



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
MONDAY OCTOBER 19TH, 2015 AT 6.15PM
HELD IN THE DAY CENTRE
LONDON ROAD, HALESWORTH

REPORT

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

In attendance: N. Rees (Clerk), Liz Wooster (HIB).

- 1) **Apologies:** Cllr A Baldwin
- 2) **Declarations of Interest:** Non-pecuniary interests were received from Cllr D Thomas for items 6b & 7, Cllr A Fleming for 7, Cllr S Leverett for 7 and Cllr P Dutton for 7
- 3) **Minutes:** RESOLVED that the report of the Finance Committee meeting held on the 21st September 2015 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) **Financial Regulations:** To review any amendments to the Financial Regulations: RESOLVED It was proposed and agreed that the Financial Terms of Reference (agreed at the Town Council meeting on July 6th) would be included in the Financial Regulations as an appendix.
- 5) **Grant Application forms and Policies:** To review any amendments to the current documentation and policies. It was noted that Cllr Dutton, Cllr Thomas & Cllr Widdowson were yet to meet and agree the wording for the application form and grant policy documents.
- 6) **Grant Applications:** To consider the following grant applications:-
 - a. Halesworth in Bloom: The Committee received the grant application and the detailed accounts and supporting information. It was noted by many members of the Committee that Halesworth in Bloom performed an invaluable service for the town and after considering the budget carefully it was RESOLVED that the Committee approved the grant application for £3,000.

6.34pm Cllr D Thomas left the room

- a. The Friends of Halesworth County Library: The grant application was to enable the purchase and installation of blinds to the Library's front windows. The Committee had not received any detailed information with the application and after some debate so it was agreed to call Cllr Thomas (Chair of The Friends of Halesworth County Library) back to the meeting to provide more information.

6.39pm Cllr D Thomas returned to the room

Cllr Thomas explained that there had been an attempt to get three comparative quotes but it had proved very difficult with two of the contractors declining to quote. The Committee understood the difficulties of getting specialist contractors. The Committee were unanimous in their praise for the Library for providing such an important service for the town and it was RESOLVED that the Committee approved the grant application for £3,000.

- 7) **HPFA:** To consider the request for financial assistance: The Chair explained that the Clerk had received a request by email for financial assistance and this was accompanied by a letter from Allens, Cadge and Gilbert Solicitors to the HPFA by way of explanation. The Council had not received a grant application at this stage. The Chair, Cllr R Lewis had spoken to Mr Martin Ducker (Chair of the HPFA) and he explained that the HPFA was not seeking any assistance. It was confirmed by the Clerk that the grant application approved in April 2015 for £2,400 was for the financial year Apr 2015 – Mar 2016 and the grant policy prevented the Council from giving a further grant in the same financial year. It was confirmed by the Clerk that the Council had agreed at the meeting in April 2015 that it would provide support to the HPFA beyond March 2016 but up to a maximum of £5,000. Cllr Leverett queried the wording of the resolution and it was agreed that the Clerk would email the extract of the minutes to the whole council.
- 8) **Teen Shelter:** To consider refurbishment options and costs: The Clerk confirmed that he was still waiting for a quotation from Mr Alexander.
- 9) **Budget:** To review the current budget and to confirm the date for setting the 2016 – 2017 Budget/Precept. The Committee received and noted the current budget and spend to date figures and the comparison of the actual spending over the last four years. It was agreed that there would be a meeting in November to specifically to go through the budget before the next Finance meeting. The Chair confirmed that this meeting would be open to all Councillors, not just those on the Finance Committee. The Clerk would arrange a date.
- 10) **Clerk's Office and storage:** To set a date for rationalising the Office paperwork, removal of old paperwork and storage of files in accordance with the legal note NALC LTN 40 local councils documents and records. It was noted that there was a lot of paper that could be shredded and removed. The Clerk had received a quote of £59.99 to remove and shred 10 bags of Council paperwork. It was likely that most of this would be old planning applications but care would be taken to ensure that the necessary records were kept in accordance with the guidelines of the legal note NALC LTN 40. It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate some dates and hopefully some Councillors would be available to help with the clear out. It was also noted that one of the old police cells could be used for storage but this would also need clearing first.
- 11) **Financial Position:** To receive the current bank balances and summary of accounts: The Chair gave a summary of the meeting with Mr Tony Harris of Barclays Bank. It was noted that the Council would now have to pay for banking services and this was estimated to be around £16 - £17 per month. This would now need to be included in next year's budget. The Council also had all its reserves all with one bank and the figure that the government would guarantee if the bank (or its subsidiaries) failed was going to be reduced to £75,000. It was agreed that the Clerk would contact Ipswich Building Society and investigate other alternative sources which were not linked to Barclays. Online banking was also discussed and the possibilities of paying invoices by BACS instead of cheques. The normal service offered by Barclays did not offer the necessary safe guards but for a monthly fee of £20 the Council could sign up to Barclays.net which did offer more security options. It was agreed that this would need to be looked at in further detail at a later meeting.
- 12) **Accounts for Payment:** To consider the list of accounts for payment. RESOLVED that the following accounts for payment were approved for payment.

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| 3714. | Van Dijk – Payroll Services | 45.00 + vat |
| 3715. | Waveney Norse – Market Clean | 175.00 + vat |
| 3716. | Petty Cash | 100.00 |

Agreed at the meeting as noted above:

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| 3717. | Halesworth in Bloom | 3,000.00 |
| 3718. | Friends of Halesworth County Library | 3,000.00 |

The Clerk drew attention to the more favourable rates he had obtained for the electricity supply for the Market Place. It was agreed to put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

- 13) **Staff Matters:** To consider the following items deferred from the September meeting.
- a. Website admin: To consider any further developments. RESOLVED that the Clerk would forward the information received from Spark Media for upgrading the current website version and the other options offered for improvements to Cllr Wollweber, who had previously agreed to look at options for the website. It was noted that Cllr Wollweber would only be looking at options and not expected to act as the website administrator.
 - b. Handyman/general maintenance person for the town: To consider any further information. RESOLVED After some debate it was proposed and agreed that this would be referred to the Town Development Committee to schedule a list of tasks and jobs that this person (Handyman) would be responsible for and from that it could be determined how many hours per week or month was involved and then this could then allowed for in the budget. It was further discussed that it may be possible to draw up a list of contractors for specific tasks and that these tasks could be advertised to enable interested individuals or companies to offer rates for the work, once it was determined what was required.
 - c. Pensions: To consider any further information in preparation for the automatic enrolment date of March 2016: This item was not held *'In Camera'*
The Clerk had supplied the committee with information on the Government's 'Nest' pension scheme. He explained that this scheme was the one that Van Dijke were familiar with and were currently using with but there were other schemes available. Cllr Thomas advised the committee that it was the Council's responsibility as the Employer, to offer a pension scheme and it was not appropriate for the Clerk to have to provide the information or offer advice. RESOLVED that the Committee would look at other schemes that are available and come up with at least three options and then to discuss it in confidence with the Clerk.

On a suggestion from Cllr Leverett it was agreed that a proposal to reintroduce proposal slips would be considered by the full Council at its next monthly meeting in November.

The meeting was closed at 7.58pm.