



HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING **MONDAY 20TH MARCH, 2017 at 6.30pm**

FINANCE REPORT no. 12 (2016-17)

Present: Councillors;

A Fleming, T Gardner, S Leverett, R Lewis (Chair), D Thomas, M Took, P Widdowson, D Wollweber,

In Attendance: N Rees (Town Clerk), 1 member of the public.

MINUTES

- 1) **Apologies:** None
- 2) **Declarations of Interest:** To receive declarations for pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests.
- 3) **Minutes:** The report of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on the 20th February, 2017 was accepted as a true record.
- 4) **Matters arising from the minutes.** There were no matters arising.
- 5) **London Rd Building:** The Clerk confirmed that he had spoken to Mr Andrew Jarvis who had confirmed that HTC's proposal for the London Rd Building would be considered at WDC's Cabinet meeting on the 7th June at 5.30pm. Mr Jarvis would also confirm in writing, in the next couple of days, that the situation for the users of the building would remain unchanged until WDC had made a decision.
- 6) **Financial Position:** The Committee received and noted a summary of the current financial position. The Clerk read out the key points in the document to the Committee and confirmed that at the April Finance Meeting he would produce a final end of year report. The Committee would then be able to agree any transfers to reserves. The Clerk reported that despite many varied transactions throughout the year, such as; the cost of the free parking, play equipment, work to the Station building, parking contributions and CIL payments, it could be seen that the Council's receipts and payments were relatively balanced and therefore there would not be a significant change in the position at the end of the year.
- 7) **Station building:**
 - a. To review the advice from NALC's solicitors. The Committee received the legal advice on the original lease document drawn up in the year 2000. Cllr Thomas was appalled that HTC's Solicitor at the time had allowed the Council to sign this Lease, which effectively left the Council liable for any work required to the building, to the satisfaction of the Landlord. The Clerk reported that the maintenance costs since 2008 amounted to £6,328 but there were probably more costs before 2008 but he had not looked back any further at this stage. The Chair opened the meeting to allow Mr Leverett, who had been involved with the project in 2000, to describe the history of events which led to the agreement with Railtrack PLC (the owner of the building). Mr Leverett explained that the rent was set at a very low level and this should be taken into account when the Council

considered the costs to date for maintaining the building. Cllr Leverett felt that the Council had an obligation to the Station Building users; Mencap, HACT and the Halesworth & District Museum as they all provided an important service to the town. The Chair appreciated the importance of these organisations but was also concerned about the potential cost for repairing the building and wished to explore all available options. It was noted that a damp survey had been conducted in 2015 and this estimated the repair work to be approximately £16,500. It was also noted that it may be possible to obtain grants or loans to repair the building and if the Council undertook this work it may wish to consider extending the lease beyond 2025. Cllr Thomas asked whether there might be an option to buy the building. Cllr Widdowson agreed that this may be the way forward and suggested that the Council could make an enquiry into the purchase of both the Station Building and the Station car park. The inclusion of the car park would then define the boundary and it was more likely the Council could obtain the property on a freehold basis rather than a long term lease. It was RESOLVED that Halesworth Town Council enquire with the owner (Network Rail) of the building whether they would be willing to sell the Station Building to Halesworth Town Council. The Clerk would also enquire if the car park could be included (Clerk to investigate ownership of the car park).

- b. To consider forming a Station Building Working Group: Cllr Leverett then proposed and it was RESOLVED that a Station Building Working Group is formed with HTC and Station users representatives to review the current condition and any required maintenance. It was then agreed that the members of the Working Group would comprise; Cllr Lewis, Cllr Leverett and Cllr Thomas together with one representative from each of the Station users; Halesworth & District Museum, HACT and Mencap. The Clerk would organise a meeting as soon as possible.
- c. To review the annual rent for the Station Users: The Clerk advised that he also needed the Working Group to agree the rents for the Station Users for the period April 2017 – March 2018 as he needed to send out the invoices at the beginning of April. It was agreed that the dilapidation and/or rent would be discussed with the Users and any proposals taken to the Council's monthly meeting or to the next Finance Meeting for approval.

8) Grants & Donations:

- a. To consider the grant application from Oxblood Molly. It was noted that this event was very well supported and brought in many visitors to the town. It was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved the grant application for £90 but the payment would be made in April (at the start of the new financial year) as there was insufficient funds left in the grants budget for the current year.
- b. To consider the grant application from Halesworth Open Days. The Committee again noted that this event was also very successful and attracted visitors over a long weekend and involved varied attractions throughout the town. It was then RESOLVED that the Committee approved the grant application for £1,000 but similarly the payment would be made in April (at the start of the new financial year) as there was insufficient funds left in the grants budget for the current year.
- c. To consider the Day Centre insurance (1, 3 & 5 year proposals). The Clerk advised that as the future of the London Rd building was uncertain it might be better for the Committee to accept a one year agreement. Cllr Thomas agreed that it was probably better to renew on a one year basis until the future of the London Rd Building was clear. The Committee agreed that this could be reviewed again next year but it was RESOLVED that that 2017/2018 the Committee approved the one year proposal at £243.44.

- 9) **Asset Register:** To review and approve the revised Asset register. It was noted that the Clerk had added the wall mounted information boards and after checking the list of assets it was RESOLVED that the Committee approved the revised Asset Register. On a point regarding play equipment, the Committee learned (from Mr Leverett) that the play equipment on Dairy Hill (not included on the Asset Register) was owned by WDC but it was situated on HPFA land.
- 10) **Maintenance:** To consider any maintenance costs. The Clerk referred to the accounts for payment and the request for HTC to pay for the Litter Notices at the Skateboard Park. The Committee noted the Skateboard Park was owned by HTC and it was RESOLVED to pay for the notices.
- 11) **News Items:** To consider any items for the website/Information screen/Mail Chimp
- 12) **Accounts for Payment:** The following list of accounts were approved for payment

3714.	Salc Training, Planning Cllr Fleming (LGA 1972 s175) (Agreed Finance Committee 20/02/17)	75.00 +vat
3715.	Waveney District Council – Free Parking (LGA1972 s144) (Business Services at CAS Ltd)	17,000
3716.	Waveney Norse – Market Clean (Quarterly) (Food Act 1984 s 50)	174.99 + vat
3717.	EPS Skateboard Litter Notices – Estimate for two double sided signs. (Litter Act 1983 ss 5,6)	72.00 + vat

Subscriptions

3718.	Voluntary Contribution to Community Action Suffolk To be agreed at the meeting	£?
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- 13) **Staff:** To review the annual salaries for the Clerk and Assistant Clerk. The Chair informed that the public that this item would be held *in camera*. The Clerk and members of the public left the room.

The Clerk was called back to the room at 7.55pm.

The Chair, referring to the National Joint Council for Local Government Services, 2017/2018 pay scales, confirmed that the Committee had agreed the following:-

The Clerk's salary would be raised one salary scale point to LC2 31 and the Assistant Clerk's salary would be raised one salary scale point to LC1 21, pro rata to their working hours. The Committee agreed that the form used for staff appraisals could be improved further and the Clerk would obtain some alternative options for the Committee to consider.

The meeting was closed at 8pm.