



FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE
19th September 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Charmaine Crossley (Vice Chairman in the Chair)

Councillor Alan Biggs	Councillor Rev'd J. Macro
Councillor Toni Coombs	Councillor Philip Mann
Councillor Lindsey Dedden	Councillor Pat Morrow
Councillor Spencer Flower	Councillor Matthew Parker
Councillor Simon Gibson	

In Attendance: Carrie Lloyd, Town Clerk
 Public: 0

114/23/24 **Public Questions**

There were none.

115/23/24 **Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held 11th July 2023**

The minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

116/23/24 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Jane Russell, Andy Maw, Carol Traves and Sandra Grove.

117/23/24 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Toni Coombs, Councillor Spencer Flower and Councillor Simon Gibson declared an interest in a confidential item as Dorset Councillors;

Councillor Toni Coombs and Councillor Spencer Flower declared an interest in the Pantomime Society grant and took no part in the debate;

Councillor Pat Morrow declared an interest in the Horticultural Society request for prizes and took no part in the debate;

Councillor Lindsey Dedden declared an interest in U3A grant request and took no part in the debate

118/23/24 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE RISK SUB COMMITTEE**

Members **RESOLVED** that the Financial Risk Register be amended to include the Youth Worker's laptop and be approved as at Appendix A and the amended Fire Risk Assessment for the Council Offices at Appendix B be approved.

Action; Town Clerk

119/23/24 **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Members noted the payments made in August and September and were advised that the additional waste bins at the Youth & Community Centre were being removed by Dorset Waste Partnership which would reduce the Waste Removal costs for the Youth & Community Centre in future.

RECOMMENDED that payments be approved.

Action; Town Clerk

120/23/24 **DRAFT TENDERS FOR GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

Members considered the three draft tenders and requested that leave clearance in December be added to the Grounds Maintenance contract. Members requested that the Clerk look into the Council's responsibility for the Right of Way across land at Church Hill. **RESOLVED** that subject to the above changes that the draft tenders be agreed.

Action; Town Clerk

121/23/24 **DRAFT FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Members noted that the only change had been to Committee names and that a draft document with more changes was being worked on by the SLCC, NALC and JPAG. This would be brought back to Members in due course. **RECOMMENDED** that the draft Financial Regulations at Appendix C be approved.

Action; Town Clerk

122/23/24 **VERWOOD IN BLOOM RESERVES**

Members noted the request from the Horticultural Society for small prizes in the form of vouchers for their photo competition. **RESOLVED** that up to £150 in vouchers be given to the Horticultural Society for its prizes.

Action; Town Clerk

123/23/24 **GRANT APPLICATIONS 2023/24**

Members **RECOMMENDED** the following grants be made and that the Grant Policy be amended and brought back to the Committee in due course for consideration;

Citizens Advice - £3,000 and they be invited to re-apply in 6 months time with additional statistics on Verwood and Three Legged Cross attendance and usage;
Hillside Community First School – Members liked the principle of the project but without out any project costs were unable to support the current application. The School were encouraged to re-apply with a breakdown of costs that they wished the Town Council to cover;

Music for the Mind - £325

Verwood Concert Brass – Members were mindful that they had contributed £25,000 of public funds to the Hall Project earlier in 2023 and felt that without estimates and plans that they could not commit any further public funds at present but encouraged the Concert Brass Band to re-apply in the March 2024 tranche of Grant Funding with detailed costs and plans;

Verwood & District Rambling Club up to £450

Verwood Evening Townswomen's Guild - £150

Verwood Pantomime Society - £2,000

Verwood & Three Legged Cross Dementia Friendly Community Association - £500

Verwood U3A - £1,500

Three Legged Cross Village Hall - £2,500 and the Village Hall Committee be encouraged to apply to Three Legged Cross Solar Farm Fund with Members willing to consider a further application in 2024.

Total Recommended

£10,425

124/23/24

ACTIONS TAKEN FOLLOWING THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR 2022/23

Members noted that the following actions had been taken;

- (i) **Recommendation:** To include reference to GDPR in the Council's Risk Assessment.

This had been actioned and a GDPR Policy will be brought to this Committee later in the year.

- (ii) **Recommendation:** The Council should compile a financial risk assessment as soon as possible to ensure they have identified and mitigated any risks.

The Financial Risk Assessment was considered by the Risk Sub Committee on 18th July.

- (iii) **Recommendation:** To review the level of Fidelity Cover in line with the recommended guidelines.

Cover was increased on 8th August.

125/23/24

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Medium Term Financial Plan – Budget, Accounts & Audit Sub Committee will consider this in October/Nov
- Draft Staff Handbook – after HR Sub Committee has met
- GDPR Policy – will be brought to Committee in October or November
- Grants Policy & Checklist – will be brought to October Committee
- Policy on use of Personal Electronic Equipment at Council Premises – to November Committee meeting

126/23/24

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting by reason of the confidential nature or debate of the business to be transacted.

127/23/24 **DRAFT MANAGEMENT OF ASSET POLICY**

Members requested that any assets on the site be inspected, repaired & confirmed in good working order. **RESOLVED** that the Management Policy be agreed.

128/23/24 **YOUTH AND COMMUNITY CENTRE USE**

Members noted that in March 2023 the Council had accepted a notice to quit from a user of the Centre and the then Mayor made a donation of £500 towards the setting up costs for the new venue for the user. The user remains in situ at the Centre and Members noted the time that had passed. The Council wished to progress with redecoration of its own asset as well as requiring more storage for its own services and **RESOLVED** that this matter be considered by Council in October.

Action; Town Clerk

129/23/24 **REGISTRATION OF LAND**

Members noted that DT371729 had a Caution against first registration of the freehold estate in land filed at Land Registry in the Town Council's name.

Members were of the view that the land should be registered in the name of Verwood Memorial Recreation Ground Trust and recommended that this be considered by the Trustees. Members were also of the view that alongside the registration of the land the Town Council would simultaneously remove the Caution.

Action; Town Clerk

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

.....
Chairman