



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

FINANCE REPORT no 56

MONDAY JULY 5th 2021 AT 6.30PM IN THE DAY CENTRE

This meeting was also held simultaneously on Zoom to allow participation remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions on the number of attendees in the Day Centre

Present: Councillors;

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

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), Cllr Joyce Moseley via Zoom

REPORT

- 1) **Apologies:** Cllr P Dutton
- 2) **Declarations of Interest:** Non-pecuniary interests: Cllr Wollweber for item 6(b)
- 3) **Minutes:** The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 15th March was accepted as a true record.
- 4) **Matters arising from the minutes.** Cllr Fleming would liaise with the Clerk to arrange an internal control check as recommended by the internal auditors. Repair of town benches; following Cllr Prime's suggestion the Clerk would investigate whether the timber slats could be replaced with a GRP/Plastic substitute. The Chair thanked Cllr Prime for arranging the replacement information map in the Notice Board. Cllr Prime would also get a quote for replacing the map in the smaller tourist information board outside van Dijke. Cllr Dunning thanked Cllr Reece for undertaking the Dog Bin survey.
- 5) **Finances:**
 - a. The Committee received and noted the annual report of expenditure against the budget Apr 2020 – Mar 2021 and agreed the following allocation of unspent monies in last year's budget to the reserves: Green Initiative (new reserve) £1,000, Civic Duties - £500, Festive Lights - £500, Office Equipment - £489, Youth Development - £1,000. Grants - £1,934, Skatepark - £1,000, Memorial - £250, Street Furniture - £250. It was also agreed to move the £10,000 budgeted for free parking to be set aside under a new 'Community facilities' reserve which could be used for a variety of community based or town centre projects. It was noted that the 1/2 hour free parking was still not working successfully, especially in the Thoroughfare car park. The lack of a second ticket machine was still causing delays in the main part of the Thoroughfare car park. ESC's no-return policy within four hours was reportedly not the case, it was effectively a no-return all day, and once a free ticket had been obtained it was not possible to park again in another ESC car park, even if it was in a different town. The Committee agreed that this situation needed sorting out and would contact Cllr Alison Cackett, East Suffolk District Councillor.
 - b. To receive the CIL report for Apr 20 – Mar21: The Committee received and noted the report which showed that additional CIL money had been received in April bringing the current total to £95,888

6) **Grants:**

- a. Bramfield C of E school: It was noted from the Clerk's report that it may not be possible to give a grant to the Bramfield C of E School as it would be against the current Grant policy, namely;

To contribute to the development of facilities in the community

To benefit residents in the community, not individuals

There was also the problem that technically the Council was not able to donate to a particular church or religion. After consideration it was then **RESOLVED** that the Committee could not approve the grant at this time, the clerk would inform the applicants.

- b. **Heritage Open Days:** The Committee received and noted the application and Cllr Wollweber provided some further information on what his understanding was with regard to their plans this year which involved an emphasis on walking tours rather than the house tours for obvious Covid-19 related reasons. The Committee felt that this annual event, which it had supported in the past, would bring in more visitors to the town and it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee approved a grant of £1,000

- 7) **Voucher scheme:** The Clerk gave an update on the latest figures for the voucher scheme and it was noted that the demand had tailed off in the last two months with £65 of vouchers being issued in May and £45 in June. Cllr Wollweber suggested it could continue for another three months but the Committee felt that with the restrictions being lifted it would be the right time to finish it and so it was **RESOLVED** that the scheme would officially end on the 19th July, 2021.

- 8) **Review Market and Allotment rents:** The Clerk explained that some of the newer Market Stalls were finding it difficult to operate at the cost of £15 per day and compared to lower rates for small stalls in Southwold and Beccles and whose markets were open all day instead of ending around 1pm. It was noted that one of the existing stalls was still paying £12 per day and this included the electricity supply (the only stall using electricity) and so this may therefore need some adjustment. It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee agreed to offer a reduced rent for new stalls for a trial period of three months at the rate of £10 per day and that the stall currently using electricity should be increased to £15 per day.

It was noted that the allotment rents had not increased for several years and the average of £25 per annum, including water usage was very low. Cllr Wollweber felt the Committee should consider the incomes of the tenants before increasing all the rents. Cllr Prime suggested that a reduction could be offered to tenants that could prove they were on very low incomes or benefits. It was then **RESOLVED** that the £25 per annum be increased to £30 (pro-rata for other sized plots, but rounded to the nearest pound) and those tenants on very low income or benefits would be offered a 1/3 off (i.e. £20 pro-rata)

- 9) **Electricity tariffs – Market Place:** To consider alternative suppliers for when the contract end with EDF in September, 2021. The Clerk explained that the contract was due to end on the 30th September and he had since obtained various options. It was noted that the annual cost was not significant at around £400 for all three electricity pillars in the Market Place and so it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee delegated authority to the Clerk to obtain the best deal for the electricity contract and if possible by using a green option.

- 10) **Maintenance:** None

- 11) **Office Computers & Software:** The Clerk reported that his computer was getting increasingly slow as the architecture was now seven years old and furthermore it would not be able to be updated to the newer version of Windows 11, which would be issued later this summer. Over a period of time he had used variety of equipment from his home;

including software, a monitor, webcam, mouse, speakers, etc but it was perhaps now time to have a complete replacement. It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee agreed that the Clerk should obtain and purchase a suitable replacement system noted in his report for the suggested budget of £1,000 and suitable software as required.

- 12) **Correspondence:** The Clerk read out a letter from ESC requesting that the funds for the Summer Activities be held by the Town Council due to complications with grant monies being paid from council to council. The proposal was that the Town Council would then effectively be acting as the grant applicant and would need to process payments to the vendors. It was **RESOLVED** that the Committee agreed to this request.

The Committee had received and noted the request to operate a Rickshaw in Halesworth in accordance with ESC's policy of licencing Rickshaws. The Clerk explained that the purpose was to obtain permission from town councils in the Waveney area for one off events, such as weddings and care home outings, rather than for a regular taxi service. The Committee agreed that this was acceptable and it was **RESOLVED** that permission was granted. The Clerk would explain the Thoroughfare restrictions and ask for notice if the Rickshaws were ever to be used in the Thoroughfare.

- 13) **News Items:** To consider any items for the website/newsletters. The Clerk would put the Rickshaw information on the website in due course.

- 14) **Accounts for Payment:** The Committee approved the following list of accounts for payment:-

4561.	The Morton Partnership – surveys on ESC assets (GPoC)	3,000.00 + vat
4562.	N Rees - Zoom monthly sub (June) LGA 1972 s144	11.99 + vat
4563.	Viking –office supplies; webcams LGA 1972 s144	51.46 + vat
4564.	N J Rees – (Amazon) Conference mic LGA 1972 s144	29.99

DD/Standing Orders:

4565.	Barclays Bank Charges (LGA 1972 s111)	6.50
--------------	---------------------------------------	------

Bank & Cash Balances at 26th June, 2021

Current 728	£128,246
Unity Trust	£167,640
Community A/c	£5,296
Business Reserves 017	£92,702
Petty Cash	£58.34