

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 22nd November 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)
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> Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Kay – holiday.	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None	
3.	<u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th September 2021</u> Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 th September were approved at Council on 4 th October.	
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 received a response from Castle Water stating that Thames Water had reviewed WTC's request for a Non-Return to Sewer Abatement of 99% and this had been granted. Thames Water advised they were only prepared to back date until 16 th September 2021. However Castle Water had confirmed they were prepared to back date to 30 th June 2021. The revised invoice from Castle Water was awaited. 8 Website Brief – A zoom meeting had been held with Cllr Elsdon-Wortley, the Clerk and the website contractor, Black Spiral Design. Following the meeting a revised quote had been sent and the slightly increased quote had been accepted as it was within the approved budget. 5.2 Payment for signage from Sundridge Parish Council had been received. 5.6 Insurance claim for the motor vehicle damage to the Fountain – an insurance claim had been submitted and further photographic evidence had been requested and sent. A decision was awaited. 9.4 The pear tree in Russell House garden had been trimmed. 11.1 Compassionate Leave policy – Cllr Sheen and the Clerk to include other appropriate compassionate circumstances and to update recent legislation.	SS/AH

5.	<p>Finance</p> <p>5.1 RFO's report – The Report was received with thanks. The Covid awareness Grant from Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) of £4,328 had been received. The Clerk to send invoices to SDC by 31st December 2021. Kent County Council had received emergency grant funding from central government under the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), to be used to support efforts towards preventing or containing the spread of COVID-19 and/or helping those that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Funding had been allocated per Parish/ Town Councils in recognition of the additional costs they may have incurred between 1st November 2020 and 31st March 2022 up to a maximum of £1 per electorate. Following discussion it was agreed that the Finance Officer would analyse additional costs incurred by WTC and apply for funding if appropriate.</p> <p>5.2 Payments and receipts list to 31st October 2021 – Cllr Sheen had no issues to bring to the Committees attention and no items were raised.</p> <p>5.3 Committee Accounts to 31st October 2021 – Cllr Sheen reported that she had nothing of concern to bring to the Committee's attention and no items were raised. The Accounts would be recommended to Council for approval.</p> <p>5.4 Draft F&GP and Committee budgets 2022/23 – The draft F&GP budget had been circulated. Following discussion, some adjustments were agreed which did not increase the draft budget and this would be presented to Council for review as part of the consolidated draft budget. The Finance Officer to add background working assumptions.</p> <p>5.4 Consolidated draft budget 2022/23 – The draft Consolidated budget had been circulated and following discussion it was agreed to recommend the draft budget to Council.</p> <p>5.6 Draft Three-year budget – A draft three-year budget had been circulated. The Committee felt more work was needed by Committees on future planning before a final three-year budget could be approved. It was agreed the Finance Officer would arrange a meeting with Committee Chairs and the Council Chair after the 2022/23 budget had been approved.</p> <p>5.7 Reserves – Information had been circulated and it was agreed to recommend to Council that the Lighting Catenary Fund and Toilet Refurbishment Fund be incorporated into the Asset Repair Fund. The Finance Officer would re-order the list for clarity.</p> <p>5.8 LED programme – H&L electricity contract was due for renewal early in 2023. In view of the tremendous increase in electricity costs during the term of the last 4 year contract, it would be advisable for the LED conversion programme to have been completed prior to entering a new contract, so that WTC had 100% LED lighting stock. H&L would be short of £2,000-£3,000 of budget to complete the conversion programme in the current financial year and planned to finish early in 2022/23, using some of next year's budget allocation. It would seem prudent to allow H&L to go over budget this year by the shortfall amount and use the WTC asset repair reserve. The amount could then be transferred from H&L's LED budget line on 1st April 2022 to replenish the asset repair reserve. Following discussion it was agreed this would be presented to Council with F&GP recommendation to approve.</p> <p>Cllr Sheen to request sight of the correspondence regarding the end date of</p>	<p>AH</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p>
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	<p>the contract to confirm it was 2023.</p> <p>5.9 CIL – WTC had received a further CIL payment from SDC for the period April to September 2021 for £5,702.60. The Finance Officer would undertake a full review of CIL funds held at the end of the calendar year.</p> <p>5.10 Parking Project - The Finance Officer reported that the stretch of hedge had been removed at Crockham Hill to create the opening for the car park entrance to ensure that work was deemed to have been started to comply with FIT's permit requirement that work was started by the end of October 2021. The car parking bays at Madan Road had been created, with no issues and residents were pleased with the work. The white lining to mark the individual spaces was awaited to complete the project (this would be done at the same time as Hartley Road). The invoice for Madan Road had been received and was in line with the estimate.</p> <p>The creation of bays at Hartley Road had started and much of the groundworks had been completed, again with no issues to date. The works were slightly behind schedule due to the foreman and some of the team contracting Covid; they were now back on site and working extended hours to try and catch up. It was essential that the works at Costells Meadow were started before the 14th December to comply with SDC planning permission condition of commencing work on site within 3 years of the date of planning approval. The Finance Officer to check on progress.</p> <p>The Chair of Committee advised of the review undertaken of the documentation received from Amey following the notice of increased costs of the Crockham Hill Car Park. The response to Amey was discussed and agreed with a request to inform Kent County Councillor Nick Chard. Lessons learned will be built into the contract approval process.</p> <p>5.11 Rural Market Town Group – The Clerk had circulated information from the Rural Market Towns Group including: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a map detailing the outcome of 24 months of work • details of the member service package <p>WTC would be invoiced for five months membership for the remainder of the year, as previously agreed, at a sum of £45.83.</p>	<p>SS</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p> <p>SS</p> <p>DM</p>
6.	<p><u>Land Issues</u></p> <p>6.1 Doctors Surgery – The Clerk to chase the Surgery for a date in January to commence lease discussions. The Clerk and Cllr Sheen to annotate the current lease and NHS lease to aid discussions.</p> <p>6.2 Bloomfield Allotments lease – No further update.</p> <p>6.3 Land North of King George's Playing Field lease – A draft letter had been circulated requesting legal advice and was agreed with minor amendments. The Clerk reported that the Junior Footballers had been successful with their pitch maintenance grant application. The Junior Footballers would work closely with WTC on the future maintenance of KGF.</p> <p>6.4 Fullers Hill public toilets – A draft agreement for use of one of the rooms of the original public toilet had been circulated. Following discussion this was agreed in principle subject to a clause being added 'WTC accepts no responsibility for the contents stored in the facility.' The Clerk to check with WTC Insurance company that the users £10,000 insurance for damage to the plant during access was sufficient.</p>	<p>AH/SS</p> <p>AH</p> <p>AH</p>

7.	<u>Russell House</u> 7.1 Anti-social behaviour issues – The Clerk reported minor litter issues.	
8.	<u>ECO Policy</u> The F&GP ECO policy had been circulated and minor amendments were agreed. Following issues with energy companies at this time it was agreed to note that requesting a green energy company would not always be viable due to cost.	
9.	<u>Local Council Award</u> Cllr Sheen had circulated an update. It was agreed that Cllrs Sheen and Ogden, with the Clerk would meet to discuss some issues. The matter would then be handed back to the Working Group to take this forward.	HO/SS/AH Working Group
10.	<u>Correspondence</u> None.	
11.	<u>Reports from Councillors</u> Cllr Boyle reported that he had found a company who could provide 'Social Media Upskilling' training and currently 15 retailers/businesses were extremely interested. An SDC grant was funding this work. Cllrs Ogden, Sheen and Boyle had met with Mr Warde.	
12.	<u>TN16 and Website</u> Junior Footballers grant	
13.	<u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> KGF project update Correspondence with Amey due to unforeseen increase in costs	
14.	<u>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</u> Budgets 2022/23 Council Chamber IT Equipment	
15.	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 10 th January 2022	
	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.	
16.	<u>HR Matters</u> Cllr Sheen provided an update on discussions with a consultant from the Local Government Association. It was agreed to request an estimate for a review.	SS

The meeting was concluded at 10.35 pm.

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman