



# HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

## FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

### FINANCE REPORT no 69

**MONDAY 20th FEBRUARY 2023 AT 6.30PM IN THE DAY CENTRE**

**Present:** Councillors; A Dunning, P Dutton, K Greenberg, J Moseley, R Lewis (Chair), M Took, D Wollweber.

**In Attendance:** N Rees (Town Clerk), Cllr A Fleming, 4 members of the public

### REPORT

- 1) **Apologies:** Cllr M Took.
- 2) **Declarations of Interest:** Non-pecuniary interests: None
- 3) **Minutes:** The report of the Finance and Governance Committee held on Monday the 16th of January 2023 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) **Matters arising from the minutes:** The Clerk reported that he had advertised the Assistant Clerk's position with Suffolk Association of Local Councils, and this would feature on their website and all clerks in the association regularly receive emails notifying them of vacancies in Suffolk. The vacancy was also on HTC's website. It was agreed to give this approach a couple of weeks and then the position would be advertised on multiple fronts; Facebook, Local newspapers, Noticeboard and directly emailed to local councils.
- 5) **Finances:** The Committee received and noted the following: -
  - a. The Committee received and noted the report of expenditure against the budget.
  - b. CIL report. The Clerk had also provided an updated CIL Projects list following the meeting with the Chairs on the 17<sup>th</sup> February. It was agreed to add another line for Toilet refurbishment and to allocate £15k for this work in the 24/25-year column. It was agreed, after some debate, that the Council would retain the earmarked £15k for a contribution towards the White Bridge in Millennium Green. It was noted that the Millennium Green wished to have a more substantial bridge to enable their ride-on mower to cross the river whereas SCC only needed to provide a footbridge. It was the difference in costs that it was hoped could be financed by other parties such as HTC. The Committee wanted to provide support but could not commit or guarantee the amount earmarked or improve upon it without knowing the final costs involved and how much East Suffolk Council, Suffolk County Council and Millennium Green would be contributing to the project. It was also noted that the Council had not been involved directly with any negotiations with SCC and Millennium Green in an official capacity and that this should be arranged if the Council were expected to commit CIL funds to the project. The Clerk suggested that one possible solution would be to allow SCC to provide the foot bridge as they were obliged to do but that Millennium Green then builds its own private mower bridge at another point along the river which would not require such stringent requirements.
  - c. Reserves report: The Committee noted that following the Chair's meeting on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, several amendments to the Reserves List had been proposed and some lines had been removed. The Committee received and agreed with the adjustments with the amendment that the line for Community Facilities fund, which had been the Covid related grant for the unoccupied part of the Station

Building, be removed because the funds had already been spent on renovation works during 2021 and 2022.

- 6) **CIL Allocation (Committees):** There was not a written report provided as yet from the Chair's meeting held on the 17<sup>th</sup> of February, but the Committee accepted that the outcome of the meeting had resulted in the documents provided; the CIL Project List and the revised Reserves list which had both been approved subject to the amendments under 5b and 5c.
- 7) **Maintenance:** To review the latest quotations for re-painting lamp posts and metalwork. The Clerk reported that the contractor had so far not produced an estimate, but it was made clear that the work related to streetlamps and bridge railings and not the decorative bollards. Regarding the proposed repainting of these bollards, Cllr Moseley had applied for a grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, but it was accepted that this may not be successful. It was then **RESOLVED** that the Committee would approve a budget of £1,500 if the application proved unsuccessful. It was also agreed that a full consultation and agreement with the majority of the businesses would need to be obtained before commencing any repainting as the bollards had been personalised by many of the businesses. County Cllr, Annette Dunning, stated that HTC would need to formally obtain her permission before starting work on the bollards as they were on the Public Highway, however, this would not be an issue as she supported the idea in principle.

8) **Allotment and Market rent reviews:**

**Market Rents:** The Clerk reported on the disappointing news that the new bread stall had only given the Wednesday Market one week before deciding not to continue, despite the fact that the clerks had made a special effort to advertise the new stall. The Assistant Clerk was currently trying to encourage them to give it a little longer as it would take time before people were aware of the new stall. However it didn't look promising and the Market was therefore currently under stalled and was suffering from a lack of footfall. It was noted that the regular stalls had packed up and left by the early afternoon but the Market rights were in force all day which was also an issue for unsuspecting drivers leaving their cars later in the day and getting a parking ticket. Cllr Greenberg would ensure that developing the Market would be a propriety for the Assets & Services Committee in the future. It was **RESOLVED** that the Market rents would stay the same i.e., no increase, and that ideas to utilise the space in the afternoon would be explored further.

**Allotment Rents:** The Committee noted that the current rents covered the normal expenditure on water and maintenance and so it was **RESOLVED** that the Allotment rents would remain the same for the next financial year. The Clerk reported that there was still a waiting list but as more allotments became available the clerks were looking at dividing some of the larger plots into two plots. This would be more manageable for new allotment holders and would get more people off the waiting list. There were still a few underused plots, but the clerks had been writing warning letters to the offending tenants and would continue to monitor the situation.

- 9) **BT/Phone options for new office arrangements:** The Clerk reported that the option for a multiuser phone solution offered by BT was exactly what was needed but in his opinion the costs seemed high, and it may be worth investigating further. Other phone options using the internet involved purchasing a different package from another broadband supplier which was not ideal. The Clerk would bring further options back to the Committee.
- 10) **Insurance:** Renewal of the existing policy: It was **RESOLVED** that the Council should renew the policy with the existing insurer on the current basis as the transfer may take several months to be concluded before insurance is needed for the new assets and at that stage the clerks would obtain comparative quotes.

- 11) **Financial Regulations:** The Committee reviewed the document with the Clerks proposed amendments and after some minor corrections it was **RESOLVED** that the Financial Regulations was then approved. The appendix: Terms of Reference was not approved and would be rewritten in the agreed format used for the other committees and resubmitted for the next meeting.
- 12) **Asset Transfer:** The Clerk reported that since the ESC Cabinet meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, where the asset transfer had been approved, he had only received verbal confirmation via the District Councillor, Tony Goldson. As agreed at the last Assets and Services meeting, the Clerk had written to ESC to request a formal confirmation of the agreement and other requests regarding timescales and permission to undertake work, etc, but had received no response at all. The Committee suggested that the Clerk retries but copies in senior management and possibly the new leader to see if that worked.
- 13) **Correspondence:** None
- 14) **News Items:** To consider any items for the website/newsletters: It was suggested that the clerks should post an explanation about the intention to paint the bollards and that businesses would be involved in order to correct some misinformation being circulated in the town.
- 15) **Accounts for Payment:** The following list of accounts for payment was approved.

<b>4561.</b>	Alan Stannard – amended drawings for London Rd (GPoC)	216.25
<b>4562.</b>	Elan City – Solar Speed Signs (LG Rating Act 1997 s.30)	2958.36 + vat
<b>4563.</b>	(Co-op) Sandwiches for Comm Hubb Presentation	18.15

#### **DD/Standing Orders:**

<b>4564.</b>	BT Telephone & Broadband (Quarterly) (LGA 1972 s111)	277.69 + vat
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#### **Receipts:**

<b>4565.</b>	Levelling Up Grant: Digital Marketing & Market Place planters	8425.00
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#### **Bank & Cash Balances on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023**

Unity Trust Current	£52,511.64
Unity Trust Savings	£200,892.30
Current 728	£123,038.98
Community A/c	£5,301.83
Business Reserves 017	£92,798.76
Soldo Prepaid Acc.	£225.59
Petty Cash	£22.82

The meeting was closed at 8.05pm