



Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee held on Friday 1st May 2020 at 1pm via zoom

Present; Cllrs Betts, Bradbury, Flunder Jordan, Ladd. Also present the Town Clerk and 2 members of the public.

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.

A member of the public asked if the council would be assisting tenants with rental holidays.

4. **Minutes of the last meeting** - the minutes of the March meeting were approved and will be signed.

5. **Management accounts 2019/20.**

The management accounts to end March 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. The RFO explained any discrepancy against the respective budget/ account code and explained as these were first draft year end print outs there may be the need to correct transfers within the account codes if any invoice etc had been applied to an incorrect code. Discussion took place regarding the overall year end position and it was noted that income for rents were as per the budget set and had been well monitored.

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

6. **Other matters**

Covid 19 including.

Emergency arrangements re delegations – The cttee noted and approved the scheme of delegation that had been put in place as an emergency measure for April 2020.

It was agreed that as the ability now exists to hold cttee meetings and full council meetings by audio/ video for a temporary period of up to a year, then this should enable decisions to be made in this way in the future and that the scheme of delegation should therefore no longer be required.

Covid 19 emergency fund – the cttee noted the need to put a fund together for any immediate assistance that may be required as part of COVID 19 emergency arrangements. **Terms of reference for the Covid 19 emergency fund to be considered by the cttee. Council to be asked to approve an initial fund of £5000.**

Immediate Budget priorities – the cttee noted the need to review the budget for 2020/21 in light of Covid 19.

SCC Cllr Ladd advised that SCC had had a look at its budget and had assessed that there may need to be an increase in budget provision of 15% for Covid related matters.

Discussion re the budget implications for STC. The cttee noted that with events not taking place some of the events budget would become available immediately. The Town mgr. role may also need a budget in view of the requirements of Covid 19 and this would need to be assessed. It was agreed that the RFO would review the budget and that cttee meet again in 2 weeks to discuss further.

Online Banking – thanks were extended to the signatories for adapting to this method of payments. The remainder of the cttee will also be added to the online banking system.

Arrangements for year end. The RFO explained the change on deadlines for the external audit and explained the procedures that are in place for year end close and for internal audit.

Meetings via Zoom – the cttees had now held a meeting by Zoom and all members are getting used to the new way of working. The RFO confirmed that much ‘upskilling’ had had to take place in a very short space of time. **The ability to hold remote meeting is part of new government legislation, and supersedes existing legislation, and forms part of the council standing orders with immediate effect. Council to note.**

7. **Donations** to receive requests.

Request from Southwold and Reydon Society for assistance with Tardis repairs.

Reydon pc has offered £450 and £300 is being requested from STC. Discussion took place regarding this with all members keen to assist.

Cllr Ladd advised that it might be better for both Reydon P C and Southwold T C to use their own funds for Covid 19 related local matters, and that he would therefore offer to fund the cost of the repairs as requested from the Parish Council and the Town Council from his SCC Locality Budget.

Thanks were extended by all.

Arts Centre. The accounts for the Arts Centre are now with the Charity Commission and have been loaded onto the public system. **It was therefore recommended that the monies raised by Cllr Tucker as Mayor be released to contribute to the purchase of the projector as previously explained.**

Other grant request from Arts Centre – the Arts Centre have requested a further grant/ loan towards the operating expenses of the facility during Covid 19. Discussion took place to understand what the funds might be required for and whether other organisations might also need such assistance.

The Town Mgr. will be asked to contact the Arts Centre and other such organisations to discuss the matter in order to understand the potential need for such a fund. The Finance cttee will then consider the criteria for such a grant/ loan facility and to consider appropriate terms of reference and criteria and to come back to a future meeting.

8. Date of next meeting – Friday 15th May at 1pm

***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) Rents – Rents outstanding were considered. See confidential minutes of landlord’s legal sub cttee.

Chair.....

Dated

Recommendations

It was agreed that as the ability now exists to hold cttee meetings and full council meetings by audio/ video for a temporary period of up to a year, then this should enable decisions to be made in this way in the future and that the scheme of delegation should therefore no longer be required.

Terms of reference for the Covid 19 emergency fund to be considered by the cttee. Council to be asked to approve an initial fund of £5000.

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It was therefore recommended that the monies raised by Cllr Tucker as Mayor be released to contribute to the purchase of the projector for the Arts Centre as previously explained.