

Minutes of a meeting of the **FINANCE and GENERAL PURPOSES** Committee held in the Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2022 at 7.30pm

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Present	Councillors	Peter Bucklitsch Kay Moss David Neeves Colin Stocks Matthew Street* Neil Waller	Vice - Chairman     Chairman
Also present		Melanie Street Karen Whiley	Assistant Town Clerk RFO (online)
		1 member of the public online	

\*Denotes non attendance

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### **APOLOGIES**

Cllr Matthew Street

### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **MINUTES**

#### Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022

It was noted that the minutes of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 stated quotes for IT support would be on the next agenda but this has not been included. The officer was asked to provide this for the following meeting.

- 9733 RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022 as confirmed be signed by the Chairman.

### **GRANT APPLICATION**

#### To consider the extraordinary grant application and agree any action

A representative from the Children with Cancer Fund spoke in support of their application. She explained the history of the organisation, gave a summary of recent activities and the work the Fund carries out. In answer to questions from members, she confirmed the group's annual spend and the funding obtained from other sources.

- 9734 RESOLVED** to award a grant of £450 to Children with Cancer Fund for a jubilee celebration

*One member of the public online left the meeting.*

## **POLICIES**

### To review the Risk Management Policy with Risk Register and agree any action/changes

Members reviewed the report. The committee requested that any future version contain page numbers and item numbering to make discussion and use of the document easier.

The following items were noted:

- The document refers to all records being backed up twice by external providers. Whilst this is the case for some records, not all have a double off-site backup. The RFO agreed to investigate options to ensure this happens for all electronic records.
- The document states 'Expenditure against budget reported to relevant committee every quarter'. Working practice is that it is reported at every committee meeting. The RFO agreed to amend the words to state, 'at every committee meeting'.
- The document states 'Minutes made available to press and public via Town council website, social media, notice boards, and in the Tourist information Office.' The town no longer has a Tourist Information Office. The RFO agreed to remove this wording.

**9735 RESOLVED** to recommend the Risk Management Policy with Risk Register to Full Council with the noted amendments

## **FINANCE**

### To note the Current Income and Expenditure position and Earmarked Reserves and agree any action

The committee noted the current Income and Expenditure position and Earmarked Reserves. It was agreed that accounting standards regarding prudence should be observed in relation to the consistent late payment of invoices and that, therefore, a reserve should be put against the profit-share invoice raised.

### To note the return of investments during the financial year 2021/2022

The return of investments during the financial year 2021/2022 was noted.

### To note the asset register and agree whether to recommend approval to Full Council

The committee discussed and noted the Asset Register. It requested that future documents are supplied as a spreadsheet, as the PDF version is difficult to read. The RFO agreed to amend the document to reflect that the pitch-marking robot has now been received.

**9736 RESOLVED** to recommend the Asset Register to Full Council with the noted amendment

### To note and agree the bank reconciliation as at 31.03.22

The bank reconciliation as at 31.03.2022 was noted and agreed.

### To note the PWLB summary as at 31.03.22

The Public Works Loans Board Summary as at 31.03.2022 was noted.

To approve the recommendation of section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 to Full Council

The Chairman read aloud all the statements in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement and asked members to consider them carefully. It was noted that both internal and external audits support these statements.

- 9737 RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council that the statements in Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement have been complied with

Members reviewed Section 2 of the Annual Governance Statement. It was agreed that a provision is made in the financial year 2021/22 against the profit-share invoice raised and an adjustment made in Line 3 'Total other receipts'.

- 9738 RESOLVED** to approve Section 2 and recommend the draft Annual Governance and Accountability Return to Full Council with the noted amendment

To decide on action regarding the Lloyds bank accounts

To agree process for dual authentication

Members discussed the council's various bank accounts and whether they are supporting or hindering officer's administration of the council's finances. The RFO advised that making some small changes would assist staff. Members considered whether to make an officer a signatory on the Lloyds account, or whether a councillor should be an online administrator. It was noted that if an officer took this role, there would be no change to the dual authentication procedures in place and that all payments would be checked and approved by two councillors.

- 9739 RESOLVED** that the Responsible Finance Officer become a signatory for the Lloyds account

To agree transfer of funds from NatWest to Lloyds account

The RFO explained that the daily limit of £30,000 on the NatWest account is becoming restrictive and proposed that some funds are moved to the Lloyds account which does not have a daily limit and could therefore be used for larger payments. The committee agreed this would be helpful to officers and that it was also prudent to spread risk across several banks. The RFO noted that any CHAPS payment from one bank to another will incur a £25 fee each time.

- 9740 RESOLVED** to transfer £200,000 from the NatWest account to the Lloyds account

To agree process around Mayor's account

The committee considered the process for receiving monies into and paying monies out of the Mayor's account. It was noted that donations are received from several events throughout the year, and members agreed it is preferable to make one payment to any charities rather than several smaller ones. Any monies received for the Mayor's charities will continue to be paid into the savings account set up specifically for this purpose but will need to go through the council accounts when received initially and when monies are to be paid out.

**EXEMPT BUSINESS**

To note the confidential report on Pine Grove

- 9741 RESOLVED** that pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that the public and press be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reasons of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

The RFO confirmed that no further payment had been received since writing the agenda report. The committee discussed the persistent non-payment and the previous resolution made with regard to this. It was agreed to proceed in line with this resolution and instruct the council's solicitor to write a further letter regarding the arrears. The Assistant Town Clerk will confirm whether future discussion of this item needs to remain confidential or can be held in the public domain.

To note the confidential aged debt report

The aged debt report was noted.

**URGENT MATTERS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN FOR NOTING AND/OR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA**

The Chairman thanked members for all their work during the past year and the RFO and Assistant Clerk for their work in supporting the committee.

The meeting closed at 8.44pm