



## Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 at 2pm 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.*

There were no members of the public.

4. **Minutes of the last meeting** - the minutes of the February 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 February 2020 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 11-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/ lease reviews awaiting completion.

The month end management accounts and bank reconciliations for February 2020 were reviewed and approved by the Chair of the cttee and signed off as required.

6. **Donations** to receive requests; Monkey Business Circus has asked the council to consider a request to assist with its operating costs for putting on performances during Easter. The Town Council grant policy provides for assistance for fixed asset purchases but not for ongoing running costs. In view of the town Council policy the cttee agreed that a letter should be sent advising of the reasons why we would not be able to assist on this occasion. The cttee is aware that the applicant has also approached the SCC ward councillor for assistance – and that some assistance may be possible.

7. **Other matters**

**Quotes for grounds works** – 3 quotes had been received for the grounds works required by the Town Council including; grass and hedge cutting at Tibbys Green and the Klondyke, grass at Electricity Green, and ground works required at town council properties. Summary quotes as follows; **Quote A £1420 Quote B £179 Quote C £775**

**It was agreed by all to recommend that Quote C be accepted.**

**Quotes for pavement cleaning** - Following complaints last year the town council received a grant from ESC for the cleaning of the pavements throughout the High Street. The appearance did improve significantly but in view of the footfall this would ideally need to be carried out at least twice per year. Following that, some businesses commissioned to have their frontages done on a regular basis. It was suggested that the Town Council also set an example by having the pavements cleaned outside its own premises. Quotes have been requested for this pavement cleaning. Quote A = £660 for twice a year clean outside council properties in Market place, Town Hall and Hurren Terrace/ Station Road. A second quote has been requested but not received. Discussion re Quote A – this business carried out the cleaning of the pavements for the whole of the High Street as funded by the grant and has a local connection.

**It was agreed by all to recommend that this quote for £660 therefore be accepted for the cleaning of pavements outside council properties.**

**Investment updates** – further to agreements in 2019 the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund has been opened and the initial investment of £300,000 is now to be made. Delegated authority provided to the Finance and Governance cttee in June 2019 to spread max £800k balances across other accounts and bonds. The CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund is open to all public sector investors and invests in around 30 AAA rated banks and institutions and is acceptable within the Investment Policy. The use of the fund will spread council investments as per best practice and is used by many town and parish councils. The risk of a single bank having difficulty is therefore spread out across this investment.

Discussion took place regarding investing a further £300k into the CCLA account and the cttee all confirmed that they would be agreeable to this. This deposit will be deferred whilst rates on other bonds, bank accounts are considered. The advantages/ disadvantages of early repayment of the loan also to be considered.

8.

**a) LATCO** – As per the minutes last month, Elysian Associates had provided the costs for setting up a LATCO and for the governance arrangements to be drawn up. Costs would be as follows;

*£150 plus VAT for company limited by shares*

*£5000 plus Vat for company limited by guarantee*

*£2000 plus vat for professional fees re tax advice for the company*

*£9500 plus Vat for legal advice re options appraisal*

*£12500 - £25,000 for legal implementation and property transfer*

Further advice has been sought on the need for a LATCO – the Town Mayor and Town Clerk has discussed the matter with advisers at ESC (who itself has been taking legal advice into setting up a LATCO). The legal advice received by ESC suggests that a LATCO only needs to be considered if a local authority wishes to undertake any investment/ profit making venture unconnected with regeneration/ normal local authority investment. ESC legal advice had also highlighted the need to carefully consider both the advantages and disadvantages of a LATCO especially in relation to the necessary transfer of assets, loss of assets from the council, and the rules regarding who could/ could not be company directors. The Town Council project at Station Road involves regeneration and it would therefore appear that a LATCO would not be a necessity. **It was agreed by all that the LATCO would therefore not be a recommended way forward at the present time.**

**b) Internal Financial Controls** – The Chair of the Finance cttee will be completing the internal financial controls prior to month end.

#### **9. Date of next meeting – tbc**

***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 – no new tenders received.
- b) Rents – Rents outstanding were considered with the landlords legal sub cttee members and following receipt of legal advice. See confidential minutes of landlords legal sub cttee.

Chair.....

Dated .....

#### **Recommendations**

**Quotes for grounds works** – 3 quotes had been received for the grounds works required by the Town Council **It was agreed by all to recommend that Quote C be accepted.**

**Quotes for pavement cleaning** - **It was agreed by all to recommend that the quote for £660 be accepted for the cleaning of pavements outside council properties.**

**Delegated authority provided to the Finance and Governance cttee in June 2019 to spread max £800k balances across other accounts and bonds. The CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund is open to all public sector investors and invests in around 30 AAA rated banks and institutions and is acceptable within the Investment Policy. CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund has been opened with initial investment of £300,000. Further £300k to be deposited, if appropriate, once considered against other accounts/ bonds.**