

MINUTES

Committee: Finance & Personnel Committee
Date: Monday, 12 October 2020
Time: 7:00pm
Venue: Zoom

Present

Cllr Sam Hawkins (Chair)
Cllr Kevin Blakey
Cllr Kim Bloxham
Cllr Ray Bloxham
Cllr Phil Norgate
Cllr Barry Rogers

Also Present

Cllr Les Bayliss, Cranbrook Town Council
Cllr Colin Buchan, Cranbrook Town Council
Cllr Matt Osborn, Cranbrook Town Council (for part of the meeting)
Janine Gardner, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Cranbrook Town Council

F&P/20/31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

F&P/20/32 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cllr Kevin Blakey declared a personal interest in relation to agenda item 4 (public participation) by virtue of being acquainted with a member of the public who had submitted two questions to the Committee in advance of the meeting. Cllr Kevin Blakey would not participate in any debate relating to this item.

F&P/20/33 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Ray Bloxham and **resolved** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2020 as a correct record.

F&P/20/34 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

On 11 October 2020, the Committee had received two questions in relation to item 7 on the agenda (Town Council Budget 2021-22) and specifically “regarding the £218,000 allocated to Grounds Maintenance (budget code 4205) as this is by far the largest single item of expenditure in the town’s budget”. A draft written response had been prepared.

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Barry Rogers and **resolved** to delegate to the Chairman of the Finance & Personnel Committee and the Clerk to finalise the Committee’s response and to send it to the member of the public.

Signed

Date:

F&P/20/35 2020-21 QUARTER 2 BUDGET MONITORING

The Committee considered the following documents:

a) Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading report for the first quarter of the 2020-21 financial year

The Committee considered the budget monitoring report relating to the second quarter of the 2020-21 financial year. In response to councillors' questions, the Clerk reported:

- a detailed breakdown of transactions relating to budget code 1095 (miscellaneous income);
- that budget 4050 covered councillors' expenses and 4051 employees' expenses;
- that budget 4065 (training and conferences) was spent at 25% of the budget due to a lack of face-to-face courses and new virtual webinars provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) at good value for money which resulted in more councillors and members of staff having been trained at lower cost.

The Committee also noted that budget 4125 (community grants) only featured a spend to date of £100.00 towards the Citizen of the Year. The Council had deferred a grant application from the Cornerstone Church baby and toddler group for £300.00 in light of the temporary closure of the Younghayes Centre on 23 March 2020 and the temporary closure of the group (ref. minute 20/49). On 21 September 2020, the Council had approved a grant application from Life Education Wessex for £550.00 towards an educational visit to St Martin's primary school (ref. minute 20/140) which had subsequently been cancelled as well as a grant of £500.00 to TRIP Community Transport (ref. minute 20/141) which had been paid after 30 September 2020 so the latter did not feature on the budget monitoring report.

It was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Ray Bloxham and **resolved** to approve the budget monitoring report relating to the second quarter of the 2020-21 financial year.

b) Cashbook transactions report for Cash Books 1 (bank accounts), Cash Book 2 (credit card) and Cash Book 3 (Younghayes Centre)

It was proposed by Cllr Sam Hawkins, seconded by Cllr Ray Bloxham and **resolved** to approve the cashbook transactions report for Cash Books 1 (bank accounts), Cash Book 2 (credit card) and Cash Book 3 (Younghayes Centre).

F&P/20/36 BANK RECONCILIATIONS

On 16 June 2019, full Council had appointed Cllr Barry Rogers as its signatory for bank statements and quarterly bank reconciliations (minute 19/128 refers) who had verified the documentation relating to the 2020-21 first and second quarters.

The Committee received Cllr Barry Rogers' report as follows:

At the last Committee meeting on 13 July 2020, Cllr Barry Rogers had reported that the hard copy bank statements relating to two of the Council's accounts had not been received in time for that meeting. It was agreed then that the approval of the bank reconciliations would be added to the agenda for this meeting (ref. minute F&P/20/26). Cllr Barry Rogers reported that he had been able to verify and sign the attached quarterly bank reconciliations dated 30 June 2020.

It was proposed by Cllr Ray Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations relating to the first quarter of the 2020-21 financial year dated 30 June 2020.

The Committee further considered the quarterly bank reconciliations relating to the second quarter of the 2020-21 financial year dated 30 September 2020. Cllr Barry Rogers reported that he had verified the documents and would sign them as soon as possible.

It was proposed by Cllr Ray Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kim Bloxham and **resolved** to approve the bank reconciliations relating to the second quarter of the 2020-21 financial year dated 30 September 2020.

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F&P/20/37 TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET 2020-21

The Committee considered the first draft of the Town Council's budget for the 2021-22 financial year.

The Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer reported that the Council's youth service provider Youth Genesis had submitted their cost proposal for the 2021-22 financial year at £13,216.70 which had been added to the draft budget as well as the anticipated Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income of £9,950.79. In addition, the Council might have to purchase two Adobe Pro licenses which might be needed to create accessible PDF documents, a legal requirement, at £14.32 each per month and a total annual cost of £343.68.

Councillors noted that the current budget proposals had been calculated on an assumed tax base of 1,950, an increase from 1,834 in 2020-21, and an assumed stable Band D council tax of £256.03. The proposals would require refining in light of the tax base being announced on 30 November 2019 or soon thereafter.

The Chairman of the Council's Amenities Committee was researching whether the Council's tree works budget should be increased and was content that the current budget of £1,500 was adequate.

Councillors requested that the following positions should be represented in the 2021-22 budget:

- Younghayes Centre security, front door and lobby design, possible employment of a caretaker and capital costs covering the internal expansion of the Cranbrook Medical Centre (see minute F&P/20/38), conversion of the multi-use hall
- Fit-out costs for the Town Council's town centre building, The Tillhouse

(Cllr Matt Osborn joined the meeting.)

The Committee noted the first draft of the Council's budget for the 2021-22 financial year and agreed that it would meet again to consider the amended draft budget after information on the 2021-22 tax base had been published, i.e. in early December 2020.

F&P/20/38 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Due to the sensitive or confidential nature of the following item it was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Ray Bloxham and **resolved** to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting on the basis of Section 1 paragraph 2 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 which stipulates that a council may, by resolution, exclude the public from a meeting (whether during the whole or part of the proceedings) whenever publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution and arising from the nature of that business or of the proceedings.

F&P/20/38 EXPANSION OF THE CRANBROOK MEDICAL CENTRE

Cllr Ray Bloxham declared a personal interest in this agenda item by virtue of being the secretary of the patient participation group at the Cranbrook Medical Centre.

The Committee considered a report explaining that the Cranbrook Medical Centre was currently operating under significant pressure due to the ever-increasing number of patients and the lack of clinical and administrative space in which to provide its services safely.

There was an option for the GP surgery to expand internally within the Younghayes Centre but the capital prioritisation process within the NHS had been ongoing for a number of years and no outcome was anticipated soon. The report suggested that the Town Council as the landlord could forward-fund any construction works and recover the capital cost via a slightly higher rent over a renewed lease period of five or seven years.

The Committee noted that East Devon District Council's Cabinet had previously approved Enterprise Zone funding of £150,000.00 in relation to the expansion of the GP surgery, albeit towards the

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delivery of a temporary modular solution on town centre land. The Town Council had previously questioned whether that funding could be utilised towards the expansion of the GP surgery within the Younghayes Centre and a response remained outstanding.

The Committee noted that the GP surgery could not extend its opening hours currently due to the limited number of clinical staff who could offer appointments.

It was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Barry Rogers and **resolved** to recommend to the full Council to agree in principle to the internal expansion of the Cranbrook Medical Centre within the Younghayes Centre and to request a further report which included/confirmed:

- a) the CCG's formal decision to pursue the internal expansion of the Cranbrook Medical Centre within the Younghayes Centre;
- b) the CCG's the architects' cost estimate and any local quotes on the basis of any specification for the fit-out/finish of clinical premises;
- c) whether the district valuer would agree to an increased rent;
- d) whether the Town Council would need to cover rent and service re-charge costs during any periods when the additional surgery space would remain unoccupied and whether the CCG would be prepared to contribute to those costs.

The meeting closed at 7:53 pm.

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Date: