

## Sevenoaks Town Council

### Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Held on 2nd October 2023 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Livestreamed and available to view on YouTube until approved by Council:

<https://youtube.com/live/lieOh7pTrwM?feature=share>

Meeting commenced: 7:40pm

Meeting Concluded: 8:53pm

#### Present:

|                                           |           |                                         |           |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------|-----------|
| Cllr Tony Clayton ( <b>Chair</b> )        | Present   | Cllr Victoria Granville                 | Present   |
| Cllr Nigel Wightman ( <b>Vice-Chair</b> ) | Present   | Cllr Chloe Gustard                      | Present   |
| Cllr Libby Ancrum                         | Apologies | Cllr Claire Shea, Mayor<br>(ex-officio) | Present   |
| Cllr Dr Marilyn Canet                     | Present   | Cllr David Skinner OBE                  | Apologies |
| Cllr Peter Dixon                          | Present   |                                         |           |

| Substitute            | For                |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Cllr Lise Michaelides | Cllr Libby Ancrum  |
| Cllr Nick Varley      | Cllr David Skinner |

**In attendance:** Cllr Gareth Willis, Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer/Deputy Town Clerk and Senior Committee Clerk.

**Representations received from Member of the Public:** None

**382 Apologies for Absence:** As noted above.

**383 Dispensations:** There were no requests for dispensations.

#### **384 Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Clayton declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the grant application from Sevenoaks Counselling (Agenda Item 11.1) : he left the room during consideration of that item and took no part in the vote thereon.

Cllr Clayton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 11.2, Grant Subsidies – Room Hire, insofar as it related to the Kent Association of Local Councils.

#### **385 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**RESOLVED:** to receive and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2023 as a true record.

#### **386 Finance Reports to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023**

**386.1** The Committee welcomed Georgina Jackson, new Responsible Finance Officer & Deputy Town Clerk, to the Town Council.

### **386.2 Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023**

The Committee received and noted the following accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023:

- Income & Expenditure by Cost Centre
- Variance Analysis
- Capital Expenditure & Funds

It was noted that the year-to-date position at the end of July 2023 gave a revenue deficit of £80,926. Adjusted for required Bat & Ball Station Management & Maintenance Reserves movement to be actioned at year end, which offsets the Bat & Ball Station year to date deficit of £94,242 the adjusted position was a surplus of £13,316.

The Town Clerk advised that £30,086 awarded to the The Stag from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) had been attributed to the grant budget in error, this would be adjusted in future.

It was noted that the budget had a contingency of £46,192 which had not been used to date.

**RESOLVED:** To receive and accept the Management Accounts to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023.

### **386.3 The Committee received and noted the following:**

#### **Suppliers' Accounts**

- 1st to 31st July 2023, total gross invoices £41,410.06
- 1st to 30th June 2023, total gross invoices £144,689.91

#### **List of Payments - Sevenoaks Town Council Nat West Account:**

- 1st to 31st July 2023, total £192,767.89
- 1st to 30th June 2023, total £256,650.40

#### **Payroll Account**

- 1st to 31st July 2023, total £86,335.27
- 1st to 30th June 2023, total £93,986.96

#### **Petty Cash Account**

- 1st to 31st July 2023, total payments £355.19
- 1st to 30th June 2023, total payments £425.01

### **386.4 Hospitality and Gifts Register**

Noted that no Hospitality or Gifts had been received by Councillors or staff for the periods 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2023 and 1<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

### **387 Conclusion of Audit, year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

The Council received and noted:

- Completion Letter and External Auditor's Certificate and Report
- Certified Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023

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- Notice of Conclusion of the Audit

The content of the audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023 was considered, together with the minor improvements recommended in the Completion Letter received from the External Auditors, Mazars LLP.

**RESOLVED:** that the audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023, together with the Completion Letter and External Auditor's Certificate and Report, be received and noted.

### **388 Recommendations from Open Spaces & Leisure Committee**

The Committee considered recommendations received from the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

#### **388.1 St John's Hill Public Toilets**

The Committee considered the recommendation of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee [*Minute 351, OS&L 18.09.23 refers*] in relation to the refurbishment of the St John's Hill Public Toilets.

It was agreed that the Planning Committee be asked to consider registering the toilets as an asset of community value.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) To proceed with the refurbishment of St John's Hill Public Toilets to create two unisex accessible toilets.
- 2) To use budget within Earmarked Reserves.
- 3) To allocate an additional £15,000 from Community Infrastructure Levy providing an overall budget of £40,000 including contingency.

#### **388.2 Greatness Cemetery Chapel**

The Committee considered the recommendation of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee [*Minute 354, OS&L 18.09.23 refers*] in relation to the installation of screens within the Chapel.

**RESOLVED:** That £4,000 be allocated from Community Infrastructure Levy for the installation of two screens at Greatness Cemetery Chapel to allow the showing of still and video images during a service.

### **389. Upgrade to Fire Alarm System, Town Council Offices**

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) that a new wireless fire alarm system be installed at the Town Council office building by the current fire protection contractor.
- 2) That the expenditure of £4,275.00 be taken from the Contingency Budget

### **390 Land at Woodside Road – Soil Remediation**

Following initial discussions with local residents, Town Councillors considered possible improvements and changes to the use of the small site known as Woodside

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Road Open Space. The proposals were to be subject to a public consultation process.

Following receipt of a report from Environmental consultants regarding necessary work to ensure there was no contamination at the site likely to pose a risk to health, a quotation for £8,905 had been received.

Councillors had some concerns regarding the level of expenditure required and agreed that the public consultation exercise should be carried out prior to a decision being taken on the soil remediation works.

**RESOLVED:** That local residents be consulted on the proposals for the Woodside Road Open Space, with the results being reported back to this Committee.

### 391 Minutes of Town Team Meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2023

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Town Team held on 2nd August 2023 be received and noted.

### 392 Grant Budget Update & Grant Applications Received

#### 392.1 Grant Applications

The Committee noted the budget for grants to local voluntary organisations for 2023/24 and the balance to date.

Cllr Clayton declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the application from Sevenoaks Counselling: he left the room during discussion of that item and took no part in the vote thereon.

### Cllr Wightman in the Chair

The Committee considered the application from Sevenoaks Counselling

**RESOLVED:** That a grant request be awarded under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011 Sections 1-8 refers) as follows:

| Grant Ref No. | Organisation          | Purpose of Award                                                                                                       | Grant Application | Grant Approved |
|---------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 11            | Sevenoaks Counselling | To supplement reserves to subsidise clients who are unable to afford recommended contribution for counselling services | £,2000            | £2,000         |

**Cllr Clayton rejoined the meeting and took the Chair**

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Councillors considered the grant applications. Mindful of the grant budget available and the further round of grant applications due in January, grants were not awarded to the The Stag Community Arts Centre, Bob Ogley, and the Kent Wildlife Trust.

**RESOLVED:** That grant requests be awarded under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011 Sections 1-8 refers) as follows:

| Grant Ref No.        | Organisation  | Purpose of Award                                                                                    | Grant Application | Grant Approved |
|----------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 45                   | Hi Kent       | Funding for free monthly drop-in support clinics for NHS hearing aids users at Hollybush Day Centre | £1,000            | £1,000         |
| 68                   | Baby Umbrella | 6 months funding to serve 65 1:1 support appointments for Sevenoaks Town residents                  | £2,600            | £2,600         |
| Total grants awarded |               |                                                                                                     |                   | £5,600         |

### 392.2 Grant Subsidies for Room Hire & Activities

The Committee reviewed the local organisations currently approved to receive grant subsidies for free room hire at Town Council venues and for activities benefitting the local community. The annual budget and balance to date for Grant Subsidies 2023/24 was noted.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the following organisations be approved to continue receiving grant subsidies for free room hire or activities benefitting the community
  - Friends of Rheinbach
  - Friends of Pontoise
  - Citizens Advice Bureau
  - Sevenoaks Greensands Commons
  - Tea Dances at Bat & Ball Centre
  - Dorothy Parrott Trust
  - Sevenoaks Samaritans
  - KALC
  - Darenth Valley Community Rail Partnership
- 2) That the allowances be reviewed within the budget setting process.

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### **393 Current Matters**

The Committee considered the updates received.

**RESOLVED** that the updates on the Current Matters be received and noted.

### **394 Press Release**

It was agreed that a press release be issued regarding the grants awarded.

There being no further business the Chair closed the Meeting.

Signed .....  
Chair

Dated .....