

## COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 6.15pm.

**Present:** Councillors Ellis (Chair), Brown, Carter, Nicholson, Oliver and Rafferty.

**In attendance:** Debbie Faulkner, Outgoing Town Clerk; Claudine Russell, Incoming Town Clerk.

### **798 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Hollis and Walters.

### **799 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **800 MINUTES RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 21 November 2023 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

### **801 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023.**

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the quarter ending 31 December 2023 giving details of income and expenditure. Councillors looked at 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 31 December 2023 were £679,894.77 of which £254,430.73 is ring fenced / ear marked expenditure. The Reserves as at 31 December 2023 were £299, 629.41 which represents approximately 11 months operating costs. This falls within the recommended 3 to 12 months reserves as set by the National Association of Local Councils. After some discussion around the cost of the library; the Town Clerk confirmed that the budget for this financial year is £22,400 and that we are yet to receive an invoice for this. Councillors have asked for this invoice to go back to the Finance Committee for review if it is higher than the amount expected. It was agreed:

#### ACTION:

1. Library invoice to go back to the Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee for review if it is higher than the amount budgeted for. It was:

#### **RECOMMENDED**

**That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 31 December 2023.**

### **802 RING FENCED AND EARMARKED BALANCES FROM THE 2023-2024 BUDGET HEADINGS.**

The Town Clerk proposed that any balances as at 31 March 2024 from the following budget headings be ringfenced:

Subscriptions

Elections/Admin contingency

Dog and litter bin emptying

Cowes Library

Cowes in Bloom

Park Road Crossing Patrol

The Town Clerk confirmed that if any invoices are presented for payment in the meantime then this will be adjusted accordingly.

The Town Clerk proposed that any balances from the following budget headings be earmarked as at 31 March 2024:

Flags and Banners (the difference between income and expenditure)

Cowes Business Association

Connect 4 Communities Grant

Northwood Rec/Skate Park/MUGA/Outdoor Gym Maintenance

Cowes and Northwood Place Plan Promotion

Street Furniture Maintenance

New Projects

Public Toilet Refurbishment, Capital Projects

It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

**That Cowes Town Council approves the Ringfenced and Earmarked budget balances as at 31 March 2024.**

**803 ADDITION OF CHEQUE SIGNATORIES TO THE LLOYDS BANK ACCOUNTS AND NATIONWIDE SAVINGS ACCOUNT.**

The Town Council needs to agree additional signatories. It was suggested that Councillors Carter, Ellis and Walters become signatories. It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

**That Cowes Town Council approves Councillors Carter, Ellis and Walters to become account signatories for the Lloyds Bank Accounts and Nationwide Savings Account.**

**804 PROPOSED MATRIX AND AMENDED GRANT CRITERIA AND APPLICATION FORM.**

Councillors received and considered suggestions for simplifying the grant criteria and grant application form and received suggestions for the scoring matrix. It was agreed that the grid scoring should take place in the first instance and then applicants for grants over £2,000 will be invited to the Town Council to give a presentation.

ACTIONS:

1. Town Clerk to amend grant application form as per the points raised during the meeting.
2. Town Clerk to update scoring matrix to show the agreed questions in a RAG rating format.
3. Terminology in the grant application to be agreed and clarified at the next Finance committee meeting namely; Underwriting, Grant, Sponsorship, Other. It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

**That Cowes Town Council agree the updated grant application form and scoring matrix.**

**805 CONNECT4COMMUNITIES HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND OF £5,000 AND DETAILS OF THE FURTHER FUNDING OF £5,000.**

Cowes Town Council purchased vouchers for the last grant of £5,000 and successfully handed these out to eligible people in the local community. A further grant of £5,000 has been allocated starting January 2024. 20 x £50 Aldi vouchers are available and local schools have been sent the application form to hand out to families meeting the criteria. More vouchers will be purchased shortly.

**806 TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER'S CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.**

Councillors were provided with a copy of the contract prior to this meeting. After some discussion it was suggested to amend point 4.1 to reflect who the decision maker is for probationary reviews. It was also suggested to amend point 11.1 to add a review at 6 months before the yearly appraisal. A suggestion was made that the new Town Clerk should complete training in Equality and Diversity. There was also some discussion around an induction procedure for new members of staff to reflect the new Councillors induction procedure.

ACTIONS:

1. Town Clerk to amend points 4.1 and 11.1 on the contract as above.
2. Town Clerk to research an Induction tick sheet. It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

**That Cowes Town Council receives and approves the amended contract and it is signed by the Mayor and the Town Clerk.**

**807 ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL PENSION FUND EMPLOYER CONSULTATION: COMPLAINTS AND INTERNAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE.**

Councillors were provided with the copy of this consultation prior to the meeting. It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

**That Cowes Town Council receives and notes the Isle of Wight Council Pension Fund employer consultation: Complaints and Internal Dispute Resolution Procedure.**

**808 OTHER STAFFING MATTERS.**

No items were raised.

**809 HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS.**

No items were raised.

**810 CLERKS CONCERN'S.**

No concerns were raised.

**811 TO RECEIVE ANY ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA.**

- Induction matrix for new members of staff.
- Health and Safety Compliance proposal from Councillor Rafferty.
- Review an NDA agreement in line with Information Handling Policy.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking the outgoing Town Clerk for guiding the committee and for her invaluable support and knowledge.

The proceedings terminated at 7:30pm.

**CHAIRMAN**