

UCKFIELD TOWN COUNCIL



Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance Sub-Committee** held via Zoom on
Monday 28th September 2020 at 6.15 pm.

PRESENT: Cllr. P. Sparks (Chairman) Cllr. C. Macve
Cllr. B. Cox Cllr. D Ward
Cllr. J Beesley

IN ATTENDANCE:

Holly Goring – Town Clerk
Sarah D'Alessio – Assistant Town Clerk & RFO (ATC)
Mark Francis – Estates and Facilities Manager

Minutes taken by Sarah D'Alessio

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members and officers were reminded to make any declarations of personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda

None received.

2.0 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

3.0 MINUTES

3.1 Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Sub-Committee held on the 27th February 2020.

Cllr Macve queried the action for the Assistant Town Clerk to investigate the Safeguarding policies inclusion within the Risk Management Policy. The ATC explained that the Safeguarding policy was to be updated separately and would be reviewed when due.

FS.01.09.20

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance Sub-Committee of the 27th February 2020 be taken as read, confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Councillors B. Cox and D. Ward arrived to the meeting at 6.20pm.

4.0 TO REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION MID-WAY THROUGH 2020/21

The ATC ran through the financial position on each committee and explained the credits received to-date, including the Furlough payments and Wealden Discretionary Grant.

Cllr Macve raised queries with regards to a number of expense codes as costed higher than budget or no costs at all, including Luxford salaries, GP Office equipment, Professional Fees, Insurances, E&L Allotments and Playing Fields and Pitches.

The ATC explained that the salaries fluctuated each month due to the number of weeks paid. It was previously agreed 2k for Office Equipment would be taken from Earmarked Reserves due to laptops being purchased during lockdown for homeworking. Professional Fees and Insurances costs would show in the next quarter and Allotment charges would be invoiced in October/November 2020. The Estates & Facilities Manager confirmed the costs for the Playing Fields and Pitches. The Town Clerk also confirmed the Insurance figures for the next quarter.

Cllr Cox queried the cost of restocking for the restaurant and the Town Clerk explained that there would be a stocktake taking place the following week in which these figures could then be identified. Restaurant staffing was also discussed and the Town Clerk confirmed that casual function staff were not contracted to UTC so were not included in the Salary expenses. The ATC confirmed that UTC would continue to claim for Furlough.

The Chairman thanked the Office team for their hard work through Covid-19.

Members suggested that another detailed review be undertaken of the financial position around December 2020, to be able to assess a full month of income and expenditure in September and October and from that, understand the likely averages for now until March 2021.

5.0 TO CONSIDER CURRENT CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ACCOUNTANTS AND INTERNAL AUDITORS

The ATC explained the current situation. UTC had used the current Internal Auditor for a number of years and the Accountants too. Each year there was a different accountant assigned from the company to UTC due to staff changes.

Cllr Macve explained the problems that could arise when sticking with the same Auditor for a lengthy time, they could overlook a problem when a change would help with a fresh view.

Members discussed the possibilities of change and how that would work going forward. but agreed that although they fully supported change, with Covid-19 and the ATC still new in post it should be re-considered in 2022.

6.0 TO REVIEW THE TOWN COUNCIL'S CURRENT LIST OF EARMARKED RESERVES

The Chairman highlighted a couple of lines within the earmarked reserves that were not imminent, and with the current pressures of Covid-19, funds from these areas could possibly be re-allocated if the need required, at financial year end.

The Town Clerk agreed as these were the only expenses not tied up in day to day running costs or projects this may be sensible.

Members thought that this suggestion was prudent and noted the contents of the earmarked reserves at this point in time.

7.0 TO NOTE THE TIMETABLE FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL'S ANNUAL COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAMME

The Chairman explained that it was previously agreed to change the timing for the community grants programme, to enable approved grants to be paid closer to the date of the grants meeting. The Chairman ran through the revised timetable.

Members discussed the pros for this, making it more consistent and relevant. Being prudent to accept that the meeting would be held by Zoom and to invite grant applicants to present. If the meeting was to be held face to face members questioned whether the Weald Hall could be considered instead of the Council Chamber to cater for social distancing. The Town Clerk advised that the Weald Hall could be used for the meeting but number restrictions would have to be considered at that time subject to Covid-19 guidance.

Cllr Beesley asked for the applications to be passed to the Councillors as soon as possible after the deadline to ensure that ample time was given to consider each application. The Town Clerk confirmed that the application packs could be compiled ready for the Committee at least 10 days before the meeting.

Members noted the revised timetable for the 2021/22 Community Grants Programme.

8.0

MATTERS DEEMED URGENT BY THE CHAIRMAN

Queries raised by Councillor Macve

The Assistant Town Clerk (ATC) addressed the queries raised by Cllr Macve at the Full Council meeting in August.

Having checked with the Internal Auditor regarding Box K on the Internal Auditors report for AGAR. Ticking 'Not Covered' was correct. It stated on the wording for Box K '*IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")*'. UTC had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR so ticking 'Not covered' was correct.

The difference on the Income Statement for Other Direct Service Costs Budgeted vs Actual was £155,012. Having checked with the Accountant to work out the exact breakdown of these costs it became apparent that these were the Earmarked Reserves expenditure. Cllr Macve asked if these could be shown differently going forward. The ATC agreed to speak to accountant to show the split differently.

2020/21 Community Grant payments

The Uckfield Bonfire Society had been in contact with the Town Clerk throughout the year to confirm what activities they would be undertaking in September and whether they required any of the £3,000 grant they had been allocated for 2020/21. They recently advised that their expenses for this year were £278.75 so would not need the full grant of £3,000. The Town Clerk asked if the members wished to increase this at all, advising that the Uckfield Festival had received £750.00 of their £1,500 grant this year.

Members discussed this further and agreed that as the Uckfield Bonfire Society and the Uckfield Festival Association should be treated equally, the Festival Association received half of their grant of £750.00 then this amount should be given to the Bonfire Society.

Councillor Ward proposed that the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society should receive £750.00 and this was seconded.

FS.02.09.20

Four out of five members voted in favour, and **RESOLVED** to grant the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society £750.00 out of their allocated grant of £3,000 for 2020/21.

The Chairman thanked the representatives for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 19.15pm.

Meeting of the General Purposes Committee

Monday 5th October 2020

Agenda Item 5.5

TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH SEPTEMBER 2020

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee from their recent meeting on 28th September 2020.

2.0 Background

2.1. 2020/21 Community Grant payments

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Councillor Ward proposed that the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society should receive £750.00 and this was seconded.

FS.02.09.20 Four out of five members voted in favour, and **RESOLVED** to grant the Uckfield Bonfire & Carnival Society £750.00 out of their allocated grant of £3,000 for 2020/21.

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1. Members are asked to approve the recommendation of the Finance Sub-Committee to:

Contact Officer: Sarah D'Alessio