

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 24 October 2023 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors Ellis (Chair), Brown, Carter, Nicholson (6.17pm), Oliver & Walters.

In attendance: Councillors Paler & Wardrop (non-voting); Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk.

773 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rafferty.

774 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

775 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 26 September 2023 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

776 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the quarter ending 30 September 2023 giving details of income and expenditure. Councillors looked at the spend against 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 September 2023 were £808,638.53 of which £299,404.97 is ring fenced / ear marked expenditure. The Reserves as at 30 September 2023 were £292,946.44 which represents approximately 10 ½ months operating costs. This falls within the recommended 3 to 12 months reserves as set by the National Association of Local Councils. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 30 September 2023.

777 CONNECT4COMMUNITIES HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND OF £5,000

Cowes Town Council have purchased 100 x £50 Aldi vouchers of which, to date, 87 vouchers have been allocated to those who have provided a completed application form and claimed eligibility; 13 vouchers remain available to those persons who claim eligibility. The full amount of £5,000 has now been spent. The next round of funding has been agreed which was requested before the decision to increase the amount requested to £15,000; this request will be made at the next round of funding. An additional £5,000 of funding is expected to be received by the Town Council shortly.

778 REVIEW OF GRANT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED AND SUPPORTED IN THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR (MIN NO 772 REFERS)

At the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting on 26 September 2023, Councillors agreed to review the grant applications received and those that have been supported in the current financial year 2023 / 2024. The balance remaining in the 'Grant' budget heading being £1,837 from the original £15,000. Councillors questioned whether they had used the 'Grant' budget wisely and reviewed those grants awarded. Did the

organisation meet the aims and objectives of the Town Council and had they done enough to fund themselves. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillors Carter, Nicholson and Oliver will produce a scoring matrix to be applied when considering future grant applications

Councillor Walters left the meeting at 6.37pm.

779 UPDATE ON THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR THE TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Due to the poor response to the initial advertisement, at the Town Council meeting on 5 October 2023, Councillors agreed to increase the hours per week from 18 to 25. The vacancy would be re-advertised in the IW County press, the IW Observer and the IW Council's website for a further two weeks with the deadline for applications being Monday 30 October 2023 at 12 noon. The interview panel will consist of Councillors Ellis, Nicholson, Rafferty, Sanders and the Town Clerk.

780 OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

Councillors asked the Town Clerk how they could support and protect the Clerks when difficult and stressful situations are being dealt with by the Clerks. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will contact other Town & Parish Councils to ask what safeguarding procedures they have in place for their staff.

Councillor Brown left the meeting at 7.15pm.

781 HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

This item was covered under 'Other Staffing Matters'.

782 CLERKS' CONCERNS

No concerns were raised by the Clerks.

783 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- To consider the Grant scoring matrix and to review the current Grant application criteria.

The proceedings terminated at 7.21pm.

CHAIRMAN