

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 9th May 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)
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 14th March 2022</u> Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 th January were approved at Council on 14 th March.	
4.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> 4 Website – Remains work in progress due to other priorities. 4 Fountain – The Clerk was meeting the contractor on site next week to discuss the work and closure of the zebra crossing. 4 Toilet agreement – Storage Agreement - The agreement was due to be signed shortly. 5.7 Asset Register – Work to revalue assets planned for Q3 prior to insurance renewal. 5.10 KGF Water Bill – The Finance Officer had not yet invoiced the Bowls Club or SDC. 6.2 Churchill School lease – The Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Head Teacher. 18 Training Schedule – The Clerk and Cllr Elsdon- Wortley still to review presentation of information.	AH/DR AH AH DM/AH DM AH CEW/AH
5.	<u>Finance</u> 5.1 RFO's report – The Report was received with thanks. The Finance Officer reported that Cllrs Ogden, Boyle, Sheen, Kay, Elsdon-	

	<p>Wortley and Bird were currently able to approve payments by BACS. WTC had no longer been making cheque payments – should WTC need to do so, only Cllrs Ogden and Boyle were signatories. It was agreed to wait until it was known who was re-standing for Council before obtaining more signatories. The Finance Officers recent ill health had highlighted the need to put back-up plans in place for payroll and paying invoices. It was suggested that the Clerk was trained to use the HMRC payroll package and given access to online banking. This was agreed.</p> <p>The Finance Officer had been monitoring increases in WTC utility costs closely. Whilst utility budgets had already been increased for 2022/23, the % increases were still likely to be higher than those budgeted for in places. The RFO had taken steps with each committee to ensure that WTC remained within budget and would continue to monitor the situation throughout the year.</p> <p>The Clerk had received notification of the cost of a new electricity contract for WTC buildings. Following discussion the contract which ran to 30/09/2025 was approved at an 85% increase as the slightly longer contract (31/03/26) represented an 112% increase.</p> <p>5.2 Payments and receipts list to 31st March 2022 – Cllr Sheen had no issues to bring to the Committees attention.</p> <p>5.3 Committee Accounts to 31st March 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 Year End Accounts 2021/22 – The Finance Officer reported that the accounts for the year had been closed, with no issues. The End of Year submissions for payroll and pension had been made. The Committee agreed to recommend the accounts for approval by Council.</p> <p>5.5 Internal Auditor Report –The Internal Audit took place on Friday 29th April and no issues were raised. The report from the Internal Auditor had not yet been received.</p> <p>Thanks were given to the Finance Officer for all her hard work particularly in view of her ill health.</p> <p>5.6 Virements and Rollovers – The Finance Officer had circulated information regarding virements, accruals and rollovers. Following discussion it was agreed to recommend approval to Council.</p> <p>5.7 Reserves - The Finance Officer had circulated information regarding reserves. Following discussion it was agreed to recommend approval to Council. Cllr Boyle to follow up the transfer of Long Pond funds with Friends of the Long Pond.</p> <p>5.8 Investments – The Finance Officer had circulated details of the Public Sector Deposit (PSD) Fund. To spread the risk of a single bank failure the Finance Officer recommended transferring funds from the Santander Reserve as follows: £10,000 into the Nationwide Building Society account, £10,000 into Lloyds Bank account and £20,000 into the Metro Bank account. A further £100,000 would be transferred into a new account with the PSD Fund. Following discussion this was agreed.</p> <p>Resolved: To move £10,000 into both Nationwide and Lloyds and £20,000 into Metro Bank and £100,000 into the PSD Fund.</p> <p>5.9 CIL update – The Finance Officer had circulated an updated CIL report. The Finance Officer was thanked for the change in format which made it</p>	<p>DM/AH</p> <p>AH</p> <p>EB</p> <p>DM</p>
--	---	--

	<p>easier to understand. This would be tabled on the Council Agenda.</p> <p>5.10 Parking Project – The Finance Officer had circulated final costings for the project. Following discussion it was agreed to pay the balance owing for the Crockham Hill car park minus the project management fee as all snagging works were not yet finished despite an assurance from the Amey Project Manager that they would be completed by now. The final costings would be presented to Council.</p> <p>5.11 Business Plan – Cllr Ogden reported due to rising costs such as utilities this year's finances would have to be managed carefully. The Chairman, Clerks of Committees, Chairman and Finance Officer had attended a meeting regarding the 3-year Business Plan to discuss wish lists and funding. The outcome from this meeting to be presented to Council. Proposed amendments to the Committee budgets to be discussed at the next F&GP meeting in June. A revised 3-year budget would be presented to the F&GP meeting in September.</p> <p>5.12 Subscriptions – The list of subscriptions had been circulated. Following discussion, it was agreed that as the total amount was in excess of the subscriptions budget for this financial year the Grounds Maintenance Association Subscription and the Local Council Advisory Service subscription would not be renewed. The Chamber of Commerce subscription would be paid from the Youth and Community contingency.</p>	<p>DM</p> <p>DM</p>
6.	<p><u>Land Issues</u></p> <p>6.1 Use of land adjacent to Churchill School for a Forest School – The Forest School Risk Assessment had been circulated but this had not included a tree risk assessment. Cllrs did not feel that this additional risk assessment was the responsibility of WTC but wished to be as supportive as possible. A grant option was discussed, the Clerk to discuss with the Forest School lead.</p> <p>6.2 Churchill School Lease – Following discussion it was agreed that the Clerk would set up a meeting with the Head Teacher; Cllrs Ogden and Boyle to attend.</p> <p>6.3 Land North of King George's Playing Field lease – The Clerk to request an update.</p> <p>6.4 Doctors Surgery – Information was awaited from the Doctors Surgery. The Clerk to chase in time for the next meeting.</p> <p>6.5 Bloomfield Allotments lease – No further update.</p>	<p>AH</p> <p>AH</p> <p>AH</p> <p>AH</p>
7.	<p>King George's Field – Redevelopment Project</p> <p>7.1 Available funds – The Finance Officer had circulated a document with available funds and potential future funds. The Finance Officer reported that none of the big funders such as Sport England and National Lottery were currently funding non Covid projects. Smaller funders would need to be looked at for the playground refurbishment and for the Community Group to source for the skatepark. The Finance Officer reported that she had taken advice on the VAT issue and she recommended WTC sought specialist advice due to the complexity of the VAT Regulations. Following discussion it was agreed that the Finance Officer would approach a VAT specialist and obtain a quote.</p> <p>7.2 Project Report – The Finance Officer had circulated an extensive Project Report. It was agreed that this would be presented to the lead Committee</p>	<p>DM</p>

	<p>with responsibility for the project (APFOS) and then be updated for Council. Cllr Ogden asked how the finances were going to be reported and following discussion a layout was agreed. The Finance Officer would put this document together for the June F&GP Committee meeting.</p> <p>The Finance Officer was thanked for all her hard work.</p> <p>7.3 Friends of KGF constitution – The Finance Officer circulated the constitution at the meeting and asked for feedback by 20th May.</p> <p>7.4 Resourcing costs/plan – Cllr Ogden had used the Project Plan and timeline to put together the draft Resource Plan and made assumptions on how long actions would take. Following lengthy discussion it was agreed to support the methodology and support the conclusions. All staff overtime would need to be tightly controlled and reported to F&GP at each Committee meeting. Overtime hours for the KGF project would be tracked against the plan. The only option at this time would be slippage of the timeline. This plan to be constantly reviewed.</p>	DM
8.	<p><u>Russell House</u></p> <p>8.1 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>8.2 Tree for Russell House garden – The Rotary had been unable to source a suitable blackthorn tree in time to plant before the end of March; the tree would now be planted in October.</p> <p>8.3 Solar panels - The Clerk had circulated a provisional quote. Following discussion it was agreed not to pursue at this time due to potential planning issues, ASB and cost.</p>	
9.	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
10.	<p><u>Reports from Councillors</u></p> <p>Cllr Ogden reported that she had had conversations with KCC Cllr Chard regarding Churchill School lease.</p> <p>Cllr Ogden reported she had had conversations with SDC Cllrs regarding the Local Plan.</p>	
11.	<p><u>TN16, Edenbridge Magazine and Website</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
12.	<p><u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
13.	<p><u>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</u></p> <p>None.</p>	
14.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>Monday 20th June 2022</p>	
	<p>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</p>	

	grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business concerned.	
15.	<u>Staff overtime 2021/22</u> Overtime for the year had been circulated and the risk to the payroll contingency noted. See also discussion at point 7.4.	
16.	<u>Bonus Scheme 2021/22</u> Bonus scheme targets had been circulated and following discussion it was agreed to approve the payment of the staff bonus.	
17.	<u>Staff Bonus Scheme 2022/23</u> To be discussed at the next meeting.	
18.	<u>HR Consultation</u> The Finance Officer to place the contract.	
19.	<u>Pay Award 2021/2022</u> Following discussion it was agreed to pay a 3% increase.	

The meeting was concluded at 10.45 pm.

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman