



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

FINANCE REPORT no 53

MONDAY JANUARY 18th 2021 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;

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

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk) Ann Follows (Waveney and Blyth Arts), John Bainer & Julia Sowerbutts (Ink Festival), Wayne Burns (Alde & Blyth Community Radio)

REPORT

- 1) Apologies: Cllr K Prime
- 2) Declarations of Interest: To receive declarations for pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests: Cllr Wollweber for any reference to the Museum.
- 3) Minutes: To approve the report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on Wednesday the 21st December, 2020
- 4) Matters arising from the minutes.
- 5) Finances: The Committee received and noted the monthly report of expenditure against the budget.
- 6) Grants & Donations:
 - a. Waveney & Blyth Arts: 'Spell songs in the Green' musical event: Application for £3,000. The Committee had received and noted the change from a live performance to a film production, which Ann Follows explained, was necessary to plan for now as it looked unlikely that the original project would be possible due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Committee learned how the production would still involve the local schools and choirs and how the film once completed would be used by the Tourism Group and for other purposes to promote the town. The Committee understood the need for the changes but questioned whether the costs would be the same and whether a new application was required. However it was RESOLVED that the Committee approved a grant of £2,000.
 - b. Ink Festival: 2021 Festival: Julia Sowerbutts explained that their grant application was also subject to change due to Covid-19 restrictions. The Ink Festival had not been possible in 2020 and the £2,000 received from HTC earlier in the year had been ring fenced for use in 2021. This new application could either be used for the Ink Festival itself, if it was going ahead, or for many other smaller projects that they would be undertaking in 2021. The Committee considered whether a new application should be made if the project was likely to be different. It was also noted that, according to the Grant Policy, the £2,000 should be paid back to the Council as it had not been used. It was RESOLVED that the Committee agreed that the Ink Festival could retain the £2,000, granted for the 2020 Ink Festival, to allow them to go ahead with the next festival when they are able to do

so and that it would be ringed fenced for that purpose. As regard to this year's application, it was eventually agreed that the Ink Festival organisers should re-apply in April once they knew what project the grant was to be used for and if any repayment of the original grant was required.

- c. Alde & Blyth Community radio donation/grant: Wayne Burns presented the Committee with a detailed account of this new project including all the various parties involved, what the radio station was intended for and how it may be useful for the Town Council. Mr Burns explained that this was a not-for-profit organisation and would be serving the residents and visitors of the area between Southwold and Orford but very much included the Halesworth area, based in Stowmarket it would initially be online only but they had plans to expand into FM and DAB. After further questions and assurances that there would be opportunities to promote Halesworth and its events on the radio, it was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved a grant of £1,000.

- 7) Community Larder: To consider donating directly to the Community Larder or alternative means to help support the work they are doing in the community. This proposal had effectively been deferred from the last monthly meeting where the Council had voted against providing financial support directly to the Community Larder (CL). At that time some councillors had not appreciated that the voucher scheme had ended in December and were keen to reinstate it. The Clerk explained that the voucher scheme had ended and the proposal was to instead provide assistance to the CL either by means of a financial contribution or to deposit funds with the shops so that the CL could obtain supplies when needed. The Committee had concerns that some people outside the parish may benefit and this may contravene regulations relating to how the precept was spent and instead wished to introduce a new voucher scheme. It was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved a new scheme; that vouchers would be issued directly to Jane Held who would distribute them to Halesworth residents only. There were no specific details about how this would work at the time and the Clerk would need to get the agreement of the shops involved and that Rev Jane Held would be willing to implement the scheme.
- 8) Neighbourhood plan: Circular walking leaflets; to consider the production costs of £420. It was RESOLVED that the Committee approved the cost of producing the leaflets.
- 9) Town of the Year: To consider allocating funds for the production of signs and other means for promoting the Town of the year award 2020. It was RESOLVED that £464 left in the Advertising and Promotion budget would be allocated for this purpose but the Clerk would report back if further funds were required.
- 10) HACT: To allocate emergency funds as agreed at the monthly meeting: It was RESOLVED that the Committee approved an emergency fund of £1,000 to support HACT (Halesworth Area Community Transport) in their efforts to get elderly residents to the Sole Bay Medical Centre for vaccinations and that the Chair of Finance and the Clerk would have collective authority to distribute the funds as required. It was also agreed that the Clerk would check with Halesworth Volunteer Centre to see if they may also benefit from an emergency fund for the same purposes.
- 11) Planning Consultancy fees: To consider a budget for engaging consultants when necessary for planning applications and the authority for the Committee to use it. The Clerk and the Chair of the Planning Committee explained that on some larger developments it would be beneficial to have access to a consultant. Often the developer provided data to support their proposals, particularly for surface water, suds, drainage and flooding, in the form of complicated reports and HTC did not have the expertise to examine it properly. It was then RESOLVED that the Committee would set aside a reserve of £5,000 initially for this purpose and the Planning Committee could draw upon this when required but normal procedures for procurement would apply.

12) Annual review of statutory documents: It was RESOLVED that the revised Grant Policy was approved with the following amendments, 'either/or' to be added to clarify that applicants can apply for either the project or the running cost grant and 'It is normal expected that' an organisation is required to have a bank account.

13) Maintenance: Cllr Dutton drew attention to the poor condition of the bench outside Patrick's Newsagents; the Clerk noted this again and would inspect the bench and take necessary action when it was possible to undertake nonessential repairs.

14) Correspondence: None

15) News Items: To consider any items for the website/newsletters: Grants awarded at the meeting and to re-advertise the revised voucher scheme.

16) Accounts for Payment: The Committee approved the following list of accounts for payment.

<u>4561.</u>	Waveney Norse – Market Clean Quarterly (Food Act 1984 s50)	174.99 + vat
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DD/Standing Orders:

<u>4562.</u>	LGPS Pension Scheme (LGA 1972 s112)	997.73
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Bank & Cash Balances at 8th January, 2021

Current 728	£129,975.93
Unity Trust	£109,013.55
Community A/c	£5,296.20
Business Reserves 017	£92,699.93
Petty Cash	£71.83

The meeting was closed 8.33pm