



Minutes of the 'Remote' Meeting of the Finance Committee Held on Thursday 26th November 2020 at 7pm

Present:

Councillors:

Nicky Smallbone (NS) - Chair
Roger Beattie (RB)
Matt Reid (MR)
Tim Horton (TH)
Ian Hill (IH)
Steve Bolingbroke (SB)

Officer:

Kristina Tynan (KT)

Members of the Public

1 (For Agenda Item 9:7)

39/20 Apologies for absence

There were none.

40/20 Election of Vice-Chair

Steve Bolingbroke proposed Tim Horton and Ian Hill seconded. There were no other nominations.

Resolved: That Tim Horton be elected as Vice-Chair of the Finance Committee.

41/20 Approval of Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes from the Meeting held on the 24th September 2020, which were received by Council on 13th October 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman when possible.

42/20 Matters Arising

There were none other than agenda items.

43/20. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest notified.

44/20 Update on Existing Issues

1. **Rent Review of Sports Field** – Letter received by Jonas Carter – this was *attached to the agenda*.

After discussion on this it was agreed to send a letter to Jonas Carter stating that we do not agree with their proposed rent amounts and they have not considered the valuations given to them by our Land Agent. In relation to the Agreement clause we should propose a figure and if this is not agreed we should consider going to Arbitration.

IH/TH to look at the evidence and then a 'Without Prejudice' draft letter to be prepared (SB/NS) which will be further discussed at the December meeting and following liaison with our agents.

2. **Bank account review** – Consideration of opening an account with Unity Bank. The Clerk to get recommendations from other Clerks and if positive to open an account. KT/NS to do this.

45/20 Grants Requests

1. **St Leonards Church** – Request for grant for Churchyard 2021/2022

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That a grant be awarded for £850.00

2. **Watlington Climate Action Group** – The request for a thermal imaging camera and cost of doing a household survey of £10 each was noted. The Clerk to see more clarification.

46/20 Budget

1. **Budget 2020/2021** – An update was sent out prior to the meeting and the provisional year end draft figures prepared by the Clerk were noted. It seems likely we will have an underspend of our budget this year. RB asked if the IT costs could be looked at to see if any savings can be made.

A note has been received from WCAG asking if any remaining funds remaining in the climate change budget could be earmarked. **This was noted.**

2. **Precept and Budget 2021/2022** – Initial discussions took place. Another meeting has been scheduled in for 17/12/2020.

TH stated that we need to establish a procedure to agree the budget for 2021/2022. He suggested that we need to look up a regular amount to be put into a sinking fund for the pavilion. The committees have given their suggestions. It was noted that the Car Park business rates will be now lower following Andrew McAuley's challenge with the Valuation Office. A new computer for the office will also be needed.

It was agreed that NS/TH and the Clerk put together a first draft of the budget for the meeting on the 17/12/2020.

3. **Children's Centre** – We have not had any update from them.

47/20 Financial Issues

1. **Car Park Hill Road – To review this following the last meetings resolution.**

a) To agree when invoices should be sent out to businesses for contributions.

Resolved: That we send invoices out for 50% of the total contribution amount to all businesses in Watlington in recognition of the impact that COVID 19 has had.

b) To note the Co-op have made no payments for 2019/2020. A meeting had been arranged with Rhys Jenkins, but this did not take place due to COVID 19. The Clerk reported that she has had a conversation with Heather Bates (Head of Property Co-op) and will send her some information in the first instance.

2. **WBA request for donation for Christmas Trees** and consideration of some backdated funds

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That in the light of now payment for these since 2016 and now with Covid 19 we allocate £1000 for trees and decoration of Watlington. (£450 is currently the budgeted figure)

3. **CIL** – To note that WPC currently holds £19,205.67 that £82,056.34 is held by SODC.

4. **Earmarked Funds** – These were noted, and the sheet is attached for information.

5. **Internal Audit Statement (Annual)** – to accept the following statement.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: The main role of the Internal Auditor is to check all the financial and accountable records that the Clerk must keep. This is done soon after the end of the financial year and involves all the financial transactions and both the legal authority and procedural authority for such transactions - eg the signed minutes of all meetings. Once the Internal Auditor is satisfied with the accounts and records, the Clerk prepares the relatively brief submission to the External Auditor. During the year the Clerk occasionally seeks her advice - eg in transferring the Receipt and Payment accounts, operated through the year, into Accrual accounts needed for audit. Were the Clerk to leave or become temporarily unavailable, the Internal Auditor would assist a new or acting clerk. The Internal Checklist was noted.

6. **Tendering Process** – This will be discussed at a future meeting.

7. **Deed of Easement** –26 Hurdlers Green – Discussion –*papers on this were attached to the agenda.*

The applicant was present for this item. There was much discussion and the draft Deed of Easement (DoE)2016 was considered. The DoE would be only for the current householder, if the house was sold the DoE would cease.

It was also agreed that if needed, advice could be taken from OCC on the added value to the householder. It was noted that the map would need to be changed as the route has altered IH said that he was concerned about any damage to the trees. The applicant stated that OCC had attended site to look at the dropped kerb and the SODC Forestry Officer has been out and did not think that the tree was in any danger. One tree is being removed as it is dead. IH said that he would attend the site and look at the trees and land. There had been a sum allocated to this easement which Members had not been previously been aware of. It was agreed that a revised agreement and map to be done and a recommendation to be given to the December Full Council meeting to expediate this issue. **IH/NS/TH** to prepare this.

48/20 Review of Policies/ToR

1. **Risk Register Review** – IH will review this for the next meeting.

2. **Financial Regulations Review** (last reviewed Sept 2018) – Please see attached NALC model regulations (July 2019) – It was noted that the current ones are good, and this will be further discussed at the next meeting. **NS/TH will go through these in advance.**

3. **Investment Policy** – Draft needed. To note that Parish Councils can invest monies in NS&I products as it is part of the UK Treasury Department. **SB** will draft one for the next meeting.

4. **Safeguarding Policy**

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Council agree this policy

5. **Terms of Reference Review** -This will be discussed at the next meeting.

49/20 Staff Issues

1. **Discussion on remit for staff pay issues** – This will be discussed at the next meeting.

50/20 Correspondence/Information

There was no correspondence for discussion.

51/20 Any Other Business

There was no other business notified.

52/20 Items for the Next Meeting

Preferred Contactors List

Staff Reveiws – These will take place at an appropriate time.

Items carried over from this meeting.

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9PM