

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 22 October 2019 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors Ellis (Chairman), Bertie, Fuller, Jones, Oliver, Peacey Wilcox, Taylor & Wardrop.

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk.

435 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hammond.

436 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Taylor declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 440 as he is the Town Council's representative on the Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd Park Forum and he is also a Member of Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd. Councillors Bertie, Fuller & Peacey Wilcox declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 443 as they are IW Councillors.

437 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 24 September 2019 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

438 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the second quarter of the financial year giving details of income and expenditure. The balances in the Town Council's bank accounts and petty cash as at 30 September 2019 were £507,435.06 of which £119,686.86 is ring fenced /ear marked expenditure. The balance of the budget for 2019 / 2020 is £190,297.40. Reserves are £197,450.80 which represents approximately 7 ½ months running costs. Councillors also discussed the over spend against the individual budget headings for Cowes in Bloom, Insurance, Audit and Accountancy and Street Furniture Maintenance. Councillors considered that additional contingencies should be included in the next budget to cover the cost of repairs due to vandalism. Councillors discussed the possibility of installing CCTV at Northwood Recreation Ground as this area suffers from frequent attacks of vandalism. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Town Clerk will investigate whether Island Roads' mobile CCTV unit can be put in place to monitor for vandalism at Northwood Recreation Ground.
2. The Town Clerk will ask the Projects Committee to investigate the possibility of installing permanent CCTV equipment at Northwood Recreation Ground.

It was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Financial Statement as at 30 September 2019 be noted and approved.

439 RECOMMENDATION FROM PROJECTS COMMITTEE

The Projects Committee recommend replacing the broken 'Yacht Haven' cast iron finger arm outside of the Vectis Tavern at a cost of up to £204.44 with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council replaces the broken 'Yacht Haven' cast iron finger arm outside of the Vectis Tavern at a cost of up to £204.44 with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading.

440 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AT NORTHWOOD PARK AS FROM 1 APRIL 2020

The current grounds maintenance contractor for Northwood Park, Andy Butler Sports Ground Specialist, has confirmed that there will not be an increase in charges for the next financial year for grounds maintenance work at Northwood Park. The cost being £10,165.00. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council extends the contract with Andy Butler Sports Ground Specialist from 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 for the sum of £10,165.00.

441 TOILET CLEANING AND LITTER PICKING CONTRACT AS FROM 1 APRIL 2020

The toilet cleaning contractor, All Round Cleaners, have confirmed a price increase of 4.7% for the year 2020/2021 to take into account the increase in the cost and usage of consumables and likely increase to the minimum wage of their staff. The contract is for the four public conveniences in Cowes and the toilets at Northwood Recreation Ground and Northwood Park. The cost being £34,246.02. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council extends the contract with All Round Cleaners from 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021 for the sum of £34,246.02.

442 COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT PROVIDER

The contract for the Town Council's Internal Audit expired after the financial year end of 31 March 2019. The Town Clerk contacted three qualified accountants to provide a quotation for the Internal Audit for the financial years ending 31 March 2020, 31 March 2021 and 31 March 2022. The three quotations were reviewed and considered. It was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Accountant A is engaged as the Town Council's Internal Auditor for the years ending 31 March 2020 for the sum of £805; 31 March 2021 for the sum of £820; 31 March 2022 for the sum of £835.**
- 2. That Accountant A be engaged as the Town Council's Internal Auditor to continue to provide their services after 31 March 2022 and until further notice.**

443 IW COUNCIL'S GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT AS FROM 1 JANUARY 2020

The IW Council went out to tender for the whole of the Island's grounds maintenance services and four companies had tendered for the contract. The Town Council have received details of the cost for the grounds maintenance contract in Cowes which is for the annual sum of £13,848.30. The areas covered by the contract are as before i.e. Park Road Recreation Ground, St Mary's Park, Arctic Park, Moorgreen Reservoir, Mornington Green and Park Road Rose Bed. Three additional areas have been added to the contract these being Brunswick Road Playground,

Egypt Point and Mornington Woods. Councillors discussed that the IW Council could achieve the best quotations for the works due to economy of scale and felt that the IW Council had undertaken a fair tendering process which complied with the Town Council's own financial regulations.

Summer bedding at Princes Green is no longer included in the contract and the Town Council has been asked to consider the additional cost of approximately £3,900 per annum for the provision of the summer bedding at Princes Green. Alternatively the Town Council could take on this service direct and have the area planted by volunteers or the Town Council could ask the IW Council to grass over the bedding areas. Councillor Fuller abstained from the vote on both recommendations. It was:

RECOMMENDED

1. That Cowes Town Council continues to fund grounds maintenance services in the areas in Cowes, as listed above, through the local authority contract for the annual sum of £13,848.30.

2. That Cowes Town Council does not support the provision of summer bedding at Princes Green and requests that the local authority grasses over the bedding areas.

Councillors Fuller & Peacey Wilcox left the meeting at 6.57pm.

444 TO CONSIDER SETTING A CAP ON THE AMOUNT OF GRANT FUNDING AWARDED BY COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Councillors discussed whether to set a cap on the amount of grant funding that can be requested from Cowes Town Council. Currently there is no financial limit for a grant application and concerns were raised that large amounts are frequently being requested, sometimes to bail out large events. The preference would be to spread money further amongst the community. Councillors agreed rather than setting a cap an additional process would be added to the existing grant application guidelines for any grants applied for of over £2,000. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That the following bullet point be added to the Town Council's Grant Application guidelines:

- **Any request for a grant of over £2,000 will require the applicant to attend to make a written or oral presentation, of up to 10 minutes, and to answer any questions about the application at the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting where the grant application is being considered.**

445 TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOW UP PROCEDURE AFTER A GRANT OF OVER £2,000 HAS BEEN AWARDED

The current follow up procedure for the awarding of grants over £2,000 is that the Town Council requires an end of grant report within 12 months of the grant being awarded, detailing how the grant was used and how this has benefitted the organisation. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Town Clerk will add a footnote to the letter accompanying any grant payment of over £2,000 reminding the applicant about the requirement to submit an end of grant report.

2. The Town Clerk will follow up any outstanding reports with the applicant if a report is not received within the 12 month period.

446 ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK'S MEMBERSHIP OF THE SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS (SLCC)

The Town Clerk reported that the Assistant Town Clerk's membership of the SLCC is due for renewal on 1 November 2019 for the sum of £196. Councillors discussed the benefits to the Town Council of the Assistant Town Clerk being a member of the SLCC. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council renews the SLCC membership of the Assistant Town Clerk in the sum of £196.

447 STAFFING

There were no other staffing matters raised by Councillors or Clerks.

448 HEALTH AND SAFETY

There were no health and safety matters raised by Councillors or Clerks.

449 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no items raised for inclusion on future agendas.

The proceedings terminated at 7.31pm.

CHAIRMAN