

HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes: **Policy and Finance Committee** held on Monday 26th June 2017

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: Andrew Sturgeon (RFO)

1. **Apologies**

None

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 10th April 2017 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

3. **Substitutes**

None

4. **Matters Arising**

None

5. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllrs A. Boutrup and S. Wickremaratchi declared personal interests in item 13, due to their positions at South East Business Systems the Town Council's IT provider. The Town Clerk felt that it would be very unlikely that the matter would be discussed in such depth that any specific contract issues would be mentioned, but noted the declarations for record.

6. **Payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period 1st January 2017 – 31st March 2017.**

Members had before them the list of payments and receipts and income and expenditure reports for the period **1st January 2017 – 31st March 2017**. The Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) welcomed questions with the following being asked by Members;

- An overspend on grounds maintenance was questioned. It was noted that the spend related to the works to the roof of the Town Hall.
- Hunters Estate Agents income quarter five. It was asked what the payment referred to. The RFO explained this was money collected by the Town Council as the contract holder for the Haywards Heath Town CIC under roundabout sponsorship.
- Three large payments were questioned within the payments listing. It was noted that two related to monthly bulk payments for staff salaries, and the other was for the annual Town Christmas lighting scheme.
- A large spend on the allotments budget was questioned. It was noted that this was due to works to the toilet on site, which included the excavation of land and the replacement of sewer pipes.
- It was asked why the Town Council was paying for dog bins to be emptied. It was explained the payment was for collection of two bins from Town Council owned land.

Members then **RESOLVED** to;

Recommend to Full Council the list of payments and receipts, and income and expenditure for the period 1st January 2017 – 31st March 2017.

7. Income and Expenditure Accounts and Balance Sheet – Year Ended 31st March 2017.

Members noted the reduction of unrestricted reserves due to unforeseen circumstances, such as the work to the Town Hall roof, but were assured by the RFO that they were still a healthy position. To alleviate any pressure on unrestricted reserves it was also noted that £7,500 had been allocated in the 2017/2018 to a specific budget heading, so initial emergency works could be undertaken without having to disturb reserves. The unrestricted reserves along with the allocated reserves totalling £245,584.03, which could reallocate by Committee agreement, Members noted that there was £389,138.11 total in the Council's reserves. It was asked if the Town Council benchmarks its level of reserves with other Town Councils. It was explained that this would be impossible because Town/Parish Council's vary in size, the services they offer and indeed how they set up their budgets. With no two Council's being the same there was no ability to do such a benchmarking exercise. There was one further question about VAT repayment with the RFO confirming that the Town Council as a local authority was able to reclaim the tax it pays. Then without further comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Income and Expenditure Accounts and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March 2017.

8. Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2017 – Internal Audit Report

It was asked under this item why the cyber insurance, as agreed by the Committee and mentioned in the Auditor's report had not been purchased. It was noted that this was down to timing issue of the Auditor's report and the fact that the insurers who offered the service had been slow in responding, on the basis that they did not get the main Town Council Insurance contract. Noting there were no major issues and, the Internal Auditor was happy with the financial action of the Town council;

Members **RESOLVED** to agree to and note the contents of the Internal Auditor's report.

9. Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2017 – Section 1 Annual Governance Statement

Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Annual Governance Statement for the year ended 31st March 2017.

10. Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2017 – Section 2 Accounting Statements

Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED** to adopt the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31st March 2017.

11. Grants

Members considered three grant applications all of which were approved. With regards to the application from the Haywards Heath Youth CIC Members were happy to support the project on the grounds that there had been so much money withdrawn from youth services over the last few years. However, it was not clear, from the report presented, how many children would participate. It was agreed that the Clerk in liaison with the Chairman would find out and report back to the Committee, but then the RRO located the application form and ascertained that 150 children would be participating, so as a result Members were happy to award the grant. Members had no question in relation to awarding a grant to Know Dementia and agreed to award the start-up costs as requested. Based on the earlier agreement to award to the Haywards Heath Youth CIC, Members agreed to an award to the Third Haywards Heath Scouts towards weekend activities for its Beaver unit. It was questioned whether these kinds of grants could open the door to a large number of applications of this kind. It was felt that the grants scheme was open to all and there would be no problem in competition for the allocated monies. Members welcomed the application from St Peter and St James Hospice towards repairs to existing facilities and were happy to award the grants, with this;

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

- a) **A grant of £250.00 to Haywards Heath Youth CIC towards the organisation of a Volunteer Fair.**
- b) **A grant of £750.00 to Know Dementia towards the opening of a Memory Cafe.**
- c) **A grant of £500.00 to the Third Haywards Heath Scouts towards weekend activities for the Beavers.**
- d) **A grant of £745.00 to St Peter and St James Hospice towards repairs to existing facilities.**

12. Future of the Community Warden Pilot Project

The Members of the Committee were comfortable with moving into the second year of the project based on the report presented. However, there was agreement that year three funding needed to be looked into quickly because of the withdrawal of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner. It was noted that business interaction was to be increased including a discussion with the Orchards Shopping Manager.

Members **RESOLVED** to **Recommend to Full Council** to;

- a) **Enter into year two of the Community Warden project.**
- b) **Present an updated report for ratification to Full Council.**
- c) **Delegate authority to the Town Clerk to: -**
 - a. **Formally apply for funding from the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner and the Co-operative.**
 - b. **Progress the second year of the project with SWL Security and Sussex Business Crime Unit.**
 - c. **To execute agreements with partner organisations and a grant agreement with the Police and Crime Commissioner.**

13. Financial Risk Policy for the Town Council.

Members considered the re-tabled policy, welcomed the work undertaken and without comment.

Members **RESOLVED** to;

Adopt the Council's revised Financial Risk Assessment.

14. Urgent Business

None

15. Exempt Business

The committee resolved to enter into Exempt Business to consider the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee held on 10th April 2017, which were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chairman.

Meeting closed at 8.46pm