

Costessey Town Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee of Costessey Town Council, held at The Costessey Centre, Longwater Lane, Costessey at 10am on 18 March 2022

Present: Cllrs G Jones (Chair), J Amis, G Dole, S Hannant, P O'Connor, H Elias (Town Clerk), N Bailey (Deputy Clerk). Newly appointed Town Clerk, Mrs Elaine Oliver, via Zoom as a member of the public

To receive apologies for absence

F036/22: Dan Henry, Chair of Costessey Sports sent his apologies

RESOLVED to accept apologies from Cllr T Laidlaw; (clashing meeting)

To receive declarations of interest

F037/22: Cllr S Hannant declared a pecuniary interest in any item involving Barclays Bank as she is in receipt of a Barclay's pension.

F038/22: Cllr P O'Connor declared an "other" interest in the Fete & Fair, as he knew the late father of the fairground owner

To confirm and sign the minutes of the previous Finance meeting on 25 February 2022

F039/22: RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record, with no amendments.

To receive updates on the previous minutes (No resolutions may be passed)

F040/22: Min: F021/22: & F008/22: The Deputy Clerk had re-drafted a letter to Costessey Sports football club, but final figures were to be included. **ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

Min: F030/22: Buildings Cover Insurance: The Deputy Clerk had arranged a Zoom meeting with Zurich. **ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

To consider the accounts for February 2022

F041/22: Min: F011/21: Clerk had manually created an additional column with percentages – YTD spent against YTD budget percentage as well as the Full Year Percentage Spent.

Narrative report: phrase "to the same extent" to be added to the Costessey Centre hires comment
CIL: The Proludic invoice for the QH Refuse Lorry had been loaded onto the accounts system and coded to use up all the CIL receipts in anticipation of full Council in March approving use of the last of the CIL, although the item had been deferred to the April meeting. If CTC do not agree, the money will have to be reversed back onto the Balance Sheet. It was noted that, although CTC had allocated £29,194.98 for the play equipment at QH, the item chosen had cost considerably more at £46,495.73 + VAT, so had exceeded the budget.

Reserves: Concerns were again expressed about the level of reserves; the Elections EMR had been depleted by the by-election during the year and the Rolling Capital had been reduced considerably. A further amount to pay for the balance of the Proludic Refuse Lorry would reduce the Rolling Capital Fund still further; this time the project had not qualified for a grant. It was noted that there was not a lot of money available, and that Council should be cautious in its spending.

Salaries: The pay increase of 1.75%, backdated to 1 April 2021, had not come through in time to be included in the February accounts, so there would be a larger than usual expenditure on Salaries in March.

Unity Trust Bank Account: this was working well to refund hall hire deposits, which were not actually the Council's money

RECOMMENDED to full Council that the February 2022 accounts be approved

To discuss costs associated with the Robot Line Marker

F042/22: The trial had worked well and it would be used for the broader fete markings; the lettering and numbers would have to be applied by hand. The Costessey Sports Chair had requested that CTC split the costs of robot marking for the Tournament 50/50; previously it had taken both grounds

staff and the Costessey Sports volunteer almost a day to mark out. It was decided to “reluctantly” accept the offer this year, but full costings for pitch maintenance were to be presented to Costessey Sports and the letter written separately. **ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

To consider the DRAFT Sponsorship Policy

F043/22: Concerns were expressed about the practicalities of some of the paragraphs. Amendments were made to 5.2 & 5.3

RECOMMENDED to full Council that the amended Sponsorship Policy be approved.

ACTION: Town Clerk

To receive information on the Finance training course attended by Cllr G Jones

F044/22: Cllr Jones explained the purpose of Internal Audit in Local Councils was not to check for discrepancies in the figures, but was crucial to ensure Councillors had complete control of all aspects of the Council’s business, including Governance, committee structures, and lawful decision-making. The AGAR (Annual Governance and Accountability Return) Part 1 required local Councils to affirm this. Council could ask the Internal Auditor to concentrate on particular aspects of its business, but the Internal Auditor could not give advice, only produce an action plan if the audit fell short of the guidance.

RESOLVED to consider the remainder of this item in confidence at the end of the meeting

To receive a general update on Finance matters (No resolutions may be passed)

F045/22: Queries were raised about how employees who had left the Council could be paid when the 2022-23 pay settlement was reached. It should be possible to reinstate the employee on the payroll for a single payment if requested

F046/22: The date of the next Finance Committee Meeting was confirmed as Friday 18 April 2022 at 11am – subject to change depending on Staffing Committee meetings

F047/22: RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting under the public bodies (admissions to meetings) act 1960 on the grounds that it was not in the public interest to disclose discussion on the items below due to the discussions relating to staffing issues & contracts.

***THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE HEARD IN CONFIDENCE / BELOW THE LINE**

To receive information on the Finance training course attended by Cllr G Jones (Continued)

F048/22: Various aspects of the fete were discussed.

F049/22: Various e-mails were read out relating to an item to be discussed at the P&E meeting the following Tuesday, and to the new community building at Lodge Farm Phase 2.

F050/22: It was noted the Financial Regulations might need to be amended.

F051/22: A suggestion was made to alter an employee’s job description (Defer to Staffing Committee)?

RESOLVED to ask the Internal Auditor to look into the management of the Fete, giving recommendations, and to pay for any additional work needed. ACTION: Town Clerk

To consider any confidential finance items

F052/22: None

F053/22: The meeting closed at 12 noon

Chair:

Date: