

## **MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9th MARCH, 2021**

Present: Councillors Miss L Willis (Chair) and, R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs K Brace, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, Ms R M Gratton, G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, T Shepherd, B Taylor.

Apologies: Mrs G Bleasdale, K Shaw.

Officers: P Fletcher (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer),  
Miss A Rountree (Minute Taker).

*Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.*

### **F30/21 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Such interests must be submitted to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

### **F31/21 ACCEPTANCE OF AMENDMENT**

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the amendment to the standing orders to incorporate the new regulations from the Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, to conduct virtual Council meetings.

### **F32/21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 9<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2021**

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the last meeting were agreed at the last Full Council meeting held on 23<sup>RD</sup> February, 2021 and were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

### **F33/21 PAYSHEET NUMBER 11 – February 2021**

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Paysheet 11-February 21 the expenditure being £68,278.32 was noted and Members endorsed the action taken.
- (ii) Members note the income received into the Councils bank account.

- (iii) Members note the information provided regarding the bank balances held by the Council at the month end.

**F34/21**      **BACS PAYMENTS FOR YEAR END**

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the BACs payment run which will be paid on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 for year end.

**F35/21**      **AUDIT REPORTS**

**(a) Annual Report – Substantial/Full Assurance**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

**(b) Annual Plan – 2021/22**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

**F36/21**      **ANNUAL REVIEW OF RENTS AND FEES 2021/2022**

RECOMMENDED that:

- (1) A 3% increase be levied on cemetery costs.
- (2) Fees remain at the same level as 2020/21 for sports clubs.
- (3) A 3% increase be levied for allotment/grazing land (not associations) and garage rents.
- (4) Fees remain at the same level as 2020/21 for the hire of the function suites/meeting rooms at the Town Hall.

**F37/21**      **LETTER OF THANKS**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the letter of thanks received from the Great North Ambulance for the grant award they received from the Town Council.

**F38/21**      **RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the following items which relate to issues of a commercially sensitive and confidential nature Members agreed to pass the formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1960.

**F39/21**      **AUDIT REPORT CONTRACTS**

Members discussed the report provided from the Internal Auditor regarding the awarding of the Catering and Café contracts.

It was noted that the Auditor's recommendation was that regular meetings should have taken place for Members to be able to keep abreast of progress

of the contracts and that all contracts should be signed before contractors are allowed on site and to ensure due diligence is followed. Members agreed that for future contracts regular meetings and due diligence will be followed.

A Member also noted that the catering contract will expire at the end of this year and following the elections in May Members will need to meet to discuss a new contract. Members requested that a timetable for review be brought to the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Regular Town Hall Working Meetings to take place when considering contracts for Members to be kept informed by Officers.
- (ii) Contracts must be signed before contractors are allowed into the premises.
- (iii) A timetable for review of the catering contract to be brought to the next meeting.

**F40/21**

**PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

RECOMMENDED that there were no press opportunities arising from this meeting.