

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 27th September 2021 at 7 pm in Russell House,
Market Square, Westerham

Present: Councillors: Mrs S Sheen (SS) – Chairman
Mr E Boyle (EB)
Mr Elsdon-Wortley (ECW)
Dr S Kay (SK)
Mrs H Ogden (HO)

In attendance: Town Clerk: Mrs A Howells (AH)
Finance Officer: Mrs D Marshall (DM)

Item		Action
1.	<u>Apologies for Absence</u> None	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None	
3.	<u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 21st June 2021</u> Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 st June were approved at Council on 26 th July.	
4.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> 5.8 The Deputy Clerk had contacted Castle Water again and received a new Complaint Handler. The Handler had stated that he had re-raised the Wastewater Abatement Claim with Thames Water who had 20 days to review the claim. Once agreed any refund would be backdated to 30 June 2020. 8 Website Brief – Cllr Elsdon-Wortley confirmed that he had sent the updated website brief to the Clerk. The Clerk would now send this to the WTC website contractor and set up a zoom meeting to discuss WTC's brief.	DR AH
5.	<u>Finance</u> 5.1 RFO's report – The Report was received with thanks. The RFO reported that the External Audit had been concluded and returned with no 'except for matters', i.e. clear. The RFO was congratulated for all her hard work. The Internal Audit had been booked for 22 nd November. 5.2 Payments and receipts list to 31st August 2021 – Cllr Sheen had no issues to bring to the Committees attention. The Clerk to request payment for the signage from Sundridge PC.	AH

	<p>5.3 Committee Accounts to 31st August 2021 – Cllr Sheen reported that she had nothing of concern to bring to the Committee's attention. The Accounts would be recommended to Council for approval.</p> <p>5.4 Parking Project – The RFO reported that two invoices for design works had been paid for £25,241.30 + VAT. A copy of the detailed design work had been provided and kept on file. A 27th September start date had been issued for Crockham Hill Playing Field and a start for the other sites was imminent. The Fields In Trust permit required that work was started at Crockham Hill Playing Field by mid- September, the RFO had secured an extension to this condition until the end of October 2021. However since the work had been handed over to the Contractor undertaking the works an error had been discovered in the transfer of figures resulting in a shortfall of £14k for the work at Crockham Hill. The RFO was investigating savings in other areas such as removing spoil to try and bring costs down. Following discussion it was agreed that a formal letter would be sent to Amey expressing WTC's disappointment and frustration on learning about this at the 11th hour. The letter to be copied to KCC Cllr Chard.</p> <p>5.5 SDC Covid-19 compliance activities and awareness funding – The Clerk had circulated information regarding funding of £4,328 from SDC for supporting WTC Covid-19 compliance and awareness activities, such as: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissemination of the Covid-19 guidance. • Promotional activity, e.g. sharing of good practice, signage, advertising. • Educational campaigns. • Engagement or tailored communications to sectors or groups. <p>Following discussion it was agreed to investigate items such as sanitizers and Covid Care packages. Y&C Committee to discuss at their meeting.</p> <p>5.6 Insurance claim for the Fountain – Following discussion it was agreed to make an insurance claim regarding the damage to the Fountain.</p> <p>5.7 Damage to the mosaic – There had been further damage to the mosaic, most likely water damage, the quote for repair had been circulated and was agreed at a cost of £650 plus VAT.</p> <p>5.8 Membership of Rural Market Town Group – The Clerk had circulated information regarding the annual subscription of the Group following the free trial membership. Cllr Holt was the WTC representative and he recommended continuing with the subscription. Following discussion it was agreed to continue to be involved with the Group and pay the annual subs of £110. WTC would be invoiced 50% of this for the remaining subscription year.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>AH</p> <p>AH</p> <p>AH</p> <p>AH</p>
6.	<p><u>King George's Playing Field redevelopment</u></p> <p>The RFO had circulated a note on the progress so far and the next proposed steps. It was agreed that this item would be put on Council Agenda together with a report to Council to discuss the next steps.</p>	<p>DM/Working Group</p>
7.	<p><u>Land Issues</u></p> <p>7.1 Doctors Surgery – The Clerk reported the Surgery had requested extending the current lease for a year and to begin the process of agreeing a longer lease by the end of 2022. Following discussion this was agreed. The Clerk to confirm in writing and request a date early 2022 to commence discussions.</p>	<p>AH</p>

	<p>Cllr Kay agreed to source a model lease.</p> <p>7.2 Bloomfield Allotments lease – No further update.</p> <p>7.3 Land North of King George's Playing Field lease – The RFO reported that Squerries had agreed to extend the lease on the northern part of KGF for 66 years, bringing it in line with the WSA lease. It was agreed that WTC would draw up a draft lease based on the 2018 lease.</p> <p>It was agreed to seek external advice on the changes to the 2018 lease necessary to make it suitable for the much longer lease envisaged.</p> <p>7.4 KCC response to allotment access – WTC had been in contact with KCC Estates regarding the allotment access. Following a letter sent in February 2021 KCC had confirmed that they will hold the land for strategic purposes.</p>	<p>SK</p> <p>SS/HO</p>
8.	<p><u>Eco Policy Action Plan</u></p> <p>A draft of the F&GP ECO Policy Action Plan had been circulated and following discussion it was agreed to make minor amendments and present it to Council for agreement.</p>	SS/AH
9.	<p><u>Russell House</u></p> <p>9.1 Anti-social behaviour issues – The Clerk reported minor litter issues.</p> <p>9.2 Valuation information request by HM Customs – This was noted.</p> <p>9.3 Request to plant a tree by the Rotary Club – It was agreed to discuss the request at Council in conjunction with the Queen's Jubilee Agenda item.</p> <p>9.4 Tree work adjacent to car park – The Clerk reported that a pear tree in Russell House garden and trees adjacent to the car park needed attention. The pear tree needed to be cut back so the CCTV could see the garden area; a quote of £150 to trim the pear tree was agreed. Following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would check the Tree Contract regarding the trees adjacent to the car park, however the needed work was agreed in principle.</p>	<p>AH</p> <p>AH</p>
10.	<p><u>Local Council Award</u></p> <p>Cllr Sheen had drawn up, in conjunction with the Clerk, a report on action needed to achieve the Gold Award. Following discussion the following actions were agreed: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include Chairman/Committee Chairman role descriptions on the website and in the Induction pack. • To carry out HR responsibilities as per Standing Orders • To review Bonus Scheme • To include unique building and map references on Asset Register • To add Staff Organisation Chart to website • To amend Standing Orders regarding adoption of Committee minutes when appropriate • For all Committee Chairman to sign the Minute Book • To complete the Three Year Business Plan • To maintain CH notice board 	SS/AH
11.	<p><u>Policies and Procedures</u></p> <p>The following Policies had been circulated: -</p> <p>11.1 Compassionate Leave Policy</p>	

	Following discussion it was agreed to update recent legislation and to extend the policy to include other appropriate compassionate circumstances. 11.2 Disclosure and Barring Policy Following discussion it was agreed that it was not necessary to at this time for Cllrs or employees to be DBS checked.	AH AH
12.	<u>Correspondence</u> 12.1 KCC Budget consultation 2022/23 had been completed by Cllr Sheen and the Clerk.	
13.	<u>Reports from Councillors</u> Cllr Kay reported that he had attended a press call on the Pilgrim Way crossroads following recent accidents and concern from residents.	
14.	<u>TN16 and Website</u> None	
15.	<u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> None	
16.	<u>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</u> Budgets	
17.	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 22 nd November 2021	
	Part 2 Pursuant to Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (admission meetings) Act 1960. The Public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the under mentioned item on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business concerned.	
18	<u>Overtime</u> The Finance Officer had circulated details of overtime claimed April to August and this was noted. All outstanding overtime to be claimed by end of Oct.	
19.	<u>Pay Award 2022/23</u> It was agreed to include a 3% uplift in the budget for 2022/2023. Following lengthy discussion it was agreed to explore the feasibility of obtaining external advice regarding a salary review for all employees.	
20.	<u>Staff Bonus Scheme 2020/21</u> The update was noted.	
21.	<u>Bonus Scheme 2022/23</u> It was agreed to consult the staff on the way forward.	

The meeting was concluded at 11.00 pm.

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman