



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY MARCH 21ST, 2016 AT 6.30PM
HELD IN THE DAY CENTRE
LONDON ROAD, HALESWORTH

REPORT

Present: Cllrs; P Dutton, A Fleming, R Lewis (Chair), D Thomas, S Leverett, M Took, P Widdowson.

In attendance: N. Rees (Clerk). 1 member of the public

- 1) **Apologies:** Cllr A Baldwin
- 2) **Declarations of Interest:** Non-pecuniary interests: Cllr A Fleming for 9, 8, 10, Cllr M Took for 6b & 8, Cllr P Widdowson for 11 & 12, Cllr D Thomas for 7, 8 & 9, Cllr S Leverett for 8 & 9, Cllr P Dutton for 8 & 9, Cllr R Lewis for 8
- 3) **Minutes:** The report of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 15th February 2016 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) **Matters arising from the minutes.** The Clerk confirmed that he had not received a price from Waveney Norse on the bus shelter cleaning but would chase them again this week. Cllr Fleming would also chase Waveney over the large hole in the Thoroughfare Car Park. Cllr Dutton noted that the Day of Dance was very impressive but was disappointed that more people were not spectating. It was agreed that the next event should be better advertised and perhaps the Council could assist Oxblood Molly in promoting the event.
- 5) **Budget:** To review the preliminary end of year figures. The Committee received and noted the Budget figures, the Clerk explained that the Accounts software presented income, expenditure and budgets in a format that was slightly confusing as it also showed the transfers from reserves from last year and the release of the funds held for the Millennium Green Trust. The Clerk would provide a clearer Excel version at the next Finance meeting. However it could be seen that once the transfers from reserves were separated from the figures, the predicted balance at the end of year would be in the region of £10k. As previously agreed, this would be earmarked for the Divestment of WDC services reserves.
- 6) **Insurance:**
 - a. Council Insurance: It was noted that the insurance had increase slightly over this year's figure, however the Clerk had included extra play equipment items and more benches on to the policy. The offer for a 5 year agreement at £1,642.90 appeared to be a good price as this was lower than the current year's figure. Came & Co had been asked to quote, although they were higher last year but the Clerk had received no quotation and the decision needed to be made. **RESOLVED** that the Council renews the insurance with the brokers Community Action Suffolk (using Zurich insurance) for the 5 year term at £1,642.90 subject to the Clerk receiving confirmation that the price was fixed for that term (assuming no changes are made to the policy).
 - b. Day Centre Insurance: Renewal (Year three of a three year agreement) It was noted that this was an agreed rate for three years and it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk renews the insurance with CAS (Zurich) in accordance with the agreement.
- 7) **Media Screen in the Library:** To consider the cost of installing a power point in the Library, £114.56. It was noted by the Clerk that the Library Manager had assumed that HTC would pay for the installation of the power for a Media Screen. It was noted that the media screen would be used by HTC and the Library. On a proposal by Cllr Thomas it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk writes to the Friends of Halesworth County Library to ask if they were willing to contribute to the cost of installing the power point.

8) **London Rd Building:**

- a. Licence Agreement: To consider any costs. It was noted that the proposed licence for HTC to occupy the London Rd Building from WDC had no associated costs other than the legal requirement to pay the rates. The Committee considered the suggested amendments by Jayne Cole CEO for Local Council Public Advisory Service) and it was also noted that the Volunteer Centre was seeking legal advice on their Licence document. Cllr Leverett proposed and it was RESOLVED that Halesworth Town Council join the Local Council Public Advisory Service at a cost of £200 per annum. This would allow HTC to have access to advice from another source other than SALC and Jayne Cole had already provided useful advice with the Licence and Business Plan at no cost.
It was also agreed that Cllr Leverett could seek legal advice on the Licence from other sources provided it was at no cost to the Council.
- b. Rates: To confirm who is responsible for paying the rates and to sign the direct debit agreement. The Clerk advised the Committee that it did have a legal obligation to pay the rates. Previously this had been reimbursed by WDC but due to WDC's intention to divest the building the Clerk had not as yet obtained confirmation from WDC that it would honour this agreement previously made with David Gallagher, a former WDC officer. It was understandable that WDC would be reluctant to reimburse the entire annual fee but it was hoped that WDC would agree to repay the rates on a monthly basis until the building was transferred or sold. RESOLVED that the Clerk asks Cllr Tony Goldson to assist with getting an agreement from WDC.

9) **Grants/Donations:**

- a. Halesworth Playing Fields Association (HPFA); To consider the request for assistance. It was noted that the Chair had asked the Clerk to confirm if it was possible for the Council to provide a short term loan of £5,000 to the HPFA. The Committee received and noted the letter from the HPFA which explained the reason for the request. The Clerk had received confirmation from SALC that the loan was possible under the provision of sporting facilities (for reference: section 19 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976). It was RESOLVED that the Committee agreed to provide an interest free loan for £5,000 subject to agreeing the terms of its repayment and that the HPFA would arrange for the legal document to be prepared at their cost.
It was also noted that the HPFA would be applying for a grant in April for a contribution towards the public access and liability insurance for the open spaces used by residents for various purposes.

10) **Maintenance:** To consider any maintenance issues.

- a. Pest control contract: To consider the quotation from Millennium Pest Control. The Committee discussed the two options offered, one was a longer term arrangement (£220 per quarter) and the other option was a concentrated programme of 8 weeks (£800) to try and get on top of the problem earlier. Both options involved the initial costs of setting up the bait boxes at £495 + vat. The Committee decided the latter option was necessary as the problem was getting worse. It was noted that the situation would need monitoring and the Council may need to implement the programme again. RESOLVED that the committee approved the quotation for the 8 week programme. It was also agreed to advise residents via the Community News that the pest control programme was being introduced and to warn residents not to allow their pets or children near the bait boxes.
- b. Manhole Cover outside Coopers. The Clerk advised that he had notified SCC that there was a trip hazard outside Coopers, this was a recessed manhole cover with loose bricks on the top. The Clerk had also advised SCC that there was a broken drain cover opposite the Angel.

- 11) **Internal Audit:** To consider the appointment of SALC to undertake the internal audit, estimated cost £250. RESOLVED that SALC be appointed to undertake the internal audit.
- 12) **Staff Matters:** To appoint an assistant Clerk and agree the Contract of Employment. This item was held *in camera*. A public announcement would be made in due course.
- 13) **Accounts for Payment:** There were no accounts for payment to consider

The meeting was closed at 7.35pm.