

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 21 July 2020 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors Ellis (Chairman), Bertie, Jones, Peacey Wilcox & Taylor (6.19pm).

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Gibbs, Assistant Town Clerk.

493 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

494 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

495 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 23 June 2020 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes.

496 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 30 JUNE 2020

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the quarter ending 30 June 2020 giving details of income and expenditure. Councillors looked at the spend against each of the budget headings and the ring fenced and ear marked balances. The balances in the Town Council's bank accounts and petty cash as at 30 June 2020 were £689,158.11 of which £164,043.29 is ring fenced / ear marked expenditure. The Reserves as at 30 June 2020 were £247,592.56 which represents around nine months operating costs. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 30 June 2020.

497 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PROJECTS COMMITTEE

The Projects Committee recommend the following:

1. To supply and install a new litter bin at the junction of Baring Road and Battery Road for the sum of £400 plus ongoing emptying costs of currently £331.50 per bin per annum.
2. To provide one dressed Christmas Tree to be located at Francki Place at a cost of up to £800.
3. To approve the installation, maintenance and subsequent removal of the Festive Lights at a cost of up to £14,500.
4. To relay a section of path and re-turf at the side entrance of the Skate Park and around the shelter for the sum of £335.
5. To redecorate the shelter at Northwood Recreation Ground for the sum of £590.
6. To provide a scaffolding enclosure around the area, for recommendations 4 and 5, during the repairs for the sum of £200.

It was:

RECOMMENDED

1. To supply and install a new litter bin at the junction of Baring Road and Battery Road for the sum of £400 plus ongoing emptying costs of currently £331.50 per bin per annum, with the cost to be met from the 'Dog and litter bin emptying' budget heading.
2. To monitor the usage of the new bin one year after installation.
3. To provide one dressed Christmas Tree to be located at Francki Place at a cost of up to £800, with the cost to be met from the 'Civic – Xmas trees / festive lights / bunting' budget heading.
4. To approve the installation, maintenance and subsequent removal of the Festive Lights at a cost of up to £14,500, with the cost to be met from the 'Civic – Xmas trees / festive lights / bunting' budget heading.
5. To relay a section of path and re-turf at the side entrance of the Skate Park and around the shelter for the sum of £335, with the cost to be met from the 'Northwood Rec- Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance' budget heading.
6. To redecorate the shelter at Northwood Recreation Ground for the sum of £590, with the cost to be met from the 'Northwood Rec- Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance' budget heading.
7. To provide a scaffolding enclosure around the area, for recommendations 5 and 6, during the repairs for the sum of £200, with the cost to be met from the 'Northwood Rec- Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance' budget heading.

498 APPLICATION FOR GRANT

The Town Clerk reported that at the start of the financial year 2020 / 2021, £22,000 was in the budget for 'Grants', subsequently Councillors agreed to send a donation of £1,000 to the IW Foodbank to help those in need during the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore £21,000 remains in the budget for 'Grants'. The Town Council have been asked to consider the following Application for Grant:

- Victim Support – Purchase of security items that are provided free of charge to victims of crime - £150.

After a full discussion it was:

RECOMMENDED

That a grant be made to Victim Support in the sum of £150.

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

The Town Clerk advised that her membership of the SLCC expires on 31 August 2020, the cost of renewal being £161. Councillors discussed the benefits of the Town Clerk being a member of the SLCC. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council renews the Town Clerk's membership of the SLCC for the sum of £161.

500 REMUNERATION FOR THE TOWN CLERKS WORKING FROM HOME

At the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting on 23 June 2020 Councillors discussed reimbursing the Clerks for working from home during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Town Clerk was actioned to seek advice from the SLCC, NALC and local Town & Parish Clerks in regard to the appropriate subsidy to be

awarded to the Clerks whilst they work from home. Following investigation it seems that Clerks on the Island have agreed their own financial arrangement with their respective town and parish councils. However, advice from the SLCC states that HMRC have a maximum 'home-working allowance' which may be paid tax free to employees who work from home, to recognise the additional costs they incur, as £6 per week from April 2020; prior to April 2020 it was £4 per week. The Clerks advised that this tax free amount would be acceptable as no additional tax and national insurance would be applied. The Town Clerk also advised that the Clerks intend to resume working in the Town Council office at Northwood House as from Monday 3 August 2020, subject to current Government guidelines remaining in place. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk be awarded £6 per week for the period that home-working is required during the Covid-19 pandemic.

501 OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

There were no other staffing matters to discuss.

502 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Town Clerk advised that to safely return to working in the Town Council office a sanitising hand gel is made available and the purchase of face masks will be undertaken to protect the staff and potential visitors to the office. The administrators of Northwood House have instigated some protocols for safe working which will be shared with Councillors when the Clerks are back in the office.

503 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no items raised for inclusion on future agendas.

The proceedings terminated at 6.44pm.

CHAIRMAN