. The rate of pay suggested is commensurate with the pay of the Administration Officer currently in post at the annual salary of £21,968. However, the NJC annual cost of living pay rise for 2023/2024 is still pending and by appointment it is expected that it will be £1,925 per NJC grade taking the post to £23,893 per annum – NJC spinal point 6 raising

to spinal point 9 over four years with each point being awarded on satisfactory service annually. Therefore, the starting salary for each would be £11,946.50 pro rata.

15. The on costs for the two posts will be circa 25% to accommodate employers National Insurance contributions and the LGPS pension schemes taking the financial cost to £29,866.
16. The pay grade suggested would be a starting point to see what quality of candidates apply with thought being given to look into the Parish sector for those who want to learn and progress into Clerking or those who have smaller Parishes with limited hours.
17. To accommodate the employment within year 2023/2024 there will need to be an unrestricted reserve movement to the staffing budget of circa £7,500 depending on start date. The annual cost will then be budgeted for in the 2024/2025 budget and onwards.

Legal Implications

18. The employment of the Town Clerk and other officers is allowed under the Local Government Act 1972 and is a matter for Full Council to decide on new posts and staff structure.

Town Clerk

Haywards Heath Town Council Job Description	
Job Title:	Committee Clerk
Salary:	NJC spinal points 6 – 9 @ £23,893 to £25,119 per annum (18.5 hours pro rata £11,946.50)
Location of work:	Haywards Heath Town Hall
Responsible To:	Town Clerk
Hours of work:	18.5 hours to be worked primarily over 3 days. Requirement to attend evening meetings primarily on a Monday.
Annual Leave:	21 working days per annum plus Bank Holidays (pro rata).
Primary purpose and scope of the job: To provide an effective support service to Full Council, committees, and appropriate working groups.	
Working relationships: Members and officers of the Town Council at all levels, members of the public.	
Key Tasks:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be responsible for all matters associated with Full Council, all committees and all working groups. • To prepare agendas and reports for Full Council, committee meetings and working groups. • To attend and support the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk at Full Council, committee meetings and working groups. • Post all agendas, minutes, and reports to the Haywards Heath Town Council Website and notice boards. • To support the Town Clerk with the production and review of Council policy documents. • To cover reception on days where front office staff are ill or on holiday. • Undertake such other duties as may be reasonably required within this post to support the operational needs of the service area and Council, including deputising for other members of staff during holiday, sickness absence when appropriate. • To assist with general administration tasks as directed by Town Clerk including filing; photocopying; typing letters, reports, other forms of record-keeping and ordering of office supplies. 	
Requirements:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good understanding of vocabulary and grammar. • Good interpersonal skills and able to work well with elected Councillors and staff. • Good I.T. skills. • Good communication skills. • Experience taking minutes would be an advantage. 	

Haywards Heath Town Council Job Description	
Job Title:	Projects Officer
Salary:	NJC Spinal points 6 - 9 @ £23,893 to £25,119 per annum (18.5 hours pro rata £11,946.50)
Location of work:	Haywards Heath Town Hall
Responsible To:	Events and Community Officer / Town Clerk
Hours of work:	18.5 hours to be worked primarily over 3 days Requirement to attend all Town Council Events
Annual Leave:	21 working days per annum plus Bank Holidays (pro rata).
Primary purpose and scope of the job: To provide support for the Town Council's events programme and the projects/initiatives led by the Environment and General Purposes Committee.	
Working relationships: Members and Officers of the Council at all levels, members of the public, voluntary and community groups, other local authority contacts at all tiers of local government	
Key Tasks:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To support the Events and Community Officer with the organisation and delivery of Town Council events and those that the Town Council offers support to third party organisations. • To assist the Town Council in delivering its pledge to help address the climate emergency in relation to its own activities, events, and assets. • To provide support to the Council's Environment Working Group. • To provide support for the administration of Active Haywards Heath. • To manage and organise the Town Council's entry into South and South East in Bloom and support the Haywards Heath in Bloom Committee. • To cover reception on days where front office staff are ill or on holiday. • Undertake such other duties as may be reasonably required within this post to support the operational needs of the service area and Council, including deputising for other members of staff during holiday, sickness absence when appropriate. • To assist with general administration tasks as directed by Town Clerk including filing; photocopying; typing letters, reports, other forms of record-keeping and ordering of office supplies. 	
Requirements:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good understanding of vocabulary and grammar. • Good interpersonal skills and able to work well with elected Councillors, staff and members of the public. • Good I.T. skills. • Good communication skills. • Ability to plan and work to deadline. • Be able to manage and deliver a project from start to finish under direction. 	

Appendix 3 – Separate Document to emails summons and additional documents if viewing on the website.