

## HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes: **Policy and Finance Committee** held on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019

### Present Cllrs:

**J Ash-Edwards (Chairman)**  
**S Wickremaratchi (Vice Chairman)**  
**C Laband \*\***  
**C Ash-Edwards**  
**A Boutrup \*\***  
**R de Mierre**  
**S Hillier**  
**M Pulfer**

Apologies \*\* Absent \*

Also present: Cllr H. Mundin and Andrew Sturgeon (RFO).

- 41. Apologies**  
A. Boutrup – Holiday  
C. Laband – Holiday
- 42. Minutes**  
The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2018 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.
- 43. Substitutes**  
H. Mundin for A. Boutrup
- 44. Matters Arising**  
None
- 45. Declarations of Interest**  
Cllr S. Hillier declared a personal interest in item 9 under Grants as a Member of the Bentswood Community Partnership.
- 46. Payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.**  
Members had before them the list of payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Then the following were asked by Members,
- It was asked what the payment to East Grinstead Town Council for £400 related to? It was explained that it was a fee for the administration and secretarial services for the Mid Sussex Association of Town Councils, which is paid by all three Town Councils to the Town Council running the Association each year.
  - It was asked what the payment relating to Western Road cemetery related to? The RFO stated it was a quarterly payment for the maintenance of the nun's burial area.
  - It was questioned what the payment for preliminary plans for South Road related to? The Town Clerk responded by saying it was investigatory work undertaken as result of Full Council's resolution, under a motion made by Cllr Knight, to ascertain the possibility of a trial

of shutting South Road, on weekends, from Haywards Road to the Sussex roundabout.

- Members were concerned about the cost of advertising for the Community and Events post and advertising of employment with the Town Council generally. The Town Clerk responded by saying that attempts to use social media and the government gateway via the job centre had proved fruitless in the past so with the importance of the post it had to be advertised further afield than Haywards Heath.
- It was asked what the lump sum payment to Natwest Barclay Card related to and how the payments were recorded? It was noted that the accounts including the credit card statement were reviewed by Members as another form of audit above the cheque signatories. The RFO stated that each transaction was also reported in the income and expenditure sheets presented to the committee. Transactions normally related to small payments and travel costs.  
With no further questions.

Members then **RESOLVED** to;

**Recommend to Full Council the list of payments and receipts, and income and expenditure for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.**

**47. Town Council Allowance and Staff/Members Expenses**

Without comment Members unanimously **RESOLVED** to;

**Agree the expenses and allowances payable to Councillors and staff for the financial year 2019/20, which had no change to the 2018/2019 rates.**

**48. Town Council Budget for 2019/2020**

The RFO introduced the draft 2019/2020 budget and informed Members that the Environment and General Purposes Committee had already agreed their section of the budget, which was recommended to the Policy and Finance Committee as part of the report. The RFO went on to inform Members that the budget was based on a 2.5% rise in the amount payable by the tax payer and that the precept showed a 4.1% rise due to a rise in the Tax Base at an additional 1.6 % to the 2.5% in Council Tax, which comprised a rise in the number of houses in the Town due to development. Then the following were asked by Members,

- The RFO was asked why the Town Council's allocated reserves were not presented with budget. The RFO directed Members to the finance reports under item 6 of the agenda.
- It was asked if the money allocated for the Community Warden was enough. The Town Clerk explained as the Community Warden budget started mid-year the annual budget goes over two financial years, which was not ideal. Nevertheless, the total contribution was £26,500 per annum with £5,000 allocated within the current year's budget.
- It was noted that the rise in pension allocation was due to Members of staff joining who had previous pension arrangements. The current year short fall was due to staff leaving.
- It was asked if the budget set would cover the costs for elections moving forward and pay for any previous by-election costs that may be outstanding. The RFO stated that costs had been paid and the allocation would cover costs for the elections in May and then would start to build up reserves for future elections.

- The Chairman pointed out that it was his belief that the £4,000 allocated for the BID was not required as MSDC were going to pick up the total cost. The Town Clerk stated he was not aware of this and would speak to the officer leading on the BID proposals.

Members noted and agreed to the RFO suggestions for the allocation of forecasted reserves and resolved the recommendation (b) in the report as presented. Cllr Pulfer stressed that with the adoption of the Country Park, the Town Council must except the liability that would come with such and stated his concern that a claim against the Town Council could lead to a substantial hit on Town Council reserves, or indeed wipe them out, if the appropriate measures were not in place. To this end, he had asked the Town Clerk to organise a health and safety report of Asylum Wood. At the end of debate the Town Clerk was asked to split the last line of the resolution to make it clearer to read, as it was clearly showing the small proportion of the Council Tax payable to the Town Council.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

**Recommend to ratify the recommendations of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 and,**

**(a) approve the 2019 - 2020 budget, with a 4.1% increase in the precept and a 2.5% increase in the amount payable by Council Tax payers. This equates to a precept of £608,025. This will represent an average Band D Council Tax of £50.92 p.a.**

**(b) approve the earmarking of the projected 2018/2019 underspend to the following reserve headings;**

- a. Western Road Cemetery - £3,854**
- b. Muster Green (Trees) - £1,750**
- c. Maintenance of Buildings and Grounds - £2,350**
- d. General Reserve - £10,234**

#### **49. Grants**

Members considered two grant applications which were unanimously agreed in line with officer recommendations. During consideration Members made mention of the Christmas event organised the Bentswood Community Partnership, which provided presents for less fortunate children in the Ward. This demonstrated to the Committee the excellent work of the group, with this.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

- a) Award a grant of £500 to Bentswood Youth Club to provide equipment and resources for fun and positive activities.**
- b) Award a grant of £100 to reMember towards their annual conference.**

#### **50. Urgent Business**

None.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm