



# Ware Town Council

Ware Priory, High Street, Ware, SG12 9AL

[www.waretowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.waretowncouncil.gov.uk)

01920 460316

## FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020

Via remote access starting at 7.30pm

### MINUTES

Cllr Pope (Chair) Butcher, Curtis, Kaye, Kemp, Shaw (S).

Officer present: Terry Philpott Town Clerk, Sean Higgins RFO.

Members of the public: nil

#### **FP061: To receive and accept Apologies for Absence**

- None received

#### **FP062: To receive any Declarations of Interest and review any requests for Dispensation submitted to the Clerk.**

- None declared

**FP063: Minutes from the previous meeting:** to receive and sign the minutes of the last Finance and Policy meeting held on 27th January 2020.

**Resolved:** The minutes are an accurate record

#### **FP064: Correspondence and Clerks report (TP)**

- Risk Register updated and posted post website. (SH)
- Financial regulations updated and posted on website (SH)
- £10K Pension strain cost payment, paid at the end of April. (SH)

## **FP065: Financial Report (SH)**

Finance reports to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

- Bank Reconciliation inc reserve, earmarked funds (inc New Homes Bonus)
- Debtors report
- Profit and Loss
- Departmental Profit and Loss showing total income and expenditure

The above reports were noted, a new format will be in place for the 2020/21-year, month 1 onwards.

## **FP066: Financial Projection 20/21 (TP)**

The financial projections were noted and the reallocation of funds within the budget approved. The net result is the budget remains balanced.

### **Broad assumptions**

The current restrictions will remain in place until the end of June.

When restrictions are lifted there will be a lead time to business as usual, the uncertainty with the economy will influence the lead times.

### **Reserves:**

The intention is to retain the contribution to reserves as indicated in this year's budget £70K.

### **Repairs and Maintenance:**

The budgets have been left largely intact. This considers the restrictions in the 19/20 financial year; we cannot get any further behind or we will be storing problems up for future years.

### **Mayoral Events and Training -£2K**

Both are likely to be curtailed with a reduction in planned expenditure.

### **PC costs +£1K**

The requirement for remote working has further shown the need to all be operating from the same platform and in a consistent way.

### **Cemetery**

No budget variance has been included due to the uncertainty in this area.

## Events

### Food Festival:

Postponed in May, reviewing the option of linking with Wares the Music (also postponed from May) to a revised date in September. Budget retained.

### VE Day

Budget retained although no events will take place in May. Online options being reviewed with perhaps an event to link with VJ day in August. If no events option to donate the £1K budget to organisation(s) supporting the community through the Coronavirus.

### Ware Festival (early July)

We are currently working on the festival taking place and have retained the budget. If all the events were cancelled rather than postponed this would generate a saving of c£14K, this is not a preferred option as the events are highly regarded in the community.

## Grants

The grants budget has been retained in Full, including the discretionary pot of £5K. Many of our local organisations may require additional support.

- **Resolved:** To set up Covid 19 support fund to be promoted with Ware for the benefit of the community of Ware to be administered by the Clerk's Office.

## Security and Cleaning

Reduced based on decreased bookings / usage.

## Utilities

Reductions in electric and minor reduction in water usage, no reduction in gas as most of the gas is used during the winter months when we anticipate return to normal business activities. No allowance has been made for increased efficiency of a new boiler at this stage.

## Lido

Currently planning for the season to start in July, with no extension at the end of the season. Reduced income and staff costs by 37%. Overall cost / subsidy no material change.

## Tenant Income

Tenant income was reviewed.

## Ware Priory Trading

Disruption to the main wedding season, encouraging postponing rather than cancelling, some income may be deferred until 21/22. Overall wedding income anticipated to be adverse to budget by c40% Overall lettings income adverse to budget by c32%

Profit reduced from £51K to £15K, adverse to budget by 70%

**Projects and Extraordinary items**

VAT payment: Retained at £60K, payment in full (phased payment to be requested if required)

HMRC NI payment £17.6K, payment in full (phased payment to be requested if required)

The Priory boiler which was unbudgeted will cost c£36.5K

Other projects have been amended as per appendices 1

Action: To review the finances considering a potential second lockdown in Q3.

**FP067: Internal Audit agreed responses (SH)**

The Internal Audit report was noted and confirmed all the actions achieved / ongoing.

**FP068: Internal and External Audit arrangements for 2019 / 20 Accounts (SH)**

To note the timetable for the audit arrangements.

Arrangements have been made with both the Internal and External Auditors to adhere to the same schedule as agreed before by working remotely and providing both auditors to access to all the relevant paperwork.

Draft Annual Accounts to be reviewed at F&P meeting 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.

AGAR to be completed / approved at Full Council 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

**FP069: Employers NI (SH)**

To receive an update on the outstanding Employer NI payments due to HMRC.

Employers Allowance – We are aiming to pay back the first 3k at the end of this month then we will seek further guidance from HMRC regarding the remaining balance.

**FP070: Ware Priory Charity VAT (SH)**

To receive an update on the Ware Priory Charity VAT query.

VAT – We are in ongoing discussion regarding the VAT status of the Priory Charity and expect to be able to provide the final decision at the next F&P Meeting

### **FP071: Contract Summary (SH)**

The contract summary was noted and agree any actions for contracts nearing renewal.

- **Action:** To review and check all contracts are included, coffee machine etc (SH)

### **FP072: Budget Process 2021/22 (TP)**

**Resolved:** The budget process for 2021/22 was approved.

### **FP073: Payments and Discounts Policy (TP)**

**Resolved:** To adopt the Payments and Discounts Policy

### **FP074: To consider the requirements for Health and safety / HR support for WTC.**

To review the requirements for Health and Safety and HR support. The current contract with Ellis Whittam ends in November 2020.

It was agreed that WTC require external support for both functions, not necessarily from the same provider.

HR support may be more appropriate on a pay as you use contract

Research to be undertaken by the Clerks Office with interviews for the top three potential suppliers prior to approval at Full Council in September / October. (F&P meeting not until 26<sup>th</sup> October which is too late for approval of a contract commencing November 2020)

Action: Investigate HR support / Create specification (TP)

Action: Investigate / Create specification Health and Safety Support (SH)

### **FP075: Agenda items for next meeting Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020**

Disaster Recovery Plan deferred until after the current lockdown.

Signed

Dated