

MINUTES

Committee: Finance & Personnel Committee
Date: Monday, 20 June 2022
Time: 7:00pm
Venue: Younghayes Centre, 169 Younghayes Road, Cranbrook EX5 7DR

Present

Cllr Kevin Blakey
Cllr Kim Bloxham
Cllr Colin Buchan
Cllr Sam Hawkins (Chair)
Cllr Barry Rogers

Also Present

Cllr Les Bayliss, Cranbrook Town Council
Cllr Ray Bloxham, Cranbrook Town Council
Janine Gardner, Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, Cranbrook Town Council
Lydia Chan, Finance Officer, Cranbrook Town Council
Duncan McConachie, Vice-Chairman, Whimble Cricket Club
Kirsty Mushing, treasurer, 1st Cranbrook Scouts
Sally Jarmain, Leader, 1st Cranbrook Cubs

F&P/22/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

F&P/22/12 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

F&P/22/13 MINUTES

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Colin Buchan and **resolved** to accept and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2022 as a correct record.

F&P/22/14 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The grant applicants who attended the meeting did not request to make representations, answer questions or give evidence in respect of the business on the agenda under Standing Orders 3e to 3k.

F&P/22/15 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee reviewed its Terms of Reference.

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to adopt the terms of reference as circulated with the agenda and to commend them to the full Council.

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F&P/22/16 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

On 23 May 2022, the full Council had resolved that the Committee reviewed the Town Council's Financial Regulations in detail at this meeting (ref. minute 22/90).

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to commend the revised Financial Regulations with the changes as circulated with the agenda to the full Council for adoption.

F&P/22/17 GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Committee considered the following grant applications after the Chairman highlighted that the Council's community grants budget was £6,000 per annum.

a) Whimble Cricket Club

The Committee considered a grant application from the Whimble Cricket Club for £5,000.00 towards the refurbishment of cricket nets. A bank statement in support of this application had been available to view by town councillors upon request.

The Club's Vice-Chairman attended the meeting in support of the application and added to the information on the application that approximately 50% of attendees at the Club and 60% of the under 9's resided in Cranbrook.

The Club's Vice-Chairman also confirmed that no other grant application in relation to the refurbishment of cricket nets had been made except to the England Cricket Board. Whimble Parish Council had granted-funded the Club in the past and had supported other initiatives in response to the growing number of players at the Club.

The Committee noted that awarding a grant of £5,000.00 would represent a significant proportion of the Council's annual grants budget of £6,000.00 at the beginning of the new financial year and suggested to lower that figure.

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to support the grant application and award £1,500.00 to the Whimble Cricket Club towards the refurbishment of cricket nets.

b) 1st Cranbrook Scouts

The Committee considered a grant application from the 1st Cranbrook Scouts for £3,000.00 towards a rented storage facility, fundraising and interesting and exciting training. This application had been re-submitted following consideration by the full Council on 25 April 2022 under minute ref. 22/71.

The Scouts' treasurer and the 1st Cranbrook Cubs' leader attended the meeting in support of the application. The treasurer confirmed that the purpose of the grant was not as stated on the application form but to settle the 1st Cranbrook Scouts' debt with the Scout Association which remained outstanding at £3,000.00.

In response to the Committee's question regarding financial sustainability, the treasurer explained that further bids for funding were being prepared for submission later in 2022, that the subscription fees had been increased by £5.00 per person and that new committee members had been appointed who were dedicated to increasing fundraising.

The Committee noted that awarding a grant of £3,000.00 would represent a significant proportion of the Council's annual grants budget of £6,000.00 at the beginning of the new financial year and suggested to lower that figure.

It was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Kim Bloxham and **resolved** to support the grant application and award £1,500.00 to the 1st Cranbrook Scouts towards settling the 1st Cranbrook

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Scouts' debt with the Scout Association.

c) Hospiscare

The Committee considered a grant application from Hospiscare for £500.00 towards the cost of replacing syringe drivers. Financial statements and bank statements in support of this application had been available to view by town councillors upon request.

The Committee noted that seven Cranbrook residents had benefitted from the service during the past year and the Committee regretted that nobody representing the applicant was attending the meeting in support of the application.

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to not support the grant application.

Cllr Colin Buchan voted against this motion.

F&P/22/18 GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SMALLER AUTHORITIES

The Committee noted the *Practitioners' Guide* dated March 2022 by the National Association of Local Councils and the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance.

F&P/22/19 2021-22 YEAR-END FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

a) Receipts and Payments from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022

The Committee considered the following reports documenting the Council's receipts and payments:

- i. Receipts and Payments Cash Book 1 (Bank Accounts)
- ii. Receipts and Payments Cash Book 2 (Credit Card)
- iii. Receipts and Payments Cash Book 3 (Younghayes Centre)

It was proposed by Cllr Sam Hawkins, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to approve the three documents.

b) 2021-22 Year-End Budget Monitoring Report

The Committee considered the budget monitoring report for quarter 4 (year-end).

It was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Barry Rogers and **resolved** to approve the budget monitoring report for quarter 4 (year-end).

c) 2021-22 Year-End Bank Reconciliations

On 16 June 2019, the Council had appointed Cllr Barry Rogers as its signatory for bank statements and quarterly bank reconciliations (minute 19/128 refers) who verified and signed bank reconciliations and underlying hard copy bank statements on behalf of the Council.

Cllr Barry Rogers confirmed that he had verified and signed bank reconciliations and the underlying hard copy bank statements relating to the 2021-22 fourth quarter.

It was proposed by Cllr Sam Hawkins, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to approve the year-end bank reconciliations dated 31 March 2022.

d) Use of Underspends at Year-End

The Committee considered a report recommending transferring some of the Council's underspends at the financial year-end into earmarked reserves.

It was proposed by Cllr Kim Bloxham, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to

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a) fund the Country Park event space through the community infrastructure levy funding, the residual amount from the Network Rail compensation payment and the underspend in the 2021-22 grounds maintenance budget (budget code 4205).

b) fund the path remediation in the Country Park by the underspend in the 2021-22 path replacement budget (budget code 4206) and the underspend in the grounds maintenance budget (budget code 4205).

c) fund the replacement of the path within the St. Martin's public open space by the underspend in the 2021-22 grounds maintenance budget (budget code 4205).

d) provide funding towards the proposed pump track from the underspend in the 2021-22 grounds maintenance budget (budget code 4205).

F&P/22/20 ASSET REGISTER

The Committee considered the Council's asset register dated 31 March 2022 and queried whether street furniture in South View Pasture should be added to the register.

It was proposed by Cllr Sam Hawkins, seconded by Cllr Colin Buchan and **resolved** to approve and commend the asset register dated 31 March 2022 to the full Council, subject to clarification regarding the inclusion of street furniture in South View Pasture.

F&P/22/21 REPORT BY THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

On 21 February 2022, the full Council had appointed the Devon Audit Partnership as the Council's internal auditor (ref. minute 22/45).

The Committee considered the report by the internal auditor covering the year 2021-22 financial year who had conducted a review of the Council's financial procedures and governance arrangements. The internal auditor had awarded the Council a "Substantial Assurance" rating, the highest rating in their assurance hierarchy, and concluded that the Council operated a sound system of governance, risk management and control, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the areas audited.

The Committee noted the report by the internal auditor.

F&P/22/22 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

a) Section 2: Statement of Accounts 2021-22

The Committee considered the Accounting Statements set out in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

It was proposed by Cllr Colin Buchan, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to approve the Accounting Statements set out in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and to commend it to the full Council.

b) Period for the Exercise of Electors' Rights

The period for the exercise of public rights was the period during which the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. The period lasted for 30 working days set by the smaller authority and must include the first 10 working days of July.

It was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Kim Bloxham and **resolved** to recommend to the full Council the period for the exercise of public rights from Friday, 1 July until Friday, 12 August 2022.

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F&P/22/23 STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Committee considered the Council's statement of internal control 2022.

It was proposed by Cllr Colin Buchan, seconded by Cllr Kevin Blakey and **resolved** to approve the Council's statement of internal control 2022 and to commend it to the full Council.

F&P/22/24 TOWN COUNCIL STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

The Committee considered a report recommending an increase in the Town Council's human resources in response to the continued growth the organisation experienced.

It was proposed by Cllr Kevin Blakey, seconded by Cllr Kim Bloxham and **resolved** to

a) approve the job description for the new proposed Office Administrator role and to advertise that position.

b) approve the increase in the Property Administrator's hours from 0.8 to 0.9 full-time equivalent from 1 July 2022 onwards.

The meeting closed at 7:43pm.

Signed:

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