

FINANCE MEETING 16/02/23

Attending: Councillors Kathryn Stallard (Chair), Peter Bishop, Sue Hebborn, Pat Warwick

1. Apologies: Councillors Don Saunders, Tobi Amadasun, Staff: Jane Scarrott (Clerk) Michelle Thompson (Deputy Clerk) ill- health

Tobi has asked to resign from the Committee due to work commitments. The Committee asked that he be thanked for his contribution.

2. To note Declaration of Members personal, prejudicial and disclose l e pecuniary interests in respect of items on the Agenda. - None

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

(i) Confirmed as a correct record of the Meeting held on 15.12.22

(ii) Updates from Minutes of the Meeting held on 15.12.22

Ian Sharman has responded to the Mayor's letter re Church Walk. WTC agreed he should be thanked for his detailed response.

Mayor's Chain - research project not yet begun due to staff illness.

Clock Tower - no update

Planters Bridle Road - planting not yet begun (seasonal).

Quotes for Hare's Green hedging no update. It was suggested the Jubilee Gardens contractor could be approached.

Photocopier. JS has quotes. However it was agreed that the issues of the photocopier, laptops for Councillors and Councillors' emails should be discussed as one Agenda item on the next Finance Committee agenda.

Toilet Refurbishment - booked 27 March - 5th May. *Cost will be met from General Reserves.*

Thetford Road Allotments site - noted WTC requested that Mayor and Chair of Finance meet with landowner to discuss charity status possibly linking to CHT. Meeting to be arranged.

Extra Staffing costs - Noted WTC accepted principle of setting aside funding for this. Needs to be reflected in 4 year plan. (an amount of £6,000 added to 23-24 Budget)

WTC agreed precept request of £408,805 for 23-24 as recommended by Finance Committee.

Noted external lights have been replaced by Karl Schen. JS will ask for quote on a timer as it is possible the lights may be intrusive for the cottages opposite the building.

(iii) **To consider items raised by Full Council**

Since the last Finance Meeting, 3 WTC Meetings had been held and the following issues were raised and discussed:-

Street Lights - these were due to be painted in late January. This has still not been done.

It was proposed there should be a meeting with representatives from the Museum 4 Watton to look at the overall heating system within Wayland Hall. This is on hold due to staff illness.

The transactional report re the Officers Mess site was approved.

The Engrossment transfer and plan re Hare's Green was received and signed.

Query raised re quotes being sought for complete refurbishment of equipment at Lovell Gardens play area as S106 monies available - agreed office to investigate. A site meeting had been held on 15th February involving JS, SH and AW

HR Committee was requested to collate all existing policies relations to staffing into a Staff Policy and Procedure Handbook, including benefit packages, and to discuss financial implications with Finance Committee. Work on hold due to staff illness.

Pigeon Control - Mr. H Woodyat (Kings Arms) has requested that the WTC contributes 50% to the £5,079 invoice for pigeon control measures and related works affecting the 2 buildings. Mr Woodyat has previously presented information to the Office, and was asked to make available the relevant information and invoice plus a rationale relating to the 50% sharing of costs. It was requested that the information should be received prior to the Finance Meeting to be held at 1pm, 16th February.

Recommendation to be made to the WTC

“i) That in this instance, the 50% contribution to the work related to Pigeon Control on the Kings Arms and Wayland Hall be agreed. A separate invoice of the £2,539 for WTC should be provided.

ii) That a letter should be sent to Mr. Woodyatt requesting that any future joint work should be fully discussed, and agreed prior to any work being initiated.”

Hare’s Green - noted a meeting was held with Paul De Grice re the matting in the play area. The contractor has admitted the matting is faulty and this will be replaced. Noted the some of the bolts on the railings are sticking out and will need to be shortened using an angle grinder.

Allotment Policy - noted that a new Allotment Policy will be produced by staff.

4. Bank Reconciliation

Received and signed by PB

5. Expenditure made since the last meeting

A payment of £7,444 to Titanium Fireworks was ratified at the WTC Meeting.

6. Consideration of the current Budget position

(A) Maintenance:

Grass Cutting Hare’s Green

A quote has been received from TTSR (Maintenance Contractor) for additional work re cutting the grass at Hares Green - 15 cuts between March and October - strip all obstacles - weed kill obstacles where possible to avoid trimming. Cost for 2023 £1931 plus VAT. Cost for 2024 £1989.19 plus VAT. Noted that funding was attached to the the handover of Hares Green to WTC.

Recommendation:

“That the quote for 2023 and 2024 from TTSR for grass cutting work be accepted. (Cost for 2023 £1931 plus VAT. Cost for 2024 £1989.19 plus VAT.)”

Jubilee Gardens

Noted that the contractor used for Jubilee Gardens is increasing charges by £1 per hour. The contract will begin again Monday March 6th (weather permitting), 2 hours every 2 weeks £38 per visit.

Recommendation

“ That the Contract for Jubilee Gardens, beginning again in March at the new rate of £38 per visit, be agreed.”

Bins Hare’s Green

Noted that the contract with BDC has been extended to the emptying of 2 bins at a cost of £239.98 pa per bin.

(B) Staffing

Staff Pensions

The “Changes in Employers’ Pensions Contributions” document was noted.

Charlotte Harvey Trust -

A request has been received from the CHT Trust Board

"The Charlotte Harvey Trust Board requests that:-

Watton Town Council extends the hours provided within the Service Level Agreement relating to the Community Food Hub, from 15 hours per week to 20 hours per week,

The SLA be amended to reflect the above in terms of hours, remuneration and other associated staff matters including the backdating of the increase in hours/pay to 1st February 2023."

Noted that the cost of additional hours will be met from within CHT budget.

An invoiced payment schedule needs to set up for the CHT . This should be based on the total cost of the employment, minus the amount agreed by WTC as a contribution. Committee requested that Office staff make appropriate arrangements.

Recommendation

"That WTC accept the request from CHT Board (wording as above)

7. To receive Report from the Internal Auditor

A positive report. 2 action points to be considered

Nomination of a Councillor to check payroll

Ensuring compliance with correct tendering processes

Recommendation to WTC "That the Report from the Internal Auditor, including the recommended Action Plan be accepted. That a Councillor be nominated to check on payroll "

8. Allotment, Cemetery and Market Fees for 2023/24

"That there will be no increase in Allotment, Cemetery and Market fees for 2023/24"

9. Date and time of next Finance Meeting

16th March 2023 1pm Wayland Hall

RECOMMENDATIONS

"Pigeon Control -

"i) That in this instance, the 50% contribution to the work related to Pigeon Control on the Kings Arms and Wayland Hall be agreed. A separate invoice of the £2,539 for WTC should be provided.

ii) That a letter should be sent to Mr. Woodyat requesting that any future joint work should be fully discussed, and agreed prior to any work being initiated."

"Grass Cutting at Hare's Green

That the quote for 2023 and 2024 from TTSR for grass cutting work be accepted. (Cost for 2023 £1931 plus VAT. Cost for 2024 £1989.19 plus VAT.)"

" Jubilee Gardens

That the Contract for Jubilee Gardens, beginning again in March at the new rate of £38 per visit, be agreed."

"Service Level Agreement with CHT

That WTC accept the following request from the Charlotte Harvey Trust Board:-

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The SLA be amended to reflect the above in terms of hours, remuneration and other associated staff matters including the backdating of the increase in hours/pay to 1st February 2023." "

"Internal Audit Report

That the Report from the Internal Auditor, including the recommended Action Plan be accepted. That a Councillor be nominated to check on payroll "

*“Allotment, Cemetery and Market Fees
That there will be no increase in Allotment, Cemetery and Market fees for 2023/24”*