



MINUTES FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held 15th May 2020 at 1pm by Zoom

FIN REP 05.20

Present – Cllr Betts, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Flunder, Cllr Jordan and Cllr Ladd.

Also present – Town Clerk, and 2 members of the public. Cllr Windell as chair of Landlords Cttee.

1. **Apologies:** To receive apologies for absence. 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.

A member of the public asked about the need for office space in Southwold in view of Covid restrictions, and how this might reflect on the scheme at Station Road.

4. **COVID 19 implications**

The Town Clerk had prepared, and provided members with, a revised budget as a working document which could reflect the potential impacts of Covid on the Council budget for 2020/2021.

- *Consideration of need for Covid 19 emergency fund.* The immediate fund which could assist with an emergency fund is the donations budget. Original budget has designated £15k – of which £10k had been recognised as potentially being required to assist with the provision of car parking at the Millennium Foundation. The other £5k has already been allocated for Covid 19 requirements.

Cllr Ladd advised that the car park project might not go ahead in this financial year.

After discussion it was agreed to recommend that all of this £15k budget be designated for Covid related matters.

- *the impact of Covid 19 on Council original budget 2020/2021* - Cllr Bradbury advised that the revised budget shows that the Council finances are robust enough to withstand some loss of income in the short term i.e. over the next 12 months and still enable the projects/work from Landlords Cttee and L and E Cttee to go ahead. Cllr Flunder advised that he had asked for clarification on some specific lines of the budget and that answers to these might enable more funds to be freed up.

Cllr Ladd advised that the only known factor in the budget for this year would be the precept – as that had been set in January 2020, and that apart from the property income and expenditure, other aspects of the budget were relatively small.

With regards to properties, Cllr Windell was invited to join the meeting to update on the present repair projects. Cllr Windell provided the update on all the works, explaining how

Covid had impacted the repairing timescales.

Cllr Jordan suggested that it would still be opportune to sell a Strickland Place property.

Cllr Flunder expressed frustration at the length of time it took to get repairs completed and for the properties to be relet. Cllr Jordan asked that Finance Cttee be updated regularly on the repair programme and its progress. It was suggested that the membership of Finance Cttee and Landlords Cttee might need reconsideration as at present there were 4 members who are on both. To be considered at a future agenda.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the role specification for a property manager had been sent to various agencies and quotes were awaited.

The Town Clerk reminded members that apart from some allocation of monies (£100k) towards decontamination remediation at the Station Road site, the remainder of the project was not included within either the original, or revised budget (as it would rely on grant funding, capital asset funds, or potential loan finance).

- *Immediate budget priorities* – the town mgr. budget, as required to assist with the economic recovery of the town, has been included within the draft budget, and this will need to be agreed as part of the updated and revised budget at the next Town Council meeting. Shuttle service has relied on donations/sponsorship for viability, but such financial support is unlikely to be available this year. With the requirements of social distancing likely to be in place for most of the year, the provision of the service in its present format will not be possible. Other governance formats such as a charitable body, have been researched by the group but are not possible for the present service which is presently ceased until further notice. Other opportunities may be sought including liaising with Reydon P C. Cllr Ladd suggested that any monies saved from the cessation of the service should be put towards improving and expanding cycling provision.
On the recommendation of Cllr Betts, seconded by Cllr Flunder, it is recommended by the Finance Cttee that the provision of the shuttle service by Southwold Town Council be ceased on a permanent basis.

5. Date of next meeting – tbc