

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 14th March 2022 at 7 pm in Russell House,
Market Square, Westerham

Present: Councillors: Mrs S Sheen (SS) – Chairman
Mr E Boyle (EB)
Mr Elsdon-Wortley (CEW)
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 10th January 2022</u> Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 th January were approved at Council on 24 th January.	
4.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> 4 Website – There was some more work that the Clerk and Deputy Clerk needed to complete and then the draft website would be available to view. 4 Fountain – The Clerk contacted Zurich again on 09/03/22 and was given the go ahead over the phone and payment was made into WTC account. The Clerk had contacted the preferred contractor and given the go ahead for the work. 4 Toilet agreement – All parties had agreed and the amendments had been made arising from F&GP comments. The agreement was due to be signed shortly. 5.1 Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) – The Finance Officer reported that a claim for the full amount of £3520 was submitted before the end of January deadline. The Finance Officer had been informed today that this grant had been successful. 5.1 Amazon business account – The Finance Officer had been unable to open an Amazon business account to-date, as agreed, as it was necessary to have	

	<p>a mobile number affiliated to the account, which was not affiliated to another Amazon account. Cllr Elsdon-Wortley offered to help with this issue.</p> <p>5.5 Santander IT Issue – The Finance Officer to send the letter received from Santander to Cllr Sheen.</p> <p>5.7 CIL Report – The Finance Officer to update the CIL report for the next meeting following the finalisation of the Parking Project costs.</p> <p>5.8 IT costs – WTC IT Contractor had advised that the monthly Microsoft costs would increase by £21.64, an annual increase of £259.68. The Finance Officer confirmed the budget would bear this increase.</p>	<p>CEW</p> <p>DM</p> <p>DM</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Finance</p> <p>5.1 RFO's report – The Report was received with thanks.</p> <p>5.2 Payments and receipts list to 31st January 2022 – Cllr Sheen had no issues to bring to the Committees attention and no items were raised.</p> <p>5.3 Committee Accounts to 31st January 2022 – 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 Internal Auditor Plan 2022/23 –The Internal Audit Plan 2022/23 had been circulated and reviewed and it was agreed to recommend its acceptance to Council.</p> <p>5.5 Effectiveness of Internal Audit – The Effectiveness of Internal Audit had been circulated and reviewed and it was agreed to recommend its acceptance to Council.</p> <p>5.6 Financial Risk Assessment – The Financial Risk Assessment had been circulated and reviewed and it was agreed to recommend its acceptance to Council subject to an amendment regarding remote working and storage of files and management of CIL funds. It was further agreed that the Finance Officer would register all F&GP as signatories to WTC accounts.</p> <p>5.7 Asset Register – The Asset Register had been circulated and reviewed and it was agreed to recommend its acceptance to Council.</p> <p>The Finance Officer reported that WTC's Insurance policy was due for renewal in June 2023. A review of WTC current policy and future cover would need to be undertaken before the end of 2022 so that quotations could be sought in the first quarter of 2023. This was an opportune time to review valuations vs insured values. Following discussion it was agreed that the Finance Officer and Clerk would investigate further.</p> <p>5.8 Parking Project – The Finance Officer had circulated information regarding the snagging issues at each of the four locations. The Finance Officer had informed the Contractor that the last invoice would not be settled until this work had been completed as it had been outstanding since December. A meeting had been arranged with the Contractor on Wednesday. Following discussion it was agreed that Cllr Ogden would also attend the meeting. The Finance Officer would provide a breakdown of final costings for the next meeting.</p> <p>5.9 Investment Information – Local Authority Investment Schemes were discussed with the view to increasing the return on funds held by the Council and spreading the risk of bank failure. Following discussion it was agreed to discuss further at the next meeting once the end of year figures had been finalized.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM/AH</p> <p>DM/HO</p> <p>DM</p>

	<p>5.10 KGF Water Bill – The Clerk advised that Castle Water had adjusted the invoices. The Water Abatement form was completed in June 2020 and had now been applied and back dated to June 2020. Castle Water were adamant that WTC had received a high invoice as correct water readings had not been received due to a faulty meter. The water meters were being read this week so that the Bowls Club could be invoiced for past and present usage. Following discussion it was agreed that as there was now an agreed base figure it was important to monitor the readings for reasonability going forward to identify any faulty meter recordings earlier. It was further agreed to invoice SDC for reasonable costs of additional water usage for the litter sweeper which benefits the town, now housed in the Groundman's Hut.</p>	DM
6.	<p>Land Issues</p> <p>6.1 Use of land adjacent to Churchill School for a Forest School – Information had been circulated regarding the request to establish a Forest School in the woodland area at the lower part of the field. Following discussion the Committee agreed to support a Forest School on the land adjacent to Churchill School as long as a Risk Assessment of the area was provided before the Forest School commenced. If funding was an issue WTC may support a grant application for a formally constituted group holding a current bank account. KCC Cllr Chard to be informed of the issue.</p> <p>6.2 Churchill School Lease – On 1st February Cllr Elsdon-Wortley and the Clerk visited WTC land adjacent to Churchill School site following a phone call from the Site Manager of the School regarding the boundary fence. The Site Manager had annotated a drawing of the existing fence which did not match the boundary on the Land Registry map. On viewing the site it was clear that the current fence needed repair and its position did not match the land registry boundary. A large amount of land was now within the neighbouring property; with a number of trees on it. There was nothing to show how long ago this fencing had been erected and no knowledge of why it had been erected in the wrong place. The committee was advised that to erect a new fence on the correct boundary would be expensive and incur additional tree maintenance costs. Following the recent storms, over £1000 had been spent on emergency tree work on the land leased by Churchill School, however the rent for the current lease was only £200 a year. Following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would set up a meeting with the Head Teacher after Easter; Cllrs Ogden and Boyle to attend. The Clerk to circulate the current lease.</p> <p>6.3 F&GP Actions from KGF Re-development Project – Cllr Sheen reported that following the Special Council meeting regarding the KGF Re-development Project there was an action for F&GP to discuss the adequacy and cost implications of the Resourcing Plan. Cllr Sheen proposed this be discussed at the May meeting when further information would be available and this was agreed.</p> <p>6.4 Deed of Dedication for Skate Park – Following discussion it was agreed in principle to spend up to £1000 on a Deed of Dedication for the Skate Park area; out of the Professional Fees budget.</p>	AH AH AH AH

	<p>6.5 Land North of King George's Playing Field lease – The legal work had been contracted by WTC; the Clerk to request an update.</p> <p>6.6 Doctors Surgery – Cllr Sheen had reviewed the Doctors Lease and a sample NHS lease and a copy with additions/deletions had been annotated and sent to the Doctors for their comments. The Clerk had chased for a response. Thanks were given to Cllr Sheen for all her hard work.</p> <p>6.7 Bloomfield Allotments lease – No further update.</p> <p>6.8 Bowling Club request – An email had been received from the Bowls Club requesting a replacement shed as the current one was coming to the end of its life. The Bowls Club were looking at a wooden shed or possibly a container as this would be longer lasting. Following discussion it was agreed to refer back to APFOS for them to request a shed/container which was in keeping with the Rural aspect. It was noted that the lease was due for renewal later this year.</p>	APFOS
7.	<p><u>Russell House</u></p> <p>7.1 Anti-social behaviour issues – The Clerk reported that nitrous oxide capsules had been found in the garden and this had been reported to the Police. There had also been minor litter issues.</p> <p>7.2 Tree for Russell House garden – Following agreement to the request received from the Rotary regarding planting a tree for the Queen's Jubilee at Russell House; a blackthorn tree had been selected out of the options due to its smaller size and compact root ball. The tree was to be planted before the end of March.</p>	
8.	<p><u>ECO Policy - F&GP Action Plan</u></p> <p>Cllr Sheen had circulated an updated Action Plan and reported good progress was being made: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Website Contractor's green credentials had been received. • A local double glazing firm was going to quote for replacement windows at Russell House. • A register of interest had been made through KCC for solar panels at Russell House. A no obligation quote would be received in April. • The carbon footprint baseline would be completed for the next meeting. 	AH
9.	<p><u>Local Council Award</u></p> <p>Cllr Sheen had circulated updated information on the progress and timeline for future work. A meeting had been set up for Committee Chairmen to input to the three year Business Plan. There were no further queries.</p>	
10.	<p><u>SDC Local Plan</u></p> <p>Cllr Ogden reported that the consultation for SDC Local Plan Regulation 18 would commence in April for a period of six weeks. Professional planning advice may be required. Following discussion it was agreed in principle that up to £1000 could be spent from the professional fees budget.</p>	
11.	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>11.1 Government advice regarding QR codes was noted.</p>	

12.	<u>Reports from Councillors</u> Cllr Ogden reported that she had had conversations with SDC Cllr Maskell; met one of HR consultants on zoom; had various meetings regarding Covers Farm and had a call with Mr Warde regarding the northern part of KGF. Cllr Sheen had zoom calls with HR consultants.	
13.	<u>TN16, Edenbridge Magazine and Website</u> Precept Parking Project	
14.	<u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> Forest School KCC Education department	
15.	<u>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</u> CIL update KGF Resourcing costs Bonus Scheme 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 proposal Investments	
16.	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Monday 9 th May 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.	
17.	<u>Deputy Clerk increase for passing CILCA</u> The Deputy Clerk had passed her CILCA at the end of January and it was agreed to confirm her pay increase of 47p an hour.	
18.	<u>Training Schedule for Cllrs and staff</u> The Clerk had circulated the Training Schedule for Cllrs and Staff, and this was noted subject to two adjustments. It was agreed to change the presentation for the Local Council Award.	CEW/AH
19.	<u>Staff Overtime</u> The Finance Officer had circulated an overtime update and this was noted.	
20.	<u>Pay Award 2021/2022</u> Information had been received from NALC that the pay award for 2021/22 had been settled on 10 th March 2022 for 1.75%. Staff had been paid 2% in April 2021.	
21.	<u>HR Consultation</u> The Committee agreed to proceed with the agency recommended by KALC.	

The meeting was concluded at 9.55 pm.

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman