



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

FINANCE REPORT no 50

MONDAY OCTOBER 19th 2020 AT 6.30PM BY ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

In accordance with (The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020)

Present: Councillors;

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

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), Brian Howard representing Halesworth Area Community Transport; Teresa Walsh, representing Halesworth Event Management; Frances Lloyd representing The Pear Tree Fund; Emma Healey representing Halesworth Volunteer Centre and Rev Jane Held representing the Community Larder.

REPORT

- 1) Apologies: Cllr T Allen
- 2) Declarations of Interest: Non-pecuniary interests; Cllr D Thomas for item 6a, Cllr A Fleming for item 6a.
- 3) Minutes: The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on Wednesday the 21st September, 2020 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) Matters arising from the minutes: Credit Card; The Chair asked whether the credit card charge query raised last month had been clarified; the Clerk confirmed that there was no charge for transactions when using the Unity Trust Card, the 2.5% referred to cash withdrawals. There was a set-up fee but thereafter it was a monthly charge of £3. The Clerk would obtain the necessary application forms. The Chair enquired as to the condition of the London Rd boiler, the Clerk confirmed that it had now been repaired and was working as it should. The Committee noted that it was currently the responsibility of East Suffolk Council but would bear in mind the age and condition of the boiler if and when negotiations with ESC progressed further.
- 5) Finances:
 - a. The Committee received and noted the monthly report of expenditure against the budget.
 - b. Committee received and noted the list of reserves
- 6) Grants: To consider the following grant applications: The Chair asked the members to bear in mind that the grant budget was limited and if all the following applications were approved in full it would only leave £5k for the remaining financial year,
 - a. Halesworth Events Management: The Chair wished to congratulate HEM on their grant application which was very clear and concise. Teresa Walsh thanked the Chair and explained that due to the obvious Covid-19 restrictions the usual Festive Lights - Switch on event had been cancelled this year, however, HEM were still planning to bring some festive cheer to the Town with lights, motives and

Christmas trees. The Grant was intended to help towards the cost of installation. It was RESOLVED that the Committee approved a grant of £2,500

- b. Halesworth Area Community Transport: Brian Howard explained that HACT had to bring forward the purchase of a new bus in order to continue the service for the town as the older bus did not comply with social distancing and Government guidelines. The Committee were unable to assist with the previous grant application but were keen to help support this important community service. It was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved a grant for £5,000.
- c. The Pear Tree Fund: Frances Lloyd explained that the charity had not been able to organise any fund raising events this year due to the Covid-19 restrictions and had also experienced a downturn in donations. The Pear Tree Fund provided facilities for the Halesworth Dementia Carers Fund and several other organisations involved with support, counselling, therapy and advice. It was noted that the Pear Tree Centre did cover a 15 mile radius and some members of the Committee were mindful that the Town Council's aim was to support local organisations for the benefit of Halesworth residents and particularly to help those organisations that were struggling to survive. It was understood that the majority of those supported by the Centre were Halesworth residents but the 15 miles radius would also take in towns such as Southwold, Beccles and Bungay. It appeared from the accounts that the Centre had sufficient reserves for the time being so it was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved a grant for £2,500 rather than the £5,000 applied for but the Chair advised that the charity could come back with another application in the new financial year.
- d. Halesworth Volunteer Centre: Emma Healey explained that the very successful Community Larder had outgrown the space in St Mary's Church. The solution was to move it to the Church Hall and upgrade the kitchen. This would be then create a Community Kitchen as well as a Community Larder and would provide more scope to maximise the fresh produce available for all those in need. The Clerk confirmed that the grant would be paid to HVC not to the Church and as it was for community use the restriction on local authorities giving to churches would not reasonably apply in this case. It was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved a grant of £2,000.

7) Relief Scheme: The Clerk gave an update on the number of vouchers issued and the number of returns, which had changed very little from last month's report due to a lack of use by local residents. Cllr Prime suggested further advertising was needed as there must be families out there that still needed help and may not be aware of the scheme. Cllr Dunning reported that there were various financial support currently available and was concerned that the one or two regular users would become to reliant on the scheme that would end at some point. It was also noted that the Community Larder was providing a very similar service and after further consideration it was RESOLVED that the scheme would continue for the remainder of 2020 and then be suspended on the 1st January 2021 but subject to review if the current situation changes. The suppliers in the scheme would be informed accordingly.

8) Annual review of statutory documents: Risk Assessment, Internal Control and Financial Regulations. The Clerk reported that the Financial Regulations included a section on the 'criteria for assessing grants' and that he had discussed with the Chair of the possibility that this may need further amendment to clarify the grant application process. This would in turn mean that the Grant Policy would need to be reviewed in line with any amendments. It was RESOLVED that the Chair of the Council, the Chair of the Finance Committee and Cllr Dutton (who had composed much of the original document) would liaise and suggest amendments for the Committee to consider for the next meeting. The Chair asked the committee members to review the current documents and put forward any suggestions via the Clerk. As regards to the other two statutory documents, the Clerk confessed he had been unable to find time to review them properly but would provide updated versions as soon as possible but certainly before the end of the financial year.

9) Maintenance: None

10)Correspondence: None

11)Staff Matters: The Chair had discussed with the Clerk and the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council that due to increased workloads that it would be beneficial for the Personnel Working Group to conduct a mid-term staff review . The Chair invited members to make any comments they may have directly to the Chair of the Council, Cllr Dave Wollweber. The Personnel Working Group would then report back 'in camera' at the next meeting.

12) News Items: To consider any items for the website/newsletters. It was agreed that the Clerk's office would re-advertise the Relief Scheme and would also add the grants awarded on to the website.

13) Accounts for Payment: The Committee approved the following accounts for payment.

<u>4541.</u>	SALC Payroll Services (LGA 1972 s112)	78.00 + vat
<u>4542.</u>	CCTV deposit (Willet Elec/BSA) (GPoC)	4,973.53 + vat
<u>4543.</u>	N Rees – Zoom monthly subscription (October) (LGA 1972 s111)	11.99 + vat
<u>4544.</u>	Cllr Anne Fleming (Hetty's Copy Shop) Maps for ABP (LGA 1972 s111)	37.90
<u>4545.</u>	N Rees – RBL wreath for Remembrance Day (GPoC)	16.00
<u>4546.</u>	Royal Mail – Collection of N Plan leaflets (Localism Act 2011 sch9)	84.00
<u>4547.</u>	Royal Mail – Delivery of N Plan leaflets (Localism Act 2011 sch9)	242.13
<u>4548.</u>	KEL Creative – Production of N Plan leaflets (Localism Act 2011 sch9)	227.00

DD/Standing Orders:

<u>4549.</u>	LGPS Pension Scheme (LGA 1972 s112)	997.73
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Bank & Cash Balances at 16th October, 2020

Current 728	£132,606.46
Unity Trust	£141,474.57
Community A/c	£5,296.07
Business Reserves 017	£92,697.62
Petty Cash	£71.83