



MINUTES FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE meeting held 12th February 2021 at 10am by Zoom

FIN REP 02.21

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

Also, present – Town Clerk and 1 member 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.

Nil.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting REP 01/2021 –**
The minutes of the REP 01/2021 meeting were approved and signed.
4. **Management accounts 2020/2021**
The management accounts to end January 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.
Discussions relating to the management accounts.
Town Hall running costs includes the one-off purchase of 2 laptops to enable Councillor inclusivity in online meetings.
Funding received for professional fees/feasibility study on Boating Lake and funding applications had now been spent on the initial application to Heritage Lottery Funders.
Solicitors provision –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 including the necessary contamination research and project management fees. Reclaim from the grant funding will be as above.

Play areas – From Rospa report Klondyke skate area needs resurfacing at cost of £2500– materials purchased.

N plan Reg 14 – fees for professional advice and consultation/printing etc £1937.

Property repair/maintenance works – £95490 includes Market Place repairs - to cover from loan proceeds

Software and support include mapping, and assistance with improving practices for remote working £5135.

Professional fees £13817 includes support on police station site

Audit fees have now all been paid – budget allocation £800 to be transferred to grounds maintenance.

CCTV – £653 includes Mights Bridge annual fee.

Bank charges - the bank has reclassified accounts and the Town Council is now classed as a business and business charges will therefore apply.

Cil expenses – costs of cycle shed provision at rear of Town Hall to be allocated once invoice received.

Kilcock Toilets – are presently closed due to vandalism. Costs of repair being ascertained.

Town Pump – repairs executed on one of posts which had been damaged by a reversing vehicle

Asset purchases include the litter picking equipment part funded by ESC ward Cllr contribution.

Highways budget – will be rolled forward and allocated as part of the Sustainable Transport priority projects for 2021.22

Memorial seat – new one purchased and installed on Electricity Green.

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

With regards to income due, the cttee noted that the rental income has exceeded the revised Covid 19 budget with tenants having received all of the appropriate Government Covid grant aid and having had a very successful trading period once open.

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 £4228.

Market is now closed as part of the Covid regulations apart from essentials – Income to date £5494.

Insurance contributions are being received from tenants.

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 Jan 2021 is £378927 against Covid Budget of £294,500– expenditure £344507 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**

- *Precept demand to ESC* – following the agreement of the precept in January the precept demand has been sent to ESC.

- *Budget/ Precept 2021/22* – this has been published in the local publications and via the Town Council newsletter and on the website.
- *Year-end closedown* – software closedown will take place 28th April 2021.
- *Property management - scope* of works sent to various potential suppliers. Members asked to forward any further recommendations to Town Clerk. ESC to be contacted to see who they use.
- *3 Strickland Place* – completion expected in March
- *Valuation update* – 3 quotes have been received for carrying out valuations - £0 £60 and £250 per property. Discussion about the reason for the valuations and the costs above. It was agreed that having a full market valuation at this point in time, will help show rates of return, liability of repairs, lending base. It is agreed by all to ensure that the quotes are for valuations all on the same basis.
Following to the meeting it was agreed by cttee members to go ahead with valuations at £0 cost per property and that as/when a full RED Book valuation is required on any property for any reason, then this can be arranged separately.
- *Station Road redevelopment project* - Discussion re Station Road full business review which is awaited. Cllr Flunder suggested that review of costs should have been included within scoping and that costs will now need to be established by a QS in line with a potential change to design. Cllr Ladd agreed that costs will need to be reviewed, and that the project had always intended to include flexible business space. Contamination and remediation costs will need to be considered, and advice will need to be taken in respect of VAT and governance implications.
Cllr Bradbury advised that the role of the Finance Cttee will be to consider the costs/ cashflows/rates of return. Capital build £ allocation is the sum of the CCF Capital grant, and the monies held by STC.
Cllr Ladd reminded members that the reason for doing the project was as part of the Town Council strategy to diversify the property portfolio and to aid economic sustainability by creating jobs.
- *Modernisation of Council practices* - I Cloudy (used by SLCC and NALC) demo provided to Town Mayor and Town Clerk – use of Microsoft Teams to be optimised including remote storage/SharePoint. opportunity for both staff and Councillors to access remote storage and for Cllrs to have new e mail addresses.
Cost of set up £1615 if all elements taken up at start – or can take up elements at slower pace to suit Council/Councillors. Includes staff and Councillor training.
Monthly cost - £118 per month if all elements taken up at start – or elements can be taken on gradual basis. Includes staff and councillor training.
It is the recommendation of the Finance Cttee that I Cloudy be asked to implement the Council modernisation process over the next 2 years as per their quote above – with Councillors to be involved in 2021 and 2022 if they wish to be, but with aim that all Councillors would be included within the system wef the 2023 Town Council elections.
- *1 Strickland Place* – feasibility report as approved by Town Council should be available by end of month.
- *Investment of balances* – to be reviewed.

6. Governance /policies to complete/review

NALC and SALC letters received regarding the impact of the Handforth Parish Council meeting and the inherent need for improvements to Code of Conduct and enforcement of the Code. Discussion took place about the Code of Conduct and all agreed that this has not kept up with the modern

world/modern media. SLCC has written to ministers about the Code of Conduct and the Handforth meeting in relation to its relevance to the impact on staff.

Action - Town Council to ensure that its own policies are up to date in respect of Code of Conduct.

Expiry of Remote meetings legislation – the remote meetings legislation expires on 7th May 2021. There are petitions to ministers to enable this to continue but at present arrangements must be made to meet again in person after 7th May 2021. Contact has therefore been made with the Methodist Hall and Stella Peskett Hall to see if they would be able to accommodate Town Council meetings in a socially distanced manner.

Comms Strategy Policy – the Comms working group are presently drawing up a draft comms strategy/policy for Council to consider. It was suggested that Town Manager provide an update for residents about her work – similar to the one that is sent to all businesses. Cllr Flunder mentioned that Transparency considerations ought to be part of the Comms.

7. **Date of next meeting** - additional meeting if required – 24th Feb at 10am. Next scheduled meeting Monday 8th March at 11.30am

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.

Nil.

Chair.....

Dated

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