



MINUTES FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held 19th November 2020 at 10am by Zoom

FIN REP 11.20

Present – Cllr Betts, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Flunder, Cllr Jordan and Cllr Ladd.
Also, present – Town Clerk.

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.
 - d) To receive details of any lobbying to members. Nil.

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.

Nil

3. **Minutes of the last meeting REP 10.2020 –**

The minutes of the REP 10.2020 meeting were approved and signed - the recommendations having been considered for approval at the previous Town Council meeting.

Thanks were extended to the town clerk for the detailed minutes.

4. **Management accounts 2020/2021**

The management accounts to end October 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 Covid revised budget. Following agreement at a previous meeting a virement of £5k from the Covid budget has been allocated to gardening and town works to increase its Covid budget to £10k.

Discussions;

Covid – signage re one-way system to be reviewed – town manager has been asked to consider banner across High Street, and eye level signage. Cllr Ladd advised that SCC Highways permission would be required for anything across the street.

Solicitors – to be reviewed Jan 2021 together with a revised residential property advisor provision.

Town manager – ESC has advised that the revenue funding for the role cannot be decoupled from the Station Road Redevelopment capital funding. To enable both revenue and capital funding to be released there needs to be certainty that the capital project is going ahead in accordance with the agreement from the funders, which ESC determine as being when the capital build commences.

Other Fees relating to Station Yard redevelopment are presently being paid by STC. Reclaim from the grant funding will be as above.

Play areas – the cttee were advised that there had been recent vandalism at Tibbys play area- repairs are being costed.

Property repair/ maintenance works –detailed expenditure summary provided analysing the invoices received against quotes and budgets.

After full discussion, there were no matters of concern to highlight noted by the Finance cttee within the 7-month accounts relating to expenditure.

With regards to income due, the cttee noted that the rental income was within the revised Covid 19 budget and may well exceed the revised budget set.

Grants have been received from ESC for setting up the Town App £7k, and a Business Association £3k, together with a further £1,000 for the Events ticketing platform.

Business rate relief has been allocated to the Town Hall - £10k

Open air cinema ticket monies have been received.

CIL total for 2020/21 has now been received - £8993

Kilcock toilets – income has been reduced due to the free provision of the toilets during the summer – income for July/ Aug/ Sept 2019 to be analysed to quantify potential income loss.

Capital sale income of £15500 has been received for the shuttle bus

Income to the end Oct 2020 is £325,460 – expenditure £179,049.

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

5. **Donations – to receive requests;**

Nil

6. **Other Finance matters**

- *Precept deadline and tax base – timescales*

Letter from ESC has been received setting out the provisional tax base and the dates for setting precept. Last date for advising ESC of precept for 2021/22 is 31st January 2021. Town Council to note.

- *Budgeting timescales; Including PCSO 2021/2022 and Cttee budgets*

PCSO - Police Service Level Agreement - The present PCSO SLA finishes in March 2021 – this will therefore need consideration by town council as to whether a new SLA will be entered into for a further 12/ 24 months.

Letter has been sent to Reydon PC to see whether they would wish to share the PSCO support through pro rata funding for their requirements. Letter also sent to ESC to see whether they have any funding available to support the assistance provided by the PCSO to the Harbour area – ESC have confirmed that this might be possible once the HMC has been set up.

It was noted that PCSO's do not work after 6pm and therefore are unavailable to deal with anti-social behaviour etc that takes place in an evening.

Discussion took place about the views of the community on having a dedicated PCSO – and whether the post now represented value for money for the community – it was agreed that this was difficult to quantify as community policing is about social value rather than measurable data. Examples were provided of the advantages of having a dedicated PCSO in

the community. Discussion about undertaking some form of community consultation – and the types of consultation that might be appropriate.

Council to consider provision of a PCSO for 2021/22 and 2022/23 at the November STC meeting once the views of Reydon P C are also known. It was acknowledged that the Police Authority wish to know whether a resource is required in Southwold as soon as possible – with a request that they be contacted by 30th November 2020.

Committee Budgets for 2021/22 – the Town Clerk advised that cttees will be asked to prioritise their work programme for the next 3 years, consider their 2021/22 budget requirements and then provide a budget request for the RFO/ finance cttee to consider when drafting the overall council budget.

- *Standing Orders / Financial Regs update*

Standing Orders; Nalc advise that the thresholds for contracts regulated by the Public Contracts Regulation 2015 have been altered and that the Standing Orders need to reflect the new limits.

It is Recommended that the Southwold Town Council Standing Orders be amended to reflect the new statutory thresholds for contracts regulated by the Public Contracts Regulation 2015.

Financial Regs; the NALC adopted Financial Regs also need to reflect the statutory limits as above – these have been included within the amended draft attached.

The finance cttee also considered the suitability of the present council limits for obtaining quotes. The clerk explained that both STC and other councils were presently experiencing difficulties in obtaining 3 quotes, probably impacted by Covid and the resourcing ability of contractors - in many instances contractors are not responding to requests to provide quotes – which in turn causes delays to decision making for STC. In view of the difficulties presently being experienced it was agreed by all to recommend that council approve the revised financial regulations as attached which include an amendment to the limits for seeking to obtain 3 quotes as follows.

‘The Clerk or RFO shall aim to obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply) where the value is not less than £10,000; where the value is below £10,000 and above £5000 the Clerk or RFO shall seek to obtain 3 quotations’.

Draft financial regs as attached - to be reviewed in May/June 2021 .

It is Recommended that the Southwold Town Council Financial Regulations be approved as per the draft attached with a further review to be scheduled for May / June 2021.

- *External Audit deadline update*

External Audit has now been received and this will be presented to Council at its next meeting.

7. **Governance /policies to complete/ review**

Nil

8. **Date of next meeting** - Wednesday 2nd December at 2pm

Exclusion of Public and Press: Pursuant to section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it was unanimously resolved that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the following;

Consideration of commercial quotes - see Confid recommendation

Chair.....

Dated

DRAFT