



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY 20th MAY at 6.30pm

FINANCE REPORT no. 36 (2019-20)

Present: Councillors;

P Dutton, R Lewis (Chair), K Prime, J Reece, D Thomas, M Took, D Wollweber,

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk).

REPORT

- 1) Election of Chair and Vice Chair. Cllr Rosemary Lewis was elected as Chair, Cllr Maureen Took was elected as Vice Chair.
- 2) Apologies; Cllr T Allen, Cllr A Dunning, Cllr A Fleming.
- 3) Declarations of Interest: Non-pecuniary interests: Cllr Thomas for item 11, Cllr Primes for item 11.
- 4) Minutes: The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on the 15th April, 2019 was accepted as a true record.
- 5) Matters arising from the minutes. Cllr Thomas asked for an update on providing bins and benches at the Old Station Rd Play area. The Clerk confirmed that ESC (East Suffolk Council) were currently consulting with Sentinel as they (Sentinel) had already proposed some upgrades to the play area and ESC were not sure what equipment had been recommended. The Clerk had written to inform ESC that the Town Council would purchase the bench and bins whether or not s106 monies were available. Cllr Dutton enquired about the Station building, the Clerk confirmed that he had written to Greater Anglia to ask for financial assistance in repairing the building but as usual they had not provided any response or acknowledgement.
- 6) Finances: The Committee received and noted the monthly report of expenditure against the budget and the current reserves.
- 7) Banking: The Committee received and noted the Clerk's report and recommendations on banking. As Barclays Bank had now closed in the town and as the Council and Clerk had experienced a very frustrating experience with the bank over the last few years and taking into account that the interest gained on a substantial amount of Council reserves was a tiny amount, it was time to consider changing banks. Many Councils were now using Unity Trust Bank who specialised in banking for local authorities and charities. Transactions would be made online with a dual or triple authorisation. Interest rates were higher and bank charges were lower so the Council would be better off. The Council would need to take into consideration that only £85k was guaranteed from the Government from each banking organisation, should the bank go into liquidation. To protect against this the Council should consider bonds and other savings options elsewhere. The Chair confirmed that the intention was to keep one savings account open with Barclays. It was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved the transfer of the current account to Unity Trust Bank.

- 8) Audit 2019/2020: The Clerk confirmed that the Internal Audit would be on Tuesday 21st May.
- 9) Market Rents: The Committee received and noted the income and expenditure for the Market over the last two years. It was noted that the current revenue covered the costs of running the Market. It was agreed that the Council should try and promote the Market and encourage new traders to the town. Possibly on short term rents or reduced rents for the first three months. The Communications Committee would consider ways to attract more traders. It was RESOLVED to freeze the current Market rents for 2019/2020.
- 10) Allotment Rents: To review the Allotment rents for 2019/2020. The Committee received and noted the income and expenditure for the Allotments over the last two years. It was noted that the current revenue covered the costs of running the Allotments. The Clerk confirmed that at present there were no available allotments (that were useable) and one person on the waiting list. It was RESOLVED to freeze the current Allotment rents for 2019/2020.
- 11) Free Parking: Contributions letters: It was agreed that the Clerk should chase ESC to get a clearer confirmation letter detailing the agreement. In the meantime, the Committee agreed that the letter could be sent to local parishes but the letter to the traders would be delayed until a firm letter from ESC had been received. The Clerk was asked to request a copy of the East Suffolk Parking Policy.
- 12) Maintenance: To consider any maintenance costs: The Clerk confirmed that urgent repairs to the Skateboard park had been necessary and Waveney Norse had been instructed to make the necessary repairs.
- 13) Correspondence:
- 14) News Items: To consider any items for the website/newsletters. It was agreed to advertise the Market once the Communication Committee had agreed the method and notification that the Skateboard Park had been repaired once the Clerk had checked.
- 15) Accounts for Payment: The following list of accounts was approved for payment:

DD/Standing Orders:

<u>3714.</u>	BT Telephone & Broadband (LGA 1972 s111)	19.50
<u>3715.</u>	EDF Electricity – Market Place no 1 (Food Act 1984 s50)	10.00
<u>3716.</u>	EDF Electricity – Market Place no 2 (Food Act 1984 s50)	21.54
<u>3717.</u>	EDF Electricity – Market Place no 3 (Food Act 1984 s50)	14.44
<u>3718.</u>	Local Government Pension Scheme (May Contributions) (LGA 1972 s112)	1,006.75

The meeting was closed at 7.07pm