



MINUTES FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held 8th March 2021 at 11.30 am by Zoom

FIN REP 03.21

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

Also, present – Town Clerk and 2 members of the public.

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.

A member of the public commented on the Station Road project, the governance for the specifications and the tenders, and on the accounting within the 3-year budget.

Cllr Bradbury advised that the budget for the Project will be a separate budget to the main budget, with expenditure being reclaimed through the grant, and through the proceeds of the capital sales. Should the project not go ahead, Cllr Bradbury advised that the Council need to consider how to fund other aspects as owners of this site.

Cllr Bradbury advised that the Project Manager (Uttings) sets the agenda for the Project Board and decisions are then made accordingly.

Cllr Bradbury advised that the Project Manager will ensure that the Business Review is received in accordance with the scoping brief. A public meeting is to be held on Thursday at which David Lock Associates will present.

A member of the public asked about the minutes of the Project Board and whether these were in the public domain. The clerk explained that the Project Board was a working group rather than a cttee and that formal minutes were therefore not required to be taken.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting REP 02/2021 –**

The minutes of the REP 02/2021 meeting were approved and signed.

4. **Management accounts 2020/2021**

The management accounts to end February 2021 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. There had only been a few entries during the month as most payments had been made on 1st March 2021. The Town Clerk talked members through the entries as displayed on the management accounts.

Rental income – has held up well despite Covid.

Salaries/ pensions etc are as per budget

Insurance premiums are paid monthly in line with direct debit mandate

Business rates and standing chargers for services were paid as per direct debits.

After full discussion, there were no matters of concern to highlight noted by the Finance Cttee within the 10-month accounts relating to expenditure.

Income to the end Feb 2021 is £389,258 against Covid Budget of £294,500– expenditure £350,323 against Covid budget of £366,050.

The month end management accounts and bank reconciliations for February 2021 were reviewed and approved by the Chair of the Cttee and signed off as required.

5. **Other Finance matters**

Budget 2021/22 including updates on;

Town Manager Budget 2021 – maximum budget being requested for the 6months to Sept 2021 is £7,500 which will include Covid safety interventions, ambassadors, open air cinema events. It is anticipated that the Business Assoc may donate some proceeds from the Open-air Events to the Xmas lights for 2021 as it is anticipated that Adnams may reduce funding. Business Association is making the arrangements for its own bank account.

Investment Advice – The Cttee will continue to take advice on ways to optimise interest and will make recommendations in due course.

Property Governance advice – the Cttee will continue to take advice on this and report back in due course.

Bank Signatories.

Full signatories on the Council accounts are any 2 of the following: Cllrs Betts, Bradbury, Flunder, Ladd. The Town Clerk is an administrator and a signatory in case of need.

Online Banking – the creator of payments and authorisers are as follows:

C Spence – create only

Cllrs Betts, Bradbury, Flunder and Ladd and the Town Clerk are able to create and authorise payments as required – 2 authorisers per transaction as per bank mandate above.

Council Modernisation Programme – having been approved by Council, the Secretary and Town Clerk are meeting with the suppliers this week to advance the Programme.

Year End close – update. All arrangements for year-end close are made – RBS will close accounts during April and internal audit will be in May in order that Council can sign off by June.

3-year Budget – work in progress document that will be forwarded to Cttee members in order that it may be brought up to date as decisions are made.

Insurance update – Insurers have advised that the units at Station Road site are covered for public liability only as they are empty and in poor repair.

Cllr Bradbury reminded members of the public meeting being held re Station Road redevelopment later in the week.

Town Clerk was asked to ensure that Covid related matters are incorporated within the insurance policy. Discussion about Covid related signage on lamp post.

The insurance brokers have advised that the Policy that they take out for Town and Parish

Councils will change providers at next renewal. Council to consider any cost/cover implications at this stage.

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

- **Biodiversity Policy** – model policy - agreed to recommend
- **Policy for dealing with abusive, persistent, or vexatious complaints and complainants** .
model policy – agreed to recommend
- **Risk Management Policy** – model policy – agreed to recommend
- **Model Publication Scheme Statement and Details** – updated policy – agreed to recommend
- **Covid 19 Health and Safety Policy and general Health and Safety Policy Covid** – agreed to recommend.

Town Clerk advised that the staff who use the Town Hall are now undertaking Community testing via Lateral Flow tests twice a week. Work from Home guidance is still in place nationally but there is a need for the Town Clerk to work from the office some days per week.

Discussion about the opening up of the Town Hall as the restrictions ease – and what measures might be required. It was suggested that a temporary Perspex screen could be made to go within the entrance hallway – Clerk to contact M & H Plastics to assess cost and availability.

Covid Risk assessment to be updated as legislation alters.

Remote meeting legislation expiry on 7th May 2021 could create more people needing to use rooms and facilities at Town Hall.

- **Donations Policy** – Discussion about the present consideration of donation requests and whether these should be considered on a first come first served basis or at quarterly/half yearly intervals.

Discussion about the present limit of £250 within the Policy. It was suggested that each application should be considered on its merits and that the maximum grant provided for any request should be 50% of the cost being requested rather than the present £250 limit.

It is recommended that the Donations Policy be amended as follows.

Donation requests will be considered on a quarterly basis – but it was acknowledged that the Finance Cttee/Council would reserve the right to consider any outside of this period if it was a matter of emergency.

Max donation of £250 to be replaced with max 50% of cost of asset being requested.

Each application to be decided on merit.

Exclusion of Public and Press: Nil