

Minutes of the ONLINE Finance, Budgets & Staffing Committee of Costessey Town Council, held via Zoom at 11am on 13 November 2020

Present: Cllrs G Jones (Chair), J Amis, G Dole, S Hannant, T Laidlaw and P O'Connor; H Elias (Town Clerk) & N Bailey (Deputy Clerk)

To receive apologies for absence

F132/20: Cllrs D Burrill & J Flowerdew (other commitments)

To receive declarations of interest

F133/20: Cllr S Hannant declared a pecuniary interest in any item involving Barclays Bank as she is in receipt of a Barclays pension

F134/20: The Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk declared a pecuniary interest in the HR Policies

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the previous FB&S meeting on 15 October 2020

135/20: Min: F111/20: Cllr Blundell had been listed both as present and in the apologies. He was not present, so the minutes were amended. It had already been corrected online.

Min: F116/20: The minutes were a correct record of the meeting at the time, however since then it appeared that the contractor had adjusted their records.

Min: F131/20: 'T' missing from 'The'

RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record with the above amendments, and to note the update to F116/20.

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

F136/20: Min: F120/20: In his capacity as District Cllr Terry Laidlaw explained the SNC Precept considerations for 2021/22. A recent SNC Finance, Resources, Audit and Governance Committee had been postponed until the following week, so he had taken the opportunity to speak at SNC Cabinet. Council. Tax Collection rates were around the same level as compared to the same point in 2019/20, and a large underspend on Capital Reserves was likely. As planned SNC will likely increase the Band D equivalent by £5.00 pa subject to approval. - the maximum rise without the need for a referendum. Cllr Laidlaw will report back accordingly. SNC would notify CTC of its Tax Base at the beginning of December.

F137/20: It was noted that the cover sheet with the monthly accounts was being presented in a different format. The Deputy Clerk had made some suggestions to the Chairman of the Committee and would work on an example for the following month. **ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

To receive the External Auditor's Report

F138/20: No issues had been raised by the External Auditor. Committee Members thanked the Town Clerk and her team who were highly commended; it was an exemplary outcome again.

To receive information on the VAT De Minimis limit

F139/20: The Accountant had confirmed that the Council had not reached the £7,500 De Minimis threshold. The calculation should be kept in case of an HMRC VAT inspection. There was no requirement for further annual checks, unless the Council had a new income/expenditure stream e.g. a new community centre build & hire.

To consider the accounts for October 2020 and receive a budget report incl payments over £500

F140/20: The only query by the Committee Chairman had been explained. An £18 legal disbursement fee related to the location of new dog bins. A small amount of income had been received from hall hire. It was noted that the CTC funded Youth Club had had an increase in emphasis on welfare calls; and an increase in contractual rate could mean there would be an

overspend. Cllr O'Connor to send a copy of the clubs' minutes to the Town Clerk. **ACTION: Cllr O'Connor**

RESOLVED to recommend to full council the approval of the October 2020 Accounts

To receive a revised 2020/21 forecast

F141/20: Cllr Jones had circulated a note and explained an adjustment to salaries as the recruitment of a new part-time Grounds Person for Queen's Hills Play Areas had not yet happened. The areas of likely overspend are – Waste, IT, Travel & Property Maintenance. The yield from the first miscanthus crop was less than it cost to cut, bail and store, but would hopefully increase in future years.

To consider future banking arrangements

F142/20: The accompanying report highlighted the costs associated with paying contractors and hall hire deposits by cheque. It would improve the customer experience if electronic payments could be made and increase office efficiency. By setting up a new account with an alternative provider, and without a complex mandate requiring multiple signatories on a cheque for lower payments under £100, none of the benefits of Barclays would be lost including the proximity of the Drayton Branch for deposits, petty cash and salary transfers. Controls should be put in place including a schedule of payments signed by members before the payment is released. The upper limit should be aligned to the current £100 damage deposit for hall hires and reflect any changes in policy. It was noted that card payments were reported retrospectively, but suitable controls were in place. An annual trawl of suppliers is undertaken to identify those who accept Direct Debit or Debit Card payments.

RESOLVED to explore further options and present recommended controls: ACTION Deputy Clerk

To receive information on the 2020/21 CIL payments.

F143/20: Funds received in previous years had been set against improvements to Queen's Hills Play Areas and have an expiry date. The £7,022.44 CIL funds received April 2020 will have a longer expiry date. The oldest available funds should be used against the first approved purchase, on a rolling basis, without the already approved amount of £29,194.98 for Queen's Hills Play Areas being impacted. **ACTION: Town Clerk**

To receive a general update on Finance, Budget & Staffing matters.

F144/20: District Councillors are seeking community group projects to support with a max £1,000 grant available. A circular email can be sent to all regular CTC hall hirers. **ACTION: Deputy Clerk**

F145/20: Lodge Farm Community Facility Survey was hand delivered to approx. 750 dwellings and exactly 100 responses were received. Running costs from handover were likely to outweigh the revenue, and the working group were meeting the following week to consider design features. A similar model may simply mean some groups request to switch from an existing CTC community centre to the new facility. A final design with estimated running costs should be presented to full council.

F146/20: Further to an ECM on 6 November 2020 re: Queen's Hills drainage, negotiations with the contractor were ongoing and Anglia Water have approved the AWA S106PDL application for the adoption of the new manhole main sewer connection and the private lateral drain, and final adoption of the connection and the PDL will be subject to inspection and inspection and approval by AWA once the remedial works are complete Another ECM would be scheduled and the Finance, Staffing & Budgets Committee should be kept up to date with any financial commitments.

F147/20: RESOLVED to confirm the date of the next ONLINE FB&S Meeting as Thursday 10 December at 11am but subject to change if the Tax Base has not been received.

F148/20: RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that it is not in the public interest to disclose discussion on the items below due to the discussions relating to exempt information on staffing and employment contracts

No members of the press or public were present.

***THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE HEARD IN CONFIDENCE**

***To approve the recommendations of the Staffing Sub-Committee**

F149/20: Min: SSC056/20: Updated Job Description for the Buildings Manager:

RESOLVED to approve the amended Buildings Manager's Job Description. ACTION: Town Clerk

F150/20: Min: SSC057/20: Amended Buildings Manager's Contract,

RESOLVED to approve amendments to the Buildings Manager's Contract, including reference to statutory entitlements under government legislation which might change from time to time. ACTION: Town Clerk

F151/20: Min: SSC058/20: & SSC059/20: Cleaner's amended contract:

A relevant salary point was agreed from 1st April 2021 which is associated with the nationally agreed sector salary scales. **ACTION: Town Clerk**

RESOLVED that the Cleaner's rate of pay be aligned with Local Government SCP pay scales as of 1 April 2021

F152/20: RESOLVED that the Cleaner/Caretaker Contract be changed in line with Min 150/20 above.

F153/20: Min: SSC060/20: Updated Grievance Procedure / Policy:

RESOLVED to approve the new Grievance Procedure / Policy

F154/20: Min: SSC061/20: Disciplinary Procedure / Policy

RESOLVED to approve the new Disciplinary Procedure / Policy

F155/20: The meeting closed at 12:45pm

Chair:

Date: