

## HAYWARDS HEATH TOWN COUNCIL

### POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

#### Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2024

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

\* Absent \*\* Apologies  
Also present: Town Clerk, Committee Clerk

#### 32. Apologies

Member	Reason
None	

#### 33. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 were taken as read, confirmed as a true record and duly signed by the Chair.

#### 34. Substitutes

None.

#### 35. Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

#### 36. Members' Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or other interests.

#### 37. To receive and consider the lists of receipts and payments, and income and expenditure for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

The Town Clerk presented the lists for period to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 welcoming questions and asked it be noted that the RFO had also included the CCLA investment paperwork as requested at the last meeting. Without comment;

Members **RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council to approve the lists of payments and receipts, and income and expenditure for the period to 31st August 2024.**

#### 38. To confirm bank balances and bank reconciliation statements as at 31st August 2024.

It was asked how much money had been deposited to the CCLA investment fund. The Town Clerk informed Councillors that £750,000 had been agreed by Members and he believed all of the monies has been deposited.

Cllr P Lucraft queried if there were enough monies in the current account to cover operational spending and how money could be retrieved from the CCLA. The Town Clerk confirmed that there were enough monies available at the present and this would be reviewed as monies can be retrieved on the same day if requested by 11am, with no penalties imposed.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to Full Council to approve the bank balances and the reconciliation statement as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024.

**39. To consider applications for Town Council Grants.**

Members noted the remaining 2024/2025 budget of £3,642.00. The Town Clerk advised that the Grants totalled being requested exceeded this amount and reminded Councillors to be mindful of there being two further Policy and Finance meetings in this Council year, although this should not impact their decision to award each Grant.

Cllr P Lucraft noted that there are many organisations in the town that should be applying for support and the Council wants to encourage them, as it's small amounts of money but significant for organisations.

The Town Clerk noted that there has been increased coverage of the Grants, particularly on Facebook and the website, and ECO Imogen Wilson has done a lot of work promoting the Grants programme, plus the Committee had increased the money available. Councillors noted that Paish/Town Council are the only Local Authorities that gives running costs.

Cllr P Lucraft noted that the budget for Grants had started at £8,500, which the Committee increased to £10,000. The Council had previously doubled the amount of Grant organisations could apply for and made the criteria wider, as the Grants had not been increased in many years.

Each grant application was discussed individually with all being awarded apart from the Waves Music Therapy because Councillors wanted further information on the number of beneficiaries and number of Haywards Heath children. Members were in agreement that the project was worthy of support so they delegated the decision, with their support, to the Town Clerk. Cllr A Murray declared an interest in Ensemble Reza, who he gave £500 to from his Councillor pot. Cllr AM Cooke also advised that MSDC gave them £5000 for a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert.

Members **RESOLVED** to award;

1. **A grant of £1000 to Waves Music Therapy to help fund a new Music Therapy project at Warden Park Primary School – DELEGATED to the Town Clerk to approve after further information is sought.**
2. **A grant of £800 to Mid Sussex Active to help fund a new Primary School Sports Training programme**
3. **A grant of £500 to Home-Start Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex to help with running costs**
4. **A grant of £500 to Ensemble Reza to help with running costs for a series of 7 lunch time concerts in Jan-July 2025**
5. **A grant of £500 to Haywards Heath Foodbank to help with purchasing new mattresses for their Babybank service**
6. **A grant of £500 to Haywards Heath Town Team to help with running costs of their 2025 Bike Ride event.**

Members, in considering the grant applications before them and being mindful of two further meetings of the Committee in the current Council year **RESOLVED** to increase the grants budget to £17,000 by moving £7,000 from the unrestricted reserves to the 2024/25 grant's budget.

**40. To consider making a request to Mid Sussex District Council in relation to Governance Arrangements in Haywards Heath**

The Town Clerk noted that this item had been brought by Cllr P Lucraft, as the two most recent attempts to review and sort the boundaries of Haywards Heath out had both been dismissed by MSDC.

Cllr AM Lucraft noted that the current boundary discrepancies were very confusing for electorates, therefore it was agreed that realignment should be reviewed and changed before the local elections in 2027. It was noted that the main concerns were the difference in representation in the north of the Town with Lindfield at District/Town level and to the south of the Town where the housing along the relief road is in the Ansty and Staplefield Ward that coalesced with the Town that should be brought within the Town Boundary.

Members **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to write to Mid Sussex District Council to formally request that a Governance Review be undertaken for Haywards Heath that would be completed for the Town/District Elections in May 2027.

**41. To consider charges for the Town Hall, Allotment Rents and Burial Charges for the 2025/26 financial year.**

The Town Clerk noted that Town Hall renting was returning to pre-pandemic levels and an increase as recommended 3% covers forecasted inflation plus staffing costs increases. It was also felt important not to increase hire costs by more as other local venues are already priced very competitively and local groups and organisations were struggling to pay hall hires in the present economic climate.

Members **RESOLVED** to recommend to;

- A) Increase the hire costs for the Town Hall by 3% for community hirers and 3% for commercial hirers for the financial year 2025/26**
- B) Increase the annual percentage rise to Cemetery fees by 3% for the financial year 2025/26**
- C) Increase the annual percentage increase in allotment rental fees by 3% for the financial year 2025/26**
- D) To keep wedding fees at £425 for the financial year 2025/26**

**42. To receive an update on financial matters relating to the Council undertaken by delegated authority**

Members **NOTED** the update on financial matters without comment.

**43. To consider for adoption a Town Council Investment Policy**

The Town Clerk presented the proposed Investment Policy. Cllr P Lucraft queried the 12 month fixed term policy and suggested extending this to 24 months and potentially adding a clause to state that this would be subject to 80% of the Council's Assets being in short term funds in order to manage capital risks and interest rate risks. Cllr S Walsh queried the percentage reserve needed at any time. The Town Clerk confirmed that this should cover 4-6 months' worth of operating costs. Cllr P Lucraft suggested that the Policy & Finance Committee review the investment strategy twice a year.

Members, in considering the queries and comments on this policy, **RESOLVED to ask the Town Clerk to return the Investment Policy to the Committee in January with the amendments that were agreed as per the body of the minute.**

**44. To receive recommendation from the Environmental and General Committee in relation to the introduction of a grants fund for third party Community Events.**

Members **RESOLVED to introduce a £5,000 grant fund for the third party Community Events administered and overseen by the Committee within the 2025/26 budget.**

**45. To note a representation made to West Sussex County Council on the development of the proposed Hurst Farm**

On the grounds that the Hurst Farm Section 106 Agreement was still to be executed the Leader of the Town Council had written to the Cabinet Member at West Sussex County responsible for Education to seek clarification on the status of the Section 106 Agreement and to ascertain what the hold up was. This was in light of the fact that the school proposed was also under review for its need due to Government review of 41 proposed schools. In addition it had also been requested that a review of the speed limit into Fox Hill from the County border be looked into in light of the new housing developments in the area. Members noted the two issues raised in light with the Town Clerk's concerns that the development of Hurst Farm had been delayed for many years due to issues around the school and the planning permission, which was putting pressure on Town Council services that were planned to be provided on Hurst Farm to meet allotment demand and the lack of space at Western Road Cemetery.

Members **NOTED** the Update.

**46. To consider the Government consultation regarding the ability of Town/Parish Councils to hold remote meetings.**

Members **RESOLVED to support the introduction of remote meeting with reservations on proxy voting and the understanding it will be for the Town Council to adopt its own policies and procedures if the legislation around remote meeting is introduced.**

**47. Urgent business**

There was none.

**The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.**