



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

FINANCE REPORT no 73

MONDAY 17th JULY 2023 AT 6.30PM IN THE DAY CENTRE

Present: Councillors; A Dunning up to item 6e, P Hedges (Chair) after item 6b, K Greenberg, J Moseley.

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), 8 members of the public representing the various groups that had applied for grants.

REPORT

Cllr Moseley took the Chair as Cllr Hedges had been delayed by traffic. Cllr Moseley explained to all those present that most of the grant applications could not be determined at this meeting due to the reduced number of councillors present (Two Cllrs absent, Cllr Dunning needing to leave early for another meeting and the Chair Cllr Hedges delayed) and furthermore, the sum total of the grant applications received exceeded the grant budget for 2023/24 at this very early stage in the financial year. The Committee agreed to consider the agenda items 2 & 6 first to allow for the possibility that the Committee would not be quorate later in the meeting.

- 2) **Declarations of Interest:** Non-pecuniary interests: Cllr Hedges for item 6a (HCSL), Cllr Dunning for 6a (HCSL), Cllr Greenberg for 6e (Museum Trustee)

The Committee agreed that it would receive presentations and explanations of each grant application from all those attending the meeting on behalf of the applicants but that it may need to defer most of the applications to the next grant window at the Finance & Governance meeting on Monday October 16th, 2023. This would allow the Committee time to discuss and review how to manage the current demand but also to consider reserving some funds later in the year for groups that had not yet applied.

- 6) **Grants:** To consider the following grant applications
- Halesworth Town Juniors FC (£5,000): There was no one representation at the meeting. However, the Committee had received the application and associated paperwork explaining the project. It was **RESOLVED** to defer this application to the October meeting.
 - Halesworth Dementia Carers Fund (£5,000): Mr Geoffrey Cackett attended the meeting and explained the need for HTC's support for their ongoing operations. Mr Cackett understood the Council's predicament and confirmed that there was no immediate urgency. The Chair thanked Mr Cackett for attending the meeting. It was **RESOLVED** to defer this application to the October meeting.

Cllr Peter Hedges arrived at 6.40pm and took the Chair.

- Halesworth Events Management (£10,000) Teresa Walsh, Chair of HEM with Gary Stannard and Winston Kemp in attendance, explained that the group had initially been set up 11 years ago by the Council. In recent years, the group had struggled to find new members and had limited scope to raise funds. The grant would enable the icicle lights to be connected from the Thoroughfare to the

Market Place and for other general costs associated with putting on the event. It was established that the icicle lights represented roughly £5,500 of the grant monies requested. The Committee understood the desire to provide these lights so that there were no gaps between the Thoroughfare and the Market Place, but felt it was not essential. Cllr Greenberg with the Clerk's assistance offered to help the group apply to East Suffolk Council for the Shared Prosperity Fund which could potentially pay for some, or all of the remaining grant requested but the deadline for this particular round was at the end of July and therefore immediate action would be needed. The Clerk would forward the relevant paperwork and after the group had completed the forms, Cllr Greenberg offered to review and check it. The Committee understood the group could not wait until the October meeting as the event took place in November and so it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee approved an initial grant of £5,000. This was the maximum the Committee could award without deferring to the full Council, which did not meet again until September.

- d. Wish Group (£1,000) There was no representation at the meeting. The Chair had some reservations about how the payment to the group via another organisation complied with the grant policy, as the group did not have its own bank account. The Committee also did not fully understand how the amount of £1,000 had been calculated. The Clerk suggested that it may be possible to treat the project as a HTC's initiative as it was on Council property and HTC could potentially pay for the materials directly. The Committee agreed that this may be a solution and it was then **RESOLVED** to defer this to the Assets & Services Committee meeting on Wednesday 19th of July and to recommend assistance up to a maximum of £500.
- e. Halesworth & District Museum (£3,000) Pauline Wilcock and Brian Howard attending the meeting. Cllr Greenberg gave a verbal report on recent activities. Pauline Wilcock explained that the Museum had recently won 2 out of 7 awards from the Association of Suffolk Museums for Object of the year and working with children which was an impressive feat considering how small the Museum was in relation to many others in Suffolk. The grant represented ¼ of the core running costs, however the Treasurer, Brian Howard confirmed that there was no immediate urgency. It was then **RESOLVED** to defer this application to the October meeting.

7.15pm Cllr Dunning left to attend another meeting

- a. Halesworth in Bloom (£3,000). Gillian Coulson and Liz Wooster attended the meeting and had provided comprehensive information to the Committee explaining the purpose of the grant. It was noted that the group also had struggled to attract new members and as there were now only 5 active gardeners, part of the funding required was to allow them to sub-contract some of the more labour-intensive operations. Cllr Moseley suggested the group could also consider applying for funding via East Suffolk Council to help them attract new members. The Committee received an impressive booklet of photo and projects, and the Clerk would try to convert this information to a web friendly format so it could be used on various medias and websites. It was then **RESOLVED** to defer this application to the October meeting.

The meeting then resumed in the normal sequence

- 1) **Apologies accepted for:** Cllrs; Alison Cackett and Maureen Took. Cllr Peter Hedges arriving late due to traffic and Cllr Dunning leaving early for another meeting.

- 3) **Minutes:** The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on Monday 19th June 2023 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) **Matters arising from the minutes:** None
- 5) **Finances:**
- a. The Committee received and noted the monthly report on expenditure against the budget
 - b. The Committee received and noted CIL & Reserves report
- 7) **Audit:** No update as the external auditors' report had not yet been received.
- 8) **Payments:** Authorising payments during August holiday period. It was **RESOLVED** that the Chair would make recommendations to approve any payments during the holiday period via email.
- 9) **Correspondence:** It was noted that Cllr Kellett had reported that the Library had wished to be involved with the Halesworth 800 event. The Clerk had asked Jess Brown, the event organiser to get in touch with the Library directly to involve them in the celebration.
- 10) **News Items:** To consider any items for the website/newsletters: None
- 11) **Accounts for Payment:** The following list of accounts was approved for payment

			Sub	Vat	Total
90 Stationery	Stationery	Viking	65.53	13.11	78.64
91 Training	CiLCA	SLCC	450.00	0.00	450.00
92 Halesworth 800 Event	Road Closure	Suffolk County Council	50.00	0.00	50.00
93 Climate Convention	Climate change	Rachel Kellett	19.20	0.00	19.20
94 Advertising & Promotion	Advertising	Kei Creative	50.00	0.00	50.00

DDs and Soldo payments

88 Allotments	Water Bill Bedingfield Allotment Wave		68.20	0.00	68.20
89 Allotments	Water Bill Swan Allotments	Wave	36.23	0.00	36.23
82 General Expenses	Lanyards	Amazon Services Europe	2.49	0.50	2.99
83 Subscriptions	MS 365	Microsoft	9.40	1.88	11.28
84 Meeting Expenses	Zoom Subscription	Zoom	0.00	0.00	0.00
86 Subscriptions	MS 365	Microsoft	9.40	1.88	11.28
87 Office Equipment	Computer Equipment	Amazon Services Europe	3.99	0.00	3.99

97 Office Equipment	Mouse	Amazon Services Europe	9.78	1.96	11.74
97 Office Equipment	Mouse mats x 3	Amazon Services Europe	6.37	1.27	7.64
97 New Events	Flag	Amazon Services Europe	7.49	1.50	8.99

12) **Staff Matters:** To receive the Clerk's report on the current job vacancies, this item may need to be held *in camera* if further discussion is required.

Administrative Officer: Cllr Hedges was unable to attend the interviews on Thursday 20th July. It was agreed that Cllr Greenberg would replace Cllr Hedges and would make up the interview panel with Cllr Cackett and Cllr Moseley. It was also agreed that the Clerk would meet the applicants informally and forewarn them that a written test (on a pc) would be presented to them before the interview and this would involve answering a typical fictitious complaint. The Committee agreed with the questions suggested by Cllr Moseley, The Clerk would provide all the relevant paperwork for Cllr Greenberg.

Clerk/RFO: Cllr Moseley and Hedges and the Clerk would meet with the applicant for the Locum position on Tuesday the 25th of July. There were no applicants for the permanent position at this stage. The closing date was August the 4th. The Clerk explained that potentially there may be more difficulties finding a replacement as Aldeburgh and Saxmundham had both lost their full-time clerks recently.

Marketing Coordinator: Cllr Moseley reported that there had been 16 applications and 5 had been selected for interviews. It was confirmed that the Clerk's comment about Cllr Hedges overseeing the process only related to the administrative aspect of the contract and was not related to the interview process which was being conducted by the newly formed Marketing Stakeholder Working Group.

The meeting was closed at 8.25pm