

HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 18th March 2024

A.M Cooke (*Chairman*)
S. Walsh (*Vice Chairman*)
A. Bashar
R. Cromie
P. Lucraft
A.M Lucraft
A. Murray **
A. Rees

* Absent ** Apologies

Also present: Town Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO),
Committee Clerk.

63. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Murray due to personal commitments.

64. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 15th January 2024 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

65. Substitutes

None.

66. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

67. Members' Declarations of Interest

Cllr Cromie declared a pecuniary interest in Item 13 'To consider reallocation of funds to Bentswood Hub for the Juniors project' as she is a director of the Bentwood Hub CIC.

68. To receive and consider the lists of payments and receipts for the period 1st September 2023 – 31st December 2023.

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) presented the Period 1st September 2023 – 31st December 2023 and welcomed questions.

Cllr Rees questioned a payment made to C Trice in October, the Clerk explained that with agreement from the leader of the council and the Town Mayor the Clerks daughter had undertaken some part time summer work organising filing and paperwork, without further comment:

Members **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to approve the lists of payments and receipts, for the period 1st September 2023 – 31st December 2023.**

69. To receive and consider the income and expenditure report for the year to date 31st January 2024

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) presented the income and expenditure report for the year to date 31st January 2024 and welcomed questions.
Without comment:

Members **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to approve the income and expenditure report for the year to date 31st January 2024.**

70. To confirm bank balances and bank reconciliation statements as at 31st January 2024.

Members noted the documents presented, the RFO explained that the statement and bank reconciliation for the new CCLA investment account were included in the finance pack. He explained that the CCLA account had variable rate interest and instant access. Without further comment:

Members **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to approve the bank balances and the reconciliation statement as at 31st January 2023.**

71. To consider the financial review of the Annual Risk Assessment for the Town Council.

The Clerk explained that there were two changes to the Risk Assessment, the Covid risk had been downgraded and an extra line had been added to include the new CCLA investment.

Cllr AM Lucraft asked the Clerk if advice on updating the risk assessment was taken, the Clerk explained that the internal auditor checks the risk assessment annually and the RFO also commented that the risk assessment is discussed with the Councils insurers.

Cllr P Lucraft asked how the council was mitigating the areas identified as high risk and asked the Clerk to ensure appropriate policy was in place. The Clerk will update the risk assessment and bring back to the next Policy and Finance meeting for resolution. The Clerk will also revisit the councils' contingency plans.

Members **RESOLVED to adopt the review of the Financial Risk Assessment for the Town Council as is and review again after the above additions at the next Policy and Finance meeting.**

72. To consider the review of the Town Council's Health and Safety Policies.

Cllr AM Lucraft asked if both grounds and office staff completed an accident report if necessary. The Clerk advised yes and additionally the RFO commented that the need to report incidents was thankfully few and far between.

Members **RESOLVED to adopt the review of the Town Councils Health and Safety Policies.**

73. To consider the review of the Town Council's General Data Protection Policies.
Without comment.

Members **RESOLVED to adopt the review of the General Data Protection Policies for the Town Council.**

74. To consider applications for Town Council Grants.

Members noted that of the £10,000 budget £9938.89 was already allocated leaving a balance of £61.11 for the remainder of this financial year.

Cllr P Lucraft spoke saying the council should in principle support grant applications received and encouraged a more flexible approach to the grants policy meaning the Town Council could help put funds back into the community.

Members agreed take monies from unrestricted reserves if any or all grants were resolved. It was advised that unrestricted reserves currently stand at £248,365.

Each grant application was discussed individually. Members asked that any links to applicants' websites be added to future grant reports for clarity. This was noted by the Committee Clerk.

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

a) a grant of £500 to Haywards Heath Tennis Club towards running costs.

b) a grant of £750 to St Catherines Hospice for a one-off cost towards new bed.

c) a grant of £500 to St Peter and St James towards running costs.

d) a grant of £500 to Sussex Chorus to fund the June concert and running costs.

e) the grant application of £1000 to The Simon Wellbeing Centre to fund the start up of a new activity was deferred pending more information from the applicant.

The total sum of grants awarded was £2250.00. With £61.11 being taken from the remaining grants budget and the balance of £2188.89 to be taken from reserves.

75. To consider reallocation of funds to Bentswood Hub for the Juniors project.

Cllr Cromie left the room having earlier declared an interest in this item.

Members considered the allocation of £12,000, as resolved under minute 25 of the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee dated 11th September 2023.

Cllr P Lucraft said that he was supportive of what Bentswood Hub are trying to do, delivering a much-needed service. He advised as the Bentswood Hub are set up as a CIC they do not qualify for support from the District or County council. Members agreed the Town Council should step in to support the Bentswood Hub CIC.

Unanimously, members RESOLVED to allocate the £12,000 to the Bentswood Hub CIC for the running of the Bentswood Juniors programme. That the monies be divided into 4 tranches with delegation to manage the service level agreement and the allocation of funds given to the Town Clerk.

76. To consider the change of policy in regards to the allocation and expenses of ward budgets.

Cllr P Lucraft tabled his motion to consider the change of policy in regards to the allocation and expenses of ward budgets, he explained his proposal seeks to update the policy passed at the meeting of the P&F on 27th June 2023. Specifically, that the council allows that unspent allocations for either individual councillors and or ward areas are allowed to be carried forward to the next financial year.

A short discussion took place, with all in favour:

Members **RESOLVED** to **change the policy to allow both the individual and ward budgets to be carried over to the next financial year, but only within the term of the council.**

- 77. Urgent Items**
None.

The meeting closed at 08.30 pm.