



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 10.45am at the Committee Room at the Town Hall

Present; Cllrs Betts, Bradbury, Flunder Jordan, Ladd. Also present the Town Clerk.

1. **Apologies:** There were no apologies for absence.
2. **Declarations of interest:**
  - a) To receive any declarations of Personal Interest regarding the agenda. *Nil*
  - b) To receive any declarations of Pecuniary Interest regarding the agenda. *Nil*
  - c) To receive any request for dispensations regarding the agenda. *Nil*
3. **Matters from the public**

*The purpose of the meeting is for Councillors to discuss Town Council business and whilst the attendance of electors is welcomed, they are not allowed to join in the discussions of the Councillors.*

*During each meeting the council will adjourn for a period for public questions. During this time, electors can put questions to the Chairman regarding matters on the agenda. Where possible, the Chairman will respond but the matter may have to be deferred and placed on a later month's agenda for discussion.*
4. **Minutes of the last meeting** - the minutes of the November meeting were approved and signed and had been noted at the previous Town Council meeting.
5. **Management accounts 2019/20.**

The management accounts to end November 2019 were presented by the RFO and discussed on a line by line basis with analysis against budget code for each individual account code. The actual spend for each account code was considered against agreed budget.

There were no matters of concern to highlight noted by the Finance cttee within the 8-month accounts relating to expenditure.

With regards to income due, the cttee noted the decision of Town Council with regards to rents due and outstanding, and those rent reviews awaiting completion.

The month end management accounts and bank reconciliations for October 2019 and November 2019 were reviewed and approved by the Chair of the cttee and signed off as required.
6. **Donations** to receive requests; S and R Society re dog bags/ Neighbourhood Watch schemes. **Southwold and Reydon Society had requested a donation for purchase of bio -degradable dog poo bags. Last donation had been £100 in October 2018. These bags are well used, and it was recommended by Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Betts that a donation of £150 be made.**

Request from Suffolk Neighbourhood Watch Association for donation to cover general operating costs of the Organisation. There are no known active schemes in Southwold. Request declined at present time.

7. **To consider** - quote for the audio system extension of an additional speaker and 3 roving microphones.

This matter had been deferred from a previous council meeting. The Town Council system would need good Wi-Fi to operate outside the Town Hall and this is not believed to be the case at the Arts Centre where the greatest need for a portable system would be required as Stella Peskett has own microphone system. It was agreed that this does not need to be considered further at the present time.

8. **STC Priorities 2020/2021- for finance cttee to consider.**

Discussion re the priority allocated to F and G cttee 'review building, maintenance, grounds, and legal agreements to ensure that they deliver value for money.'

Discussion re the above. It was agreed by all to review the property rent agreement with NPS in 2020. Works programme would then be to review grounds and solicitor agreements in future years.

9. **Draft Budget 2020/2021 - for council Jan 2020**

Members and cttees have had input into the draft budget that will be provided to council in January.

10. **Other matters including:**

- Southwold and Reydon Emergency Group – banking arrangements – noted.
- Beach Wheelchair – It was noted that following requests from residents/ visitors, a beach wheelchair has been suggested for purchase by the Town Council. However ESC ward Cllr and Sole Bay Care have offered to fund at 50% each. Thanks were extended to both and the finance cttee noted the purchase would be made by STC and would be an STC asset. Arrangements will be made with RNLI and Pier to house it and arrange requests for loan. Sentinel to be asked for the terms of their wheelchair loans in Lowestoft. All noted that this was a great initiative and Cllr Ladd advised that he would be supportive of a second one aided by his locality budget if usage demands. Tony Smith to be advised once the chair is received. Press to also be advised.
- Jet washing pavements – complaints received re the state of the pavements. Clerk has checked with Norse and they will not be funding a clean. L and E to consider.
- Pre-Paid cards – Fairfx have been recommended as a provider. Application form and terms and conditions to be obtained. Discussion to be held with other councils with such cards.
- Hudson Energy – as agreed with chair of Finance a 1-month contract was entered into and this has reduced the non-contract standing charge rate from £6 per day to 28p per day. Discussion re taking a 12-month contract at same rates. It was agreed by all that Chair of Finance would review the terms and have permission to approve the supplier on similar rates for 12 months to negate need for monthly contracts. Agreed by all.

11. **Governance matters**

Mention was made that the Station Road working group is concerned that it is being cited by some as a reason why the Enterprise Hub project is not progressing within the original timescales set on the consultant's project plan. Cllr Flunder asked that it be noted that there are many areas within the risk analysis that have yet to be given green lights by the F and G Cttee/ STC and that the working group are therefore not the cause of delays.

It was suggested that in view of the number of risk matters that need to be progressed in relation to the Station Road site i.e. contamination surveys, planning procedures etc – Town Council to consider the appointment of a third party to assist town hall staff resources in taking these matters forward to enable STC decision making/ completion of each.

12. **Date of next meeting – Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at 10am.**

***Exclusion of Public and Press:** This cttee will consider information about individuals disclosure of which would breach the obligations of a council under Data Protection Act 1998, information that is commercially sensitive including tenders/ quotes, communications from professional advisers solicitor/ surveyors, architects which is protected by legal professional privilege, legal documents such as leases which are subject to contract. All such information is subject to confidentiality. Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodied (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following;*

- a) Tenders – a review of property maintenance quotes took place with the landlords cttee – recommendations to take to full council as annotated on property worksheet.
- b) Rents – Rents outstanding were considered with the landlords legal sub cttee members and following receipt of legal advice, recommendation to go to full council regarding collection of outstanding rent due.

Chair.....

Dated .....

**Recommendations**

Southwold and Reydon Society had requested a donation for purchase of bio -degradable dog poo bags. Last donation had been £100 in October 2018. These bags are well used, and it was recommended by Cllr Jordan, seconded by Cllr Betts that a donation of £150 be made.

In view of the number of risk matters that need to be progressed in relation to the Station Road site project i.e. contamination surveys, planning procedures, governance etc – Town Council to commission extra resource to progress the identified risk matters to enable STC to have sufficient information for subsequent decision making.