

**EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL**

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 15<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2023 at 7.00pm**

Committee Members: Cllr Farren (Chair)  
Cllr M Belsey (Vice Chair)  
Cllr Visser (Town Mayor)  
Cllr Ody (Deputy Town Mayor)\*  
Cllrs: Barnett, J Belsey, Gibson, Whittaker\*

Others present: Cllr Reeves, Cllr Gibbs, Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk  
& Responsible Finance Officer \*\*Cllr Pond  
\*\* present on zoom = not an official attendance

\*= absent

**52. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no public present, therefore the Chairman moved along to the next item.

**53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were accepted from:

Cllr Whittaker	Personal Commitment
----------------	---------------------

**54. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: the minutes for the meetings of were accepted as a correct record and the Chairman bidden to sign them as such.

**55. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no new declarations.

**56. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Armed Forces Day is coming up on 24th June, 11-3 at Meridian Hall. The chair encouraged all to come along. She advised that The Town Clerk is doing a piece of work on the Armed Forces Covenant that the Council signed up to a few years ago, she will be surveying forces families to try to determine the number that we have in the parish and whether their needs as a community are being addressed by council and other services. This survey will be launched at the event. A report will come back to the committee with the results of this later this year.

St Barnabas; the Clerk spoke with the Church today and they signed the papers last weekend so this is just with the solicitors to complete.

Congratulations to Alice Burrows on her recent engagement

#### 57. TO RECEIVE THE LIST OF APPROVED PAYMENTS

The Committee received the payment lists for March 2023, April 2023 and May 2023

It was asked what is a consumer unit? - This is a new unit for electricity in the meridian hall. An upgrade and moving towards the circuit breakers which improve the stability of the systems.

It was asked as to what was the Mayor's picture scaffolding? The answer was that this was for all the pictures to come down and be repositioned to give more room for new Mayors' portraits.

The reports were noted.

#### 58. TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES - POSITION STATEMENT

The committee noted the position statement and asked about the £100k reduction in balances on the business reserve? This is due to the payment in this financial year for St Barnabas.

#### 59. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & HR UPDATE

The Committee noted the report on the current KPI's for invoices and absence

Cllr Reeves arrived at this point

#### 60. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE

It was asked whether it is to be looked at to purchase a SID with ANPR? This needs to be looked in to ensure that we can run ANPR with the police and LAT, so that it can be even more effective. The concept of SIDs were supported by all councillors to reduce speeding.

RESOLVED: To approve that a second SID be purchased.

There was support for bike hire and the active travel week. Comment was made as to Kidical Mass this past weekend and how this was successful. And for improving access to cycles from the station. Bike week in June is for businesses and this may encourage many people to cycle to work. Hire for bikes and moving to E-Bikes was also supported. There was some concern as to fixed point rather than leaving a bike anywhere. It was clarified that we were looking at fixed point docked bikes, which was supported.

RESOLVED: To support a budget allocation to be set aside for 2024/25 to incorporate active travel week, (bike week) into the calendar and to develop a number of initiatives around this.

RESOLVED: That further exploration into the hire bikes be undertaken and then that a trial be instigated.

The Committee also noted the request to support the devolution of some road works to the three towns such as pot-hole filling if the business case is proven and Finance and General

Purposes are able to allocate appropriate budgets. However at this time WSCC have said no to any devolution so no allocation will be needed.

61. DELEGATED DECISIONS

It was noted that there had been no delegated decisions since the last cycle

62. APPROVAL OF ANNUAL REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Committee noted the statements from the auditor and congratulated the Clerk, RFO and all staff on a good return.

63. ANNUAL RETURN & STATEMENT OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Chair introduced the report, thanked the RFO for his reports and moved to the recommendations.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Council to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/2023 by:

- a) Confirming “yes”, to questions 1 to 8, and not applicable to question 9 as set out in the Annual Governance Statement (section 1) contained in Appendix E of the F&GP Committee papers of 15.06.23, and to agree that this now be signed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk;
- b) Accepting the accounting Statements (section 2) as set out in Appendix F of the F&GP Committee papers of 15.06.23

64. COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES CLAIMED 2022/23

The report was noted as to the amounts claimed by the Councillors in 2022/23

65. ANNUAL STAFF AND TRAINING REPORT 2022/23

Committee noted the report as to training undertaken and the statements as required under transparency regulations for local councils regarding salaries. There was a comment that the training regime was extensive and welcomed.

66. WORKING GROUPS AND SUB COMMITTEES FOR 2022/23

The chair referred to a revised working groups as tabled.

It was proposed as an amendment that the Environmental and Sustainable Travel Working Group be amended to a Sub Committee.

RESOLVED: To amend the title of this group from working group to sub committee

Cllr Gibbs advised he was happy to serve this sub committee but had not been aware of this. The Chairman apologised but stated that she had believed this had been communicated.

RESOLVED: The Working groups & Sub Committees for 2023 / 24 are:

- Consultation group (Chair and Vice Chair F&GP, Chair of planning, the chair of the relevant committee, Cllr Mockford, supported by TC) reporting to F&GP
- Planning and Economic Development (Chair and Vice Chair F&GP Chair of Planning, Cllr Gibson, supported by the TC) reporting to F&GP
- Environmental & Sustainable Travel Sub Committee (Chair and Vice Chair Planning and Chair & Vice Chair F&GP, Town Mayor, Cllr Gibbs & Cllr Mockford with support from DTC) reporting to F&GP
- Personnel Working Group (Chair and Vice Chair F&GP and Town Mayor plus Cllr Mockford, supported by TC) reporting to F&GP
- Budget 2024/25 Working Group (Chair and Vice Chair of F&GP, Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Gibbs supported by TC and RFO) reporting to individual committees

#### 67. THE OLD POLICE STATION

The Chair introduced the paper and asked for views. There were comments that the Council may regret what the site becomes. It was also commented that the hope value regarding the aspirations of the price was an issue and indeed the government were looking at national levels across the board. It was thought that the price that the P&CC was looking for at around £1.2m was excessive and it was not thought that the price would be achieved. As the Council has not at this time got the funds nor any plan as to what would be the expected use for the property, it would be better not to make any offer but wait and see. It is fully understood that the public do not wish to see residential development on this site. It was clarified that the Old Court House continues to make income for the council.

RESOLVED: To ask the Town Clerk to remain in negotiation with the agent, if she is made aware of a bid having been submitted, that a special council meeting be called for a business plan and valuation to be brought back

#### 68. ELIZABETH CRESCENT - LAMP POSTS

The Chair introduced the report and it was clarified that the East Grinstead Town Council's lights are not yet on the project for upgrade. It was also clarified that the position of these lights will not be detrimental to any householders and beneficial for the path users.

RESOLVED: To agree to transferring the two East Grinstead Town Council lamp posts in the twitten between Elizabeth Crescent and QVH, to the West Sussex County Council. noting this will result in their earlier upgrade to LED lights and enable the upgrade to the cycle/footpath to go ahead.

#### 69. PERSONNEL MATTERS

The Chair introduced the report. It was clarified that the Council has equality and diversity policies, and more will follow.

RESOLVED: To approve the new policy regarding TOIL

RESOLVED: To approve the new policy for Maternity

RESOLVED: To approve the filling of the vacancy for the part time caretaker and to thank Mrs Sue Batt for her years of service, wishing her well for the future.

#### 70. HOTDESKING EQUIPMENT

The Chair introduced the report, it was asked about docking stations and large screens and security as to using the laptops in their own home. These were all answered positively that we will be able to have better security and docking stations will be part of the process.

RESOLVED:

- 1) East Grinstead Town Council purchase work laptops for employees with the aspiration to implement a hot desking system for staff in the future.
- 2) East Grinstead Town Council purchase tablets for Councillors

It was commented that a tablet may not be useful to all Councillors and this would be a choice. It was also clarified that the actual laptops and tablets were not being decided at this point. It was also commented that when MSDC introduced tablets they were not universally used which had been disappointing.

The Deputy town Clerk made the comments as to the security, efficiency and environmental benefits. It was asked if the council had considered "modern gov". We have not but can do so.

- 3) The underspend in the current IT budget and earmarked reserve be carried in to 2024/25 for this project and additional allowance be made in the 2024/25 budget to complete the project.

There being no other business the Chair announced that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2023** and ended the meeting at 8.07pm

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN