

HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes: **Policy and Finance Committee** held on Monday 4th November 2019

Present Cllrs:

J Knight (Chairman)
C Ash-Edwards (Vice Chairman)
R Bates
R Cromie
C Evans*
C Laband
R Nicholson*
M Pulfer

Apologies ** Absent *

Also present: Cllrs Inglesfield and Wickremaratchi, Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer.

21. Apologies

None.

22. Minutes

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on Monday 2nd September 2019 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

23. Substitutes

None

24. Declarations of Interest

None.

25. Payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period 1st July 2019 – 31st August 2019.

Members had before them the list of payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period **1st July 2019 – 31st August 2019**. The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) welcomed questions with the following being asked by Members;

- It was questioned why a payment was made to Mid Sussex District Council for reconciliation of street nameplates? The Town Clerk explained that at the end of each year, under the Service Level Agreement for providing the service, any unspent money is returned to MSDC and then a fresh payment is made for the following year. It was acknowledged by the Town Clerk it was a strange arrangement, but it was what was required by Mid Sussex District Council.
- It was asked if the Town Council could pick up the sponsorship for unsponsored roundabouts. The Town Clerk said unfortunately this would not be possible as West Sussex County Council had taken that part of the service back.

Members then **RESOLVED** to;

Recommend to Full Council the list of payments and receipts, and income and expenditure for the period 1st July 2019 – 31st August 2019.

26. Report of the External Auditor – Year Ended 31st March 2019

Members welcomed the clean bill of health given by the auditor who made no recommendations or had any points of concern. The RFO was thanked for his hard work and then,

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to;

Full Council the formal minute noting the report of the external auditor for the year ended 31st March 2019.

27. Committee Timetable

Without comment,

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Adopt the Committee Timetable for the Council year 2020 - 2021.

28. Grants

The Town Clerk updated Members on the available amount of monies for awards, which totalled £5,795 of the £8,500 budget allocated for grant awards. Members considered each grant in turn and were supportive of four of the applications and deferred an application for further information. The application deferred related to the St Peter and St James application. This was on the grounds that it was suggested, due to the worthiness and excellent work of the hospice, that the award be doubled from what was applied for at £250 to £500. The Town Clerk interjected, acknowledging that he agreed with the sentiment of the suggestion, and stated that where the Committee could do such it would then have to recommend any inflated award to Full Council as it would break adopted Town Council Policy by exceeding the Grants Policy, which only allows for £250 to be awarded towards running costs. Furthermore, if the policy was broken then it would leave the Town Council exposed to further applications exceeding the agreed limit. Members considered the Town Clerk's advice and after thought was given to a prudent way forward. It was then agreed to stay within the policy, defer the grants and ask the applicant if they had one off project or purchase, they would wish to apply for, which would fall into the bracket of a £500 award.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

- a) **Defer the determination of an award of a grant to St Peter and St James Hospice.**
- b) **Award a grant of £250 to Revitalise Respite Holidays towards running costs.**
- c) **Award a grant of £250 to Dame Vera Lynn Children's Charity towards running costs.**
- d) **Award a grant of £250 to 4Sight Vision Support towards running costs.**
- e) **Award a grant of £250 to Haywards Heath Town Team CIC towards running costs.**

29. Town Hall, Allotment Rents and Cemetery Fees for 2020/2021

Members considered the report of the Town Clerk and the recommendations for the rise in Town Hall service fees for 2020/2021. It was felt that the 3% rise as suggested by the Town Clerk was appropriate for all Town Council services apart from the cost of hiring the kitchen facilities being uplifted to £15. This fee was moved on motion and seconded and duly agreed unanimously. It was also

moved and agreed that wedding fees would rise by £10 to £360. During discussions, for ease of administration, it was also agreed that charges would be rounded up to the nearest 50p or £1.

Members **RESOLVED** that,

As of the 1st April 2020, the following price rises for Council Services are implemented,

- (a) Increase the hire costs for the Town Hall, by 3% for community hirers and 3% for commercial hirers. Plus, the use of kitchen rising to £15.**
- (b) Increase the annual percentage rise to Cemetery fees by 3%.**
- (c) Increase the annual percentage increase in allotment rental fees by 3%.**
- (d) To raise Wedding Ceremony Fees to £360.**

30. Operation London Bridge Policy

Members noted the Policy and welcomed it. The Town Clerk was asked if everything had been purchased to enable the policy to be actioned and if not did such require a budget. The Town Clerk responded that the costs were minimal apart from the condolence book, but had been catered for through the stationary budget, so the policy could be implemented.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Adopt Haywards Heath Town Council's Operation London Bridge protocol.

31. National Association of Local Councils (NALC) Model Financial Regulations

Members considered the NALC Model Financial Regulations as presented with the covering report. Members felt that the regulations were too prohibitive for a forward-thinking proactive Town Council with multiple services and responsibilities. Notwithstanding the fact that there have to be regulations to protect public monies, it was felt the Town Council, which has multiple layers of regulations and internal auditing processes, did not need such a wide range of tight regulations, which would make operations unmanageable. It was also felt that a number of the Model Regulations only benefitted small Councils and felt that NALC needed a differing set of regulations for small and large Councils. However, it was noted that there were many regulations with the Model Regulations that were potentially worthy of review and using within the Town Council's existing Standing Orders and Financial regulations, which were reviewed and adopted each year at the annual Town meeting of the Town. It was noted that the Town Clerk was undertaking a Governance Review of the Town Council so it was agreed that the work to pull out and adopt any good practice regulations would be undertaken and incorporated with the changes to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations when they would naturally need to be made and adopted to allow any changes to the Town Council's governance set up. This work was due for completion so the Town Council would change to any new Governance Structure in May to coincide with the annual of review Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Members **RESOLVED**;

Not to adopt the National Association of Local Council's model Financial Regulations, but review the contents of the

document and implement changes to the Town Council's existing Standing Orders and Financial Regulations during their pending review in line with Town Governance structure.

32. Mid Sussex Polling Places and Polling Station Consultation

Members agreed that there needed to be a further polling station in the Bentswood Ward and felt that America Lane Recreation Ground Pavilion would be a suitable central location especially with the pending improvements to the building and the new Community/Scout Hall to be built in the near future on the site linked to the pavilion.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Make a representation on the Mid Sussex Polling Places and Polling Station Consultation as per the body of the minute above.

33. Urgent Business

None.

- 34.** Members **RESOLVED** to enter into exempt business to review and note staff appraisals.

Meeting Closed at 8.27pm