



# HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

## FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING MONDAY 17<sup>th</sup> JUNE at 6.30pm

### FINANCE REPORT no. 37 (2019-20)

Present: Councillors;

A Dunning, A Fleming, K Prime, J Reece, D Thomas, M Took (Vice Chair), D Wollweber,

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk). No members of the public.

### REPORT

Cllr Maureen Took (Vice Chair) chaired the meeting.

- 1) Apologies: Cllrs; T Allen, P Dutton, R Lewis.
- 2) Declarations of Interest: None
- 3) Minutes: The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2019 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) Matters arising from the minutes:

It was RESOLVED that the bench at the junction of Wissett Rd and Mill Road is replaced as soon as possible and that the plaque is retained if possible. The Clerk reported that he had requested this replacement before from Waveney Norse but no action had been taken so far.

It was noted that a bench formerly located in Dukes Drive had disappeared several years ago. Cllr Dunning was confident that she knew who had removed it and would attempt to contact the individual and try and get it returned.

The Clerk would investigate whether the recent damage to the Skateboard Park ramps had been repaired.

- 5) Finances: The Committee received and noted the report of expenditure against the budget. The Clerk would circulate the current list of reserves to the members.
- 6) Banking: The Clerk explained the options and methods of payment proposed for the new current account at Unity Trust Bank. After considering the various options and the safest method to ensure protection for the Council and the Clerk it was RESOLVED that;
  1. The Bank Signatories would be the three current Barclays signatories; Cllr Rosemary Lewis, Cllr Maureen Took, Cllr Anne Fleming and in addition Cllr Annette Dunning and Cllr David Wollweber would also be added.
  2. There were several different options for security and access. The Committee and the Clerk agreed the preferred option of two councillor signatories for each transaction. Councillors would not be given access to the account to set up payments this would only be possible by the Clerk. The Clerk would have access privileges to view and set up transactions for approval but would not have access to approve any transactions. This would then be in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and would mirror the current procedures with Barclays

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Bank. It was agreed that the Council would, if necessary, write to Unity Trust Bank to ensure that the Bank would communicate with the Clerk on any banking queries. This had not been the case with Barclays and had always been an ongoing source of frustration. The Clerk would keep the Council informed of progress with the application to open the current account and if necessary this would be considered again.

3. The Bank Signatories for Unity Trust Bank would be able to log in online at home or in the office to sign off payments but only after the transaction had been approved under 'accounts for payment' or during the relevant meeting, as was the case currently with hand written cheques (except in emergency cases noted in the Financial Regulations item 3.4). The Clerk would circulate the current Financial Regulations to the members.

### 7) Allotment:

- a. To review the Allotment policy. It was noted that the Clerk had received enquiries from members of the public seeking allotments who lived outside of the parish of Halesworth. The Clerk wished to receive the Committee's agreement on whether they could or should be added to the waiting list. It was RESOLVED that Halesworth residents would always be given priority regardless of which order they were in the waiting list. If an allotment became available and there were no Halesworth residents on the waiting list at that time, the Committee would consider applicants from other local parishes on an individual basis. It was further RESOLVED that the Clerk would incorporate this ruling and other elements contained in the guidelines produced by the Saxon Allotment group and once approved this would form the basis of the conditions of letting and policy rules that the Clerk would issue out in September with the invoices.
- b. Mower repairs – Saxon Allotments. It was noted that the mower had been donated to the Saxon Allotment group by one of the allotment holders and they used it on a community basis to keep the paths and surrounding areas cut. The Committee debated whether it would have been better for the group to have approached the Council to have the mower replaced as this was the second repair needed in a short period of time. However since the mower had already been repaired the Committee approved payment of the repairs (£112.73). The Clerk would advise the group to contact the Council to consider other options if repairs were needed in the future.
- c. To consider receiving a grant on behalf of Saxon Allotment Association. It was noted that the Saxon Allotment group were not a constituted association; furthermore they did not own the land or have a bank account. This would make it extremely unlikely that they would be able to obtain a grant directly. However the Clerk was under the impression that some progress in obtaining a grant had been made by the group but this was subject to certain conditions, one of which was a bank account, hence the request to use HTC's account. The Committee were not comfortable with this arrangement and asked the Clerk to invite representatives of the group to meet with the Committee in order to explore other alternatives.

### 8) Telephone and Broadband:

Review of the current service and to consider an alternative quotation. The Clerk reported that he was often approached by companies offering lower prices and on this occasion agreed to accept a quotation from ONECOM which, in theory, could save the Council £156 per annum. The Clerk was sceptical on the claim but was more concerned with any potential disruption and the time taken to sort out any issues. It was also noted that some of the feedback for the company on the internet was not encouraging. However the Committee needed to consider any potential savings if possible. It was RESOLVED that the Committee asked the Clerk to challenge BT to see if they would reduce the cost and then report back to the next meeting.

### 9) Maintenance: To consider any maintenance costs: Benches as noted under item 4

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10) CIL/s106: To consider whether to recommend that this Working Group is brought back to the Finance Committee. It was noted that the Working Group had established a useful method of reviewing the available funds and potential projects but it was not considered necessary to retain a separate working group and associated meetings and minutes. It was RESOLVED that the Committee recommended that the Community Infrastructure Working Group be dissolved and that matters relating to CIL and s106 monies are dealt with by the Finance Committee.

11) Correspondence: None

12) News Items: To consider any items for the website/newsletters. It was agreed that residents are informed of the refurbishment/replacement of the benches as noted under item 4.

13) Accounts for Payment: To consider the list of accounts for payment.

- a. Before the Committee considered the accounts for payment the Clerk reported on two items needing further discussion. It was RESOLVED that item 3715 be held for payment until the Local Council Public Advisory Service had conducted a GDPR audit. A previous payment had been made of £500 for this service last year but the Clerk had only received a set of templates and very little else since. LCPAS was supposed to be the appointed data protection officer, not the Clerk, and therefore the responsibility for compliance should lay with LCPAS and they needed to undertake more work to ensure the Council was fully up to date. The fact that the Council were behind in establishing all the documentation needed for GDPR compliance had been noted in the internal audit for 2018-2019.
- b. Business rates for the Station Building (Former Mencap area). It was noted that item 3716 showed the total liability for business rates for this financial year. The Clerk had made a claim for three months empty property rates relief and was awaiting a response. It was agreed that ideally the building should be sub-let as soon as repairs were completed and therefore the Council should not pay rates in advance. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk would arrange for monthly payments once any re-calculation to the bill had been made.

It was then RESOLVED that the following accounts for payment was approved, subject to the above resolutions under 13a and 13b.

<u>3714.</u>	EPS Transfers – (Signage London Rd parking)	32.00 + vat
<u>3715.</u>	LCPAS - GDPR (LGA 1972 s111) – appointed data protection officer.	150.00
<u>3716.</u>	Rates – Mencap (LGA 1972 s144)	1082.82
	Agreed 15 <sup>th</sup> April Finance – minute ref 35.5c	
<u>3717.</u>	Chair's Allowance (2018-2019) Halesworth Dementia Carer's Fund	487.50
<u>3718.</u>	Chair's Allowance (2018-2019) Halesworth Area Community Transport	487.50

DD/Standing Orders:

3719. Local Government Pension Scheme (Mthly Employer and Employees Contrib)1,006.75  
(LGA 1972 s112)

Bank & Cash Balances at 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2019

Current 728	£152,010.92
Community A/c	£5,286.78
Business Reserves 017	£92,535.14
Petty Cash	£87.13

The meeting was closed at 7.26pm