



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING

MONDAY 21st NOVEMBER, 2016 at 6.30pm

FINANCE REPORT no. 8 (2016-17)

Present: Councillors;

A Fleming, T Gardner, S Leverett, R Lewis, M Took, P Widdowson, D Wollweber,

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), 1 member of the public.

Minutes

- 1) **Apologies:** Cllr D Thomas
- 2) **Declarations of Interest:** To receive declarations for pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests: Cllr P Widdowson for 5, 6, 7 & 8, Cllr A Fleming for 5, 6 & 8, Cllr S Leverett for 5, 6, 7 & 8, Cllr D Wollweber for 5, 6 & 8, Cllr R Lewis for 5 & 6, Cllr T Gardner for 5 & 6
- 3) **Minutes:** The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on the 17th October, 2016 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) **Matters arising from the minutes.** Cllr Leverett asked about whether WDC had replied on whether HTC could manage the poster on the Saxon Way Bridge. The Clerk confirmed that Waveney Norse, who were responsible for managing fly posting had stated that they were happy for Halesworth Town Council to manage the posters on the Saxon Way Bridge. Cllr Leverett, referring to a question raised at the last meeting, confirmed that Leiston Parish Council were in the process of acquiring the Leiston Middle School building. Cllr Leverett, referring to the costs on the accounts for payment, asked how often did the Council pay Waveney Norse for cleaning the market and should this be taken from the budget or from the market revenue. The Clerk confirmed that the costs were quarterly and that it was a good question and would be dealt with under item 5a.
- 5) **Budget Review & Financial position:**
 - a. To review the current budget for 2016/2017 and b) To review the suggested budget figures for 2017/2018. The Committee received and noted the proposed budget figures prepared by the Clerk and the Chair of the Committee, Cllr Lewis. The document included last year's figures, current expenditure compared to the budget, projected spend at the year end, income and proposed budget figures for 2017/2018. The Chair asked the Committee to consider every item in the budget and during this review some adjustments were made. It was agreed that the Market cleaning costs would be taken from the market rent revenue and not from the precept. The budget for the Skateboard Park was increased from £1,000 to £2,000 and the general repairs and maintenance budget was decreased from £6,000 to £5,000. The budget was then provisionally agreed and the revised figures are attached.

During discussions about the Station building, Cllr Leverett proposed and it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Councillors who are trustees of the Halesworth & District Museum arrange a meeting to discuss matters relating to the lease of the Station Building and the Deed of Trust.
 - c. The Committee received and noted the current and predicted reserves at the year end. It was noted that the election costs of £2,000 were likely to remain unspent

and this would then be added to the Election Reserves at the end of the year. The revised figures are attached.

- d. The Committee received and noted the current list of Receipts and Payments for October and the monthly summary figures for the year (April – October)
 - e. The Committee received and noted the current Bank & Cash reconciliations. Cllr Wollweber was horrified that the interest on the bank accounts was such a tiny amount. The Clerk confirmed that this was unfortunately the case and in fact this small amount of interest was now offset by bank charges. The Council had recently attempted to move some of the reserves to a Building Society but the company had at the last minute confirmed that it was unable to offer an account to a Local Authority.
- 6) **London Rd Building:** To consider any updates: Cllr Fleming reported that after receiving assistance from Cllr Gardner and Cllr Leverett, a grant application had been made to Heveningham Hall Trust for the repair and the re-painting of the windows in the London Rd Building. Cllr Fleming was delighted to report that a grant of £10,000 had been approved, subject to the Council obtaining the building. The Trust were very impressed that the windows were all salvageable, despite being neglected for many years, the timber was found to be in generally good condition and all the windows could be recovered. It was noted that there had been no time limit specified in the letter confirming the grant. It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mr Jarvis, Strategic Director for WDC, to ask if the Cabinet had approved the offer he made to HTC.
- 7) **Grants & Donations:** The donation of £40 for prizes for Language and Creative writing and for Product Design (£20 each) for Bungay High School was approved for payment. It was noted that although Bungay High School was outside the area, the Committee agreed that as Halesworth was in the catchment area that the donation was therefore of benefit to the majority of 11 – 16 year old Halesworth residents who were educated at the school. It was further noted by Cllr Widdowson that the rules for awarding grants and donations would need to be considered carefully in future as the continuing change in education meant that some schools could be classed as businesses. It was proposed by the Chair of the Council, Cllr Anne Fleming and it was RESOLVED that due to this ambiguity the donation of £40 would be taken from the Chair's allowance.

[Clerk's note: Bungay High School is an academy with charitable status regulated by the Education Funding Agency.]

During general discussions about the Council's grant policy, Cllr Gardner suggested that organisations who had received a grant from the Council should be asked to provide a report of how the money had been spent.

It was then RESOLVED to incorporate a 'grant monitoring' form into all grants given. Grant monitoring forms should be completed to ensure monies are spent by the applicants. This proposal would then be incorporated into the Council's Grant Policy document.

- 8) **Parking:**
- a. The Committee received and noted the current list of businesses and parish councils who had confirmed contributions for the free parking next year. Several Committee members expressed concerns that the responses from the business community had proved to be very disappointing. Cllr Fleming reported that in future the Council should consider consulting the Town as to whether it wanted to support the free parking financially. SALC had advised that a referendum could be misleading as it depended on the turn out and it was also very expensive. Instead the Council could conduct a campaign to establish opinion through various channels such as the forum meetings, newspapers, Mail chimp, the website, the media screen in the Library and the Notice board. It was Cllr Fleming's opinion that the Council may need to fund the free parking for another

year but thereafter it should be dependent on the level of business contributions and/or public opinion. The Clerk confirmed that the letter and reply form sent to the businesses had not given a deadline date to receive the forms back. It was noted that the costs to fund the free parking would increase every year and the response so far did not bode well for the following years. It was then agreed that a follow up email/letter should be sent to all those businesses who had not replied with a strong message that if the required amount was not raised the Council could not continue to support the free parking in the future. It was agreed to make the deadline for replying the 9th December, this would allow a week to review the situation before the next Finance meeting

- b. To consider the letter from Halesworth Area Community Transport: The Committee appreciated the concerns raised in the letter and was aware of many of the points raised, the Clerk would write back to this affect and to thank Mr Gray for his letter.
 - c. To consider if there is sufficient information to enable the Council to confirm the contribution to the free parking for April 2017 – March 2018. This was deferred until the next meeting.
 - d. To consider the cost of the Free Parking Banner. The Committee considered the two latest designs of the banner (sent via email) and preferred the first design with the blue sky and circle stating ‘Don’t forget to obtain a ticket’. It was then RESOLVED that the Council would pay for the banner at a cost of £78.00. Cllr Leverett drew the Committee’s attention to the article in the ‘intouch’ magazine which reported that Lowestoft Vision were funding two days of free parking in the two multi storey car parks in Lowestoft. It was agreed that the Clerk would try and obtain more information as to how this was funded and how much the scheme would cost.
- 9) **Allotments:** To consider introducing a small maintenance charge to the Allotment rents. After considerable debate it was agreed that instead of adding a maintenance charge the Clerk would write to the allotment committees to inform them that they were responsible for the maintenance of the hedges. If the Council had to pay for this work in the future it would consider adding a maintenance charge to the rents. The Clerk confirmed that since the annual invoices had been sent out there were some allotments that had become free and currently there was no one on the waiting list. The Clerk would advertise the vacant allotments on the website and the Notice Board.
- 10) **Market Place Electricity:** To consider any costs for providing electricity for the Christmas Market on the 10th December 2016. It was RESOLVED that the Council would support the event by providing the electricity free of charge. The Clerk would monitor the usage for future reference.
- 11) **Maintenance:** There were no other maintenance costs to consider.
- 12) **Website:** To consider any items for the website. It was agreed that the proposed letter to the businesses (agreed under item 8a) should also be added to the website. It was agreed to advertise the allotments on the website. It was agreed to announce the winner of the Scarecrow event and to acknowledge the donators and contributors to the event (after contacting Edwards to find out further details).
- 13) **Accounts for Payment:** The following list of accounts were approved for payment.

<u>3714.</u>	Community News – Advert for website (LGA 1972 s142)	66.00 + vat
<u>3715.</u>	Chairs Allowance – (LGA 1972 s15 (5) Chair's allowance)	16.20
<u>3716.</u>	Pearce & Kemp – Media socket in Library (LGA 1972 s142)	114.56 + vat
<u>3717.</u>	SALC - Cilca Training Day 2 (s137)	125 + VAT
<u>3718.</u>	Salc Training Workshop Cllr Wollweber (LGA 1972 s175)	20.00 + vat

DD/Standing Orders:

3719. BT Phone & Broadband (Post Office Act 1953 s51) 160.81 + vat

To be agreed at the meeting

3720. Bungay High School prizes for Creative Writing and Product Design under (LGA Act 1972 s137), if the Council is of the opinion that the expenditure is of benefit to the area or to some or all of its residents. £40.00

Bank & Cash Balances at 4th November, 2016

Current 728	£133,978.77
Community A/c	£5,269.42
Business Reserves 017	£92,231.11
Petty Cash	£115.11

The meeting was closed at 8.34pm