

HALESWORTH TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
6.15pm June 15th 2015
HELD IN THE DAY CENTRE
LONDON ROAD, HALESWORTH

REPORT

Present: Cllrs; A Baldwin, P Dutton, A Fleming, R Lewis, D Thomas, M Took, P Widdowson

In attendance: N. Rees –Clerk, 3 members of the public.

Cllr A Fleming took the Chair for the first item.

- 1) **To elect a Chair:** It was proposed by Cllr Thomas and RESOLVED that Cllr R Lewis would be Chair of the Finance Committee.
- 2) **To elect a Vice Chair:** It was proposed by Cllr Lewis and RESOLVED that Cllr M Took would be the Vice Chair of the Finance Committee
- 3) **Apologies.** All Present
- 4) **Declarations of Interest:** Non-pecuniary interests were received; Cllr P Widdowson for item 9d and Cllr Thomas for 10a.
- 5) **Minutes** of the meeting held on the 23rd March which were approved at the monthly meeting held on the 13th April, 2015 were received and noted.
- 6) **Financial Regulations:** It was noted again that the Finance Committee currently did not have devolved powers to pass payments. The Clerk had suggested that the Financial Regulations could be amended to enable the Finance Committee (hereafter to be subtitled Finance and Personnel) to authorise payments for general office, repairs, maintenance, donations and HMRC payments up to a value of £2,000 (excluding grants). After various suggestions it was proposed by Cllr Thomas and RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the Finance Committee be given delegated authority to authorise (all) expenditure up to and no more than £5,000 (per meeting) and that the Financial Regulations be amended to reflect such authority and further that all Finance Committee agendas be circulated to all the town Councillors.
- 7) **Terms of Reference:** It was RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that the Finance Committee and the Employment Committee be amalgamated to form a new Committee called the Finance and Personnel Committee and its terms of reference be agreed along the proposals previously circulated.
- 8) **Twinning:** To consider the forth coming events and to approve any associated costs: Cllr A Fleming explained that there were events taking place in Eitorf and Bouchain to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the twinning of the two towns. Representatives from Halesworth & District Twinning Society would be visiting and would take gifts, a key representing freedom of the town of Halesworth to Eitorf, cost £92 and Adnams drink to Bouchain, cost of £60 (purchased by Dr Bill Pagan). RESOLVED to recommend to the Council that these costs be approved for payment.
- 9) **Signage:**
 - a. **Pedestrian Signs** To consider the proposal of seven new pedestrian signs pointing the way to the Market Place. The locations were; At the Station, Quay St, Middle Car park over the pay machine, Coopers Wall, between Crosse Ram and the Angel, outside the Angel Car Park and the last possibly Chediston Street but to be confirmed. The cost of £229.73 included the signs and installation. Cllr

Thomas would provide a map of the locations for the Council. RESOLVED to recommend to Council that Cllr Thomas contacts Mr Mark Kerridge of Suffolk County Council to authorise him to proceed with the work for the estimated sum of £229.73.

- b. **Town signs:** To receive any updates and to consider any costs: Clerk confirmed that Waveney Norse had visited the proposed site at Bramfield Rd (by Durban Close) and would be providing a price as this was on WDC land and not Highways. The other location was to be by Fairview Road junction and this would be installed by Suffolk County Council as it was on Highways land.
- c. **Sponsorship signs:** Waveney Norse had inspected the Roundabouts and had given preliminary costs for installing the signs which would be met by the Sponsors.
- d. **Speed signs:** The Clerk and Cllr Thomas were due to inspect the speed signs on Wednesday and to determine the rota if possible. It was confirmed that the cost of the signs had been noted previously at £1,308.

10) **Donations:** To consider the request for donations from:-

- a) Waveney Valley Food Festival. RESOLVED to recommend that this is referred to Halesworth & Blyth Valley Partnership

Cllr A Fleming (Chair of Halesworth Town Council) confirmed that she intended to adopt and support two local charities and would speak to Southwold T.C. to get some ideas and help as the Mayor of Southwold currently holds events to support local charities.

In view of the fact that the following items b,c & d were national charities and that the Council would prefer to reserve funds for local charities it was RESOLVED to recommend that these were declined

- b) Suffolk Area Cruse Bereavement RESOLVED to recommend that this is declined
- c) NSPCC RESOLVED to recommend that this is declined
- d) Firefighters Charity RESOLVED to recommend that this is declined, note it was agreed that as there was an active Fire Station in Halesworth and that the Clerk could write to see if they needed help on a local level.

RESOLVED It was proposed by Cllr Dutton and agreed to recommend to Council that 'The Finance Committee determine the criteria against which all requests for donations will be considered.'

11) **Grants:** To note that the following grant applications have been received but will be considered in July: Halesworth Arts Festival, Millennium Green, Men's Sheds (Halesworth Volunteer Centre). Noted

12) **Local Government Award Scheme:** To review the requirements and costs of registering for the Scheme. The Clerk confirmed that he had attended a Suffolk Association of Local Councils' information day and this new scheme had been recommended. The Clerk had circulated the information pack about the award scheme but explained that the Council currently meets most of the criteria for the Foundation Award but some more work would be needed. The aim of the scheme was to demonstrate that the Council had the required documentation and information in place to be operating lawfully and according to standard practice and that it had policies for training councillors and officers and that it was building a foundation for improvement and development. The Cost of the scheme was currently £50 to register with NALC and a reduced fee of £25 (for a limited period) to apply for the new scheme. There were two further levels which the Council could work towards over a period of time. RESOLVED to recommend that the Council pays the sum of £75 and registers for the Local Government Foundation Award Scheme.

13) **Financial Position:**

- a. Current bank balances and summary of accounts: RESOLVED that the Committee accepted the financial reports and budget information provided.
- b. To receive additional signatories for the Bank (Mandate Change) The Clerk confirmed that the only current bank signatories were Cllr P Widdowson and

Cllr J Wagner. RESOLVED that the bank signatories to be added (as previously agreed) would be Cllrs; Lewis, Baldwin, Took and Fleming. At the same time former Cllrs; Mizon, Dunning and Smith would be removed. The Clerk distributed personnel information requests from Barclays Bank to the proposed signatories.

14) **Any other business:** Any other business and items for the next agenda.

A report from Cllr Payne (attached) had been distributed prior to the meeting after he had attended the recent meeting of Halesworth Events Management. It was noted that there were several items that needed the Council's attention but the first item involved the original festive lights owned by the Council. These lights were in need of replacing and it was noted that Pearce and Kemp had offered a set of LED replacement lights with 3mm Harnesses at £3,800 ex VAT and plus a small fitting charge. It was noted that the new lights may offer a different type of luminosity but that as there were other types already in place it should not be an issue. RESOLVED that the Committee recommends to Council that the lights be replaced at the estimated cost and that the Clerk would, prior to the next meeting, find out how much the fitting cost would be. It was noted that the item 2 ('Welcome to Halesworth' sign) would hopefully be financed by H.E.M. Item 3 (festive motifs) would be dealt with by a separate grant (the Clerk confirmed receipt of this application) and it was hoped that this could be agreed at the next monthly meeting. This was due to the need to act quickly to secure a current offer from Pearce and Kemp. Item 4 in the report would be dealt with by HEM through fund raising.

The meeting was closed at 7.25pm