

## HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes: **Policy and Finance Committee** held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018

### 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. Munding, Cllr C. Cheney and Andrew Sturgeon (RFO) (part of meeting),

**Before the meeting formally opened, in the absence of the Vice Chairman Cllr Wickremaratchi, Cllr M. Pulfer was nominated and duly seconded to become the Vice Chairman for the evening.**

#### 41. Apologies

S. Wickremaratchi – Holiday.  
C. Laband – Holiday.

#### 42. Minutes

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

#### 43. Substitutes

H. Munding for S. Wickremaratchi.  
C. Cheney for C. Laband.

#### 44. Matters Arising

None

#### 45. Declarations of Interest

Cllr A. Boutrup declared a personal interest in item 9 as the owner of one of the companies stated in the report. As no decisions were being taken on favoured contractors, or any procurement being undertaken Cllr Boutrup was not asked to leave the Chamber.

Cllr S. Hillier declared a personal interest in item 10 as a West Sussex County Councillor.

Cllrs J. Ash-Edwards, C. Ash-Edwards, S. Hillier and M. Pulfer declared a personal interest in item 10 as directors of Haywards Heath Town CIC.

#### 46. **Payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017.**

Members had before them the list of payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017. The RFO pointed out during his introduction that the payment made to Landbuild was made under the West Sussex County Council's Operation Watershed and the cost would be countered by a grant payment by the County Council. Then the following were asked by Members,

- It was asked why only £75 had been spent on the Community Warden Project. The RFO explained that the expenditure related to a helmet and padlock for the electronic bike. It was also noted that the Cooperative, who administer the project, were not very quick off the mark in collecting the Town Council's contribution.
- In relation to the payment for vehicle tracking, it was noted that there could be General Data Protection Regulation implications to tracking vehicles. The Town Clerk stated that this would be looked into outside of the meeting.
- It was asked why sponsorship was slightly under the forecasted budget. It was noted that Crest Nicholson had withdrawn from the St Francis Park roundabout sponsorship.
- In relation to the advisor fees budget it was asked what the budget heading covered and why there had been reserve movements. It was noted that this budget covered any fees for third parties such as legal advice, employment law advice and the forthcoming need for advice on General Data Protection Regulation implications. With regards to the reserve movements it was down to an allocated reserve being held for authorised expenditure between financial years.
- The same was asked of the Muster Green budget. It was reported that maintenance works were ongoing.  
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> November 2017 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017.**

**47. Town Council Budget for 2018/2019**

The Town Clerk introduced the draft 2018/2019 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 Town Clerk went on to inform Members that the budget was based on a 9% rise in the amount payable by the tax payer. In monetary terms this showed a rise to the average Band D Council Tax of £4.10 per annum (34p per month/ 8p per week) and meant the cost would increase to £49.68 per annum for a Band D property. The RFO added that the precept showed an 11% rise due to a rise in the Tax Base at an additional 2% to the 9% in Council Tax, which comprised a rise in the number of houses in the Town due to development. Members were informed that the income from the cemetery was forecasted to be lower as the forecast was not going to be met this year as burial are a very difficult income stream to forecast and manage as it was not in the gift of the Council to envisage how many were to be undertaken year on year. It was also noted that the majority of the rise was required to increase funding to the Community Warden Project, to fund the South Road Tree project and incorporate a larger budget for Town Council events due to the 100-year anniversary of the end of World War, the 100-year anniversary of the Haywards Heath RAF and the Victoria Cross Winners event, which were all projects that would benefit the community. The RFO then welcomed questions from Members.

- There was concern over the doubling of the hospitality budget. It was noted that this was to cover staff recognition as asked for by the Leader of the Town Council and the Town Mayor. Where Members were not overly comfortable with the inclusion of such, it was not challenged

formally so Members resolved for the budget to remain at £800 including staff recognition.

- The RFO was asked to confirm that the increase to bank charges was down to the introduction of the Worldpay card reader. This was confirmed.
- It was asked for confirmation that the significant increase in the Warden Budget was down to funding being withdrawn from the Police and Crime Commissioner? The Town Clerk explained that it was always the case that the funding would reduce over three years so the Town Council could precept accordingly. This had happened in years one and two, but there did not seem to be any funding available for year three, which was expected at the outset of the project, so the budget had been set on that basis,
- It was asked for confirmation that the budget for cemetery contractor works had been reduced in line with the reduction income. The RFO explained that this was correct as the less burials the less expenditure would be incurred.
- It was asked why the street lighting budget had been reduced. It was noted that a healthy reserve had been built up as a number of projects were funded by Section 106 monies. Notwithstanding this, it was noted that upgraded projects were ongoing and the budget would be increased in the 2019/2020 budget due to a reduction in the requirements on event funding.
- It was questioned why the In-Bloom budget had increased even though it was well under budget. It was noted that expenditure was pending on the in-year budget and the increase was to cover catering costs of events, which were only realised this year because Town Hall staff were not available to cater for thank you parties.
- It was asked why the budgeted income for Town Hall hirings had been reduced for 2018/2019. The RFO stated the NHS had been a great source of income over the year, but their hirings were to stop because of budget cuts. As a result, the forecasted budget was set on the best information available without their income included within.

On a general note Members were supportive of the budget and the rise in Council Tax, but felt that the publicity needed to be right during a time when all agencies and authorities were raising their precepts and residents were in for a considerable rise in their collective Council Tax bill, the Chair's were thanked for their hard work, which started with the Town Clerk and RFO back in September. Without any changes to the budget as presented;

Members **RESOLVED** to **recommend**;

**The 2018–2019 budget to Full Council for adoption, with an 11% increase in the precept representing the average Band D cost of £49.68 per annum and a 9% rise in Council Tax.**

#### 48 Grants

Members considered four grant applications two of which were unanimously supported, namely to Haywards Heath Town Football Club for directional signage and the Impact Foundation for a healthy eating project for local school children. Grants to, Mid Downs Radio and Mid Sussex Choir were deferred under delegated authority to the Town Clerk and Chairman as Members required further information. In relation to Mid Down Radio, Members wished to know if they were buying a bespoke computer package relevant to their activities. After a split vote of four Members for and four against to grant to Mid Sussex Choir, the Chairman suggested that information be sought from the

Choir on their activities in the community and the amount of monies raised for good causes. This request was made on the grounds that the application showed a very minimal amount of activity and residents reached. With this

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

- a) **A grant of £200 to Haywards Heath Football Club towards directional signage.**
- b) **A grant of £499.72 to Impact Foundation a towards healthy eating project for local school children.**
- c) **To defer the awarding of a grant of £500 to Mid Downs Radio towards a new laptop, to the Town Clerk and Chairman, after further information is sought on the specification of the laptop and the packages needed to run the laptop.**
- d) **To defer the awarding of a grant of £250 to Mid Sussex Choir towards running costs, to the Town Clerk and Chairman, after further information is sought on the community involvement of the Choir.**

**49. Reorganisation of Haywards Heath Town Hall Office Area**

Members were supportive of the revised proposals as presented by the Town Clerk. It was noted that the works would require the relocation of staff and it would be undertaken in line with standing orders and financial regulations, which would involve the Chairman and Vice Chairman. With this,

Members **RESOLVED** to;

- a) **Approve a structural reorganisation of the Town Hall office area.**
- b) **Agree the draft plan for the reorganisation of the Town Hall office area as presented**
- c) **Approve the spending of £15,500 of 2018/2019 Capital budget monies on the structural reorganisation.**
- d) **Instruct the Town Clerk, under delegated authority, to deliver the structural re-organisation in line with Town Council Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.**

**50. Future of Haywards Heath Town CIC (CIC)**

Members considered the future of the CIC run services as the owner of the company and holder of all contracts with its partner Councils, on the understanding that the CIC board of Directors would make the decision on all administrative and operational matters. Members, whilst being mindful of the success of the project over the last five-years felt that there would be a big change, in terms of reporting and the support offered by Haywards Heath Town Council, for residents, within the Town and the partner parishes that would need to be communicated. Members noted and were agreeable to all services currently offered by the CIC being covered by Haywards Heath Town Council Groundstaff between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018 along with support of KPS with regards to weed spraying. Turning to the services affected by the closure of the CIC, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018 onwards, it was agreed that the street nameplates service (until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020) and relief road roundabout maintenance (until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019) should continue as per existing contracts. These contracts would then have to be reviewed at their end with the relevant principal authority. Members regrettably had to agree to all services being stopped in the three partner parishes. With regards to services tentatively offered by West Sussex County Council post 1<sup>st</sup> July 2018, on the advice of the Town Clerk, dismissed grass cutting due to the cost associated making the work unviable and there

needing to be a level of double taxation. However, Members even though they had concerns about this year's weed growth authorised the Town Clerk to negotiate further on continuation of the weed spraying service and the implications of only undertaking safety critical vegetation cut backs. In closing of the debate, it was requested that the Town Clerk be commended for his work and professionalism during the five years of the operation of the Haywards Heath CIC and the devolved highways works undertaken.

Members **RESOLVED** to,

- a) **All contracts, including the devolved highways works contracted from West Sussex County Council, street nameplate maintenance and replacement contract with Mid Sussex District Council, Haywards Heath Relief Road roundabout maintenance and adhoc contractual work in the three partner parish councils, being withdrawn from Haywards Heath Town CIC on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018.**
- b) **The Haywards Heath Town CIC will lay dormant as of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018.**
- c) **The following services currently provided by Haywards Heath Town CIC are to be undertaken by Haywards Heath Town Council,**
  - **Street nameplate maintenance and replacement contract with Mid Sussex District Council**
  - **Haywards Heath Road roundabout maintenance.**
  - **Weed spraying and vegetation cutback be further investigated by the Town Clerk.**
- d) **The following services currently provided by Haywards Heath Town CIC are not to be undertaken by Haywards Heath Town Council and are ceased.**
  - **All ad-hoc parish partner contracts (31<sup>st</sup> March 2018)**
  - **Any services offered by West Sussex County apart from weed spraying and vegetation cutback, 30<sup>th</sup> June 2018.**

**51. Urgent Business**  
None.

Meeting closed at 8.56pm