

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Monday 11th May 2020 at 2 pm

Present: Councillors: Mrs S Sheen (SS) – Chairman
Mr E Boyle (EB)
Mr A Jowett (AJ)
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.	This meeting was held virtually using Microsoft Teams due to Covid 19. No members of the public had requested to join the meeting. <u>Apologies for Absence</u> None Cllr Sheen thanked members of the Committee for joining the first F&GP virtual meeting in these unprecedented times.	
2.	<u>Declarations of Interest not previously declared</u> None	
3.	<u>Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd March 2020</u> Were approved at Council on 16th March.	
4.	<u>Information items arising from the minutes of the previous meeting not dealt with elsewhere on the agenda</u> VAT – The Finance Officer had consulted with KALC and the donation form for the Hanging Baskets project had been redesigned. The meeting regarding VAT treatment of KGF maintenance costs had been put on hold due to Covid-19. Gas Cupboard, Russell House – The Insurance Claims Recovery had sent a letter stating there was no further action to be taken as there had been no evidence found. The claim had been settled in full.	DM
5.	<u>Finance</u> 5.1 RFO's report – The Report was received and noted with thanks. 5.2 Payments and receipts list to 31st March 2020 – Cllr Sheen reported the water invoice for KGF was very high. This would be passed to APFOS for investigation. There were no other queries.	DR/AJ

	5.3 Committee Accounts to 31st March 2020 – 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. 5.4 Year End accounts 2019/20 – The year end accounts were noted. The Finance Officer reported that there was new audit legislation in response to Covid-19 – the deadline by which the Annual Governance Statement and Statement of Accounts must be published had been amended from 30th September to 30th November 2020. The 30-working day period for the exercise of public rights must start on or before the first working day of September (rather than 1st July). It had been confirmed that 'wet' signatures still need to be added to the AGAR in the same order as previous years. PKF Littlejohn (WTC External Auditor) was encouraging Councils to keep to the regular reporting timetable as much as possible and to submit documents as early as WTC were able to do so. The submission deadline had been moved to Friday 31st July 2020 (from 12th June) and requests for extensions to the deadline would not be granted beyond 13th November. Kent Audit were working remotely and had postponed all internal audits. They preferred not to undertake them remotely and were hopeful that onsite audits could be re-scheduled for the end of June/early July. The report was usually received within 7/10 days. Therefore It was unlikely that an internal audit could be undertaken, and the report received, in time for consideration at the Full Council meeting on the 6th July. This meeting may need to be delayed, or an extraordinary meeting convened to approve the AGAR. 5.5 Reserves – The Committee reviewed the reserves and thanked the Finance Officer for her report. 5.6 Subscriptions – A list of subscriptions for the year 2020/21 had been circulated and was approved. It was further agreed that WTC would pay the subscription to the ALCC for staff member - Mrs Rogers and Miss Rodgers. 5.7 Grant to Community Meals Scheme - The Finance Officer reported that F&GP members approved a £500 rollover from the 2019/20 budget to fund a £500 grant to the Courtyard for the provision of hot meals to vulnerable members of the community during Covid-19. This was AGREED unanimously via email and was ratified at this meeting. 5.8 Transport consultant quote – Three documents had been noted on the KCC website that WTC had not been aware of. A quote had been requested from the WTC Transport Consultant for work required on the new information. The quote was for £900 and following discussion this was agreed. 5.9 Photo editing software – Information had been circulated from the Acting Deputy Clerk and following discussion it was agreed to purchase software at a cost of £126 per year and trial for a year.	DM/AH AH DM AH DR
6.	CIL Funds 6.1 SDC CIL funds – WTC was in receipt of a further CIL payment of £52,530.61, which related to the houses built on the field north of Farley Lane and Croft Road junction. 6.2 SDC CIL Levy Deed of Agreement – Subsequent to the last Council meeting it was noted that the Deed of Agreement stated that work should commence six months from the date the agreement was signed. As the work on the car parking proposals was unlikely to commence before next spring due to Covid-19 the Clerk was requested to contact SDC and ask for an extension.	AH

7.	<u>Land Issues</u> 7.1 Doctors Surgery lease – Following discussion it was agreed to discuss this at the September meeting as the lease expired in December 2021. 7.2 Bloomfield Allotments – Following discussion it was agreed to discuss this at the September meeting. 7.3 King George's Playing Field – Following discussion it was agreed to discuss this at the September meeting. 7.4 Telephone box at Verralls Corner – An email had been received from the Westerham Society regarding the 2013 agreement between WTC and WS whereby WTC secured ownership of the box and the WS agreed to maintain and look after the box. WS now wished to terminate this agreement. Following discussion it was agreed to grant the request from WS. Y&C Committee would be requested to discuss the future maintenance of the box.	Y&C
8.	<u>Covid-19</u> Cllr Sheen thanked all the staff for carrying on working under new and challenging conditions. 8.1 Financial implications – The Finance Officer reported that WTC income/expenditure levels for the year had been affected: reduced income from the Art Group not using Russell House (circa. £150) and the sports clubs/church fete etc. not using Crockham Hill Playing Field (circa. £3,725). However expenditure would remain as budgeted as mowing, hedge cutting etc. would still need to be undertaken. The shortfall in funds would be met by WTC's grant, which had been set aside to fund the provision of a car park on the site. NB: consequently the Parking Project will be underfunded. WTC expenditure had increased with the use of a contractor to undertake essential APFOS works during T Buckley's absence (circa. £90-£150 per week - £1,000-£2000). WTC needed to be mindful of longer-term implications. 8.2 WTC response to relaxation of lockdown – The Finance Officer advised that advice to councils regarding furlough was that where staff were unable to work in their role and that role was funded by the precept, the council would be unable to reclaim a portion of the salary. All four of the office staff were continuing to work their normal contracted hours, albeit mainly remotely. WTC groundsman was not working as he was shielding due to being within the 'vulnerable' group. His job role was not furloughed, as the main elements of the role were essential works, temporarily being undertaken by a contractor. Cllr Kay was requested to report to Council on the relaxation of lockdown, prioritising a safe work environment for the staff. 8.3 Risk Assessment – The Covid-19 Risk Assessment had been circulated and it was agreed to recommend its approval to Council.	SK AH
9.	<u>Russell House</u> 9.1 Telephone cable for surgery – The Clerk reported that a request for a telephone fibre cable had been received from the Surgery. This required a trench to be dug across the car park into the building. Following discussion with Cllrs Sheen and Ogden this had been approved and the work carried out.	
10.	<u>Correspondence</u>	

	10.1 Clerks report from SLCC Practitioners Conference – The Clerk had circulated a report from her attendance at the February SLCC Conference.	
11.	<u>Reports from Councillors</u> None.	
12.	<u>TN16 and Website</u> June copy – Annual Report.	
13.	<u>Matters for District and County Councillors</u> None.	
14.	<u>Further Matters for Consideration at the next meeting</u> Internal Audit arrangements.	
15.	<u>Date of next meeting</u> Thursday 22 nd June 2020	
	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>Staff Bonus Scheme 19/2020</u> Following discussion it was agreed to pay a 5% bonus for the 2019/20 scheme.	
17.	<u>Staff Bonus scheme 2020/21</u> Details to be finalised at the June meeting. Cllr Sheen and The Clerk to meet to discuss before the June meeting.	SS/AH
18.	<u>Staff overtime</u> The Finance Officer was thanked for her report, which was noted. Cllr Sheen would submit a draft Overtime policy to the June meeting.	
19.	<u>Deputy Clerk appointment</u> Following discussion it was agreed to confirm the appointment of the Deputy Clerk for Mrs Rodgers.	AH
20.	<u>Grievance Procedure</u> A draft had been circulated and was approved; thanks to Cllr Sheen for her work on this.	

The meeting was concluded at 3.50 pm

Minutes confirmed as a correct record:

Chairman