

Costessey Town Council

Minutes of the ONLINE Finance, Budgets & Staffing Committee of Costessey Town Council, held via Zoom at 11am on 19 March 2021

Present: Cllrs G Jones (Chair), J Amis, G Dole, T Laidlaw and P O'Connor; H Elias (Town Clerk) & N Bailey (Deputy Clerk). Mr Dan Henry from Costessey Sports

To receive apologies for absence

F056/21: Apologies were accepted from Cllrs D Burrill (work) and S Hannant (family illness). No apologies were received from Cllr G Blundell

To receive declarations of interest

F057/21: The Town and Deputy Clerks declared interests in any HR Policies & Contracts

With the agreement of the Committee the Chair took Item 7 next:

To re-consider fees for the 2020-21 football season

F058/21: Costessey Sports rented pitches at Longwater Lane and Breckland Park and were usually charged per team per season, with an additional charge for the summer tournament. Due to Covid no games were currently allowed, and only a few games had taken place in September 2020, when the club had been obliged to hire portable toilets as the halls were closed to the public. Costessey TC had previously agreed to pay 50% of the costs of the toilets (£37.50 per week). The club would miss its second fund-raising tournament in 2021 and was not able to access grants as it did not own the grounds; grants were usually awarded by the Norfolk FA for pitch improvements. Costessey Sports had previously been awarded money for goalposts. Costessey Sports had 28 teams and were a community-run organisation charging £20 to join and £2 per week / match, unlike some other clubs which operated as businesses.

F059/21: The pitches were about to be re-seeded, after which there was little opportunity to play. Costessey TC had been awarded Business Interruption Grants for its halls based on Rateable Values. The RV was calculated to include changing rooms and pitches / grounds.

RECOMMENDED to full Council that Costessey Sports were NOT charged pitch hire fees for the 2021 football season.

Mr Henry thanked CTC on behalf of Costessey Sports and left the meeting.

To confirm and sign the Minutes of the previous FB&S meeting on 12 February 2021

F060/21: RESOLVED to approve the minutes as a true record with no amendments.

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

F061/21: None

To consider the accounts for February 2021 and receive a budget report incl payments over £500

F062/21: It was noted that several items of expenditure had been approved at the last full Council meeting for payment in March. Also, there was a long list of un-presented cheques as the Fete refunds had not been cashed. There had been an increase in Burials revenue and the levels of expenditure were low. It was likely that the previous surplus estimates had been conservative. The forecast surplus had allowed the Council to hold the 2021-22 Council Tax at the same level as 2020-21. Any further surplus would be divided between the General Reserve (a proportion of budgeted expenditure) and then put into the Earmarked Reserves such as the Rolling Capital Fund for various projects, the New Cemetery Extension Fund and the Elections EMR.

RECOMMENDED to full Council that they approve the February 2021 Accounts

To receive a revised 2020/21 forecast (GJ)

F063/21: The forecast was very cautious as it was not easy to predict so close to the Year End. It was noted that for the following financial year it would be better to produce a Q1 forecast rather than forecasts for the first three months individually, as many subscriptions left at the beginning of the year. A comment was made that it would be better to calendarise the budget so that each month could be forecast more effectively.

To review the CTC Grants Policy (see report)

F064/21: Changes to the guidance on Permitted Powers under the General Power of Competence were noted. It was recommended to the Committee that Section 3 was revoked and that 2.5 was amended. The item was deferred to the next Agenda for more specific wording. **ACTION: Town Clerk**

To consider the Unity Trust Bank for the return of deposits and other payments under £100 (see report & Item 14 below)

F065/21: Damage deposits of £60 & £100 were taken for hall hires, usually by bank transfer. Most deposits were returned, requiring cheques to be raised and incurring postage costs; hirers would prefer to receive a bank transfer. Details to be discussed in confidence later in the meeting.

RECOMMENDED to full Council that in principle a Unity Trust Bank account be opened for electronic payments for hall hire deposit repayments up to £100, subject to change in hire deposit amounts

To receive a general update on Finance, Budget or Staffing matters (No resolutions may be passed)

F066/21: Thanks were expressed for the article in the recent Newsletter.

F067/21: RESOLVED to confirm the date of the next ONLINE FB&S Meeting as Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 11am.

F068/21: 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 exempt information on staffing and employment contracts

No members of the press or public were present. Live streaming was stopped.

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

***To clarify Officers' IMPREST account arrangements**

F069/21: To ensure business continuity it was suggested that a second debit card be acquired for the Deputy Clerk to be linked to the Clerk's IMPREST account.

RECOMMENDED to full Council that a second debit card be obtained for the Deputy Clerk on the Clerk's IMPREST account

F070/21: The amount for a single transaction delegated to the Clerk for approval had not risen in over 10 years.

RECOMMENDED to full Council that full delegated authority for the Clerk to authorise payment of a single transaction be increased from £2,000 to £3,000

***To consider confidential banking details**

F071/21: Procedures for how the proposed Unity Trust account would be managed were discussed. Queries about the Auditors were raised. It was noted that CTC did well to consistently obtain an unqualified Auditor's report. The procedure for refunds was to be developed and presented at the next meeting. **ACTION: Town Clerk & Deputy Clerk**

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

F072/21: Min: SSC020/21:

RESOLVED that the Buildings Manager receive an additional Scale Point to replace the previous call-out system. ACTION: Town Clerk

F073/21: Min: SSC021/21:

RESOLVED that additional amendments in the contracts for the Deputy Clerk and Clerk's Assistants be approved

F074/21: Min: SSC022/21:

RESOLVED that, in principle, Costessey TC employ a Minutes Secretary

F075/21: Min: SSC023/21: Differing arrangements were in place regarding gifts to Councillors.

RESOLVED that the Staffing Sub-Committee be informed of any gifts of over £50 to any individual staff member

F076/21: The meeting closed at 12:41pm

Chair:

Date: