

EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – 20th JUNE 2024 at 7.00pm

Committee Members: Cllr Farren (Chair)
Cllr M Belsey (Vice Chair)
Cllr Ody (Town Mayor)*
Cllr J Belsey (Deputy Town Mayor)*
Cllrs: Barnett, Gibbs, Gibson, Peacock* and Reeves

Others present: Cllr Mockford, Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer
** present on zoom = not an official attendance

*= absent

66. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Chairman noted that England had drawn in their group match at the Euros. There were no public present, therefore the Chairman moved along to the next item.

67. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were accepted from:

Town Mayor Cllr Ody	Town Twinning Engagement in France
Deputy Town Mayor	Personal commitment
Cllr Peacock	Personal Commitment

68. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no new declarations.

69. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the meetings of 21st March and 13th May

70. **CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair advised that Armed Forces Day was approaching on 29th June. All would be welcome. We had been saddened to hear of the passing of John Grantham who was such a part of the British Legion in East Grinstead for many years and the Council's sympathies were with his family.

71. **TO RECEIVE THE LIST OF APPROVED PAYMENTS**

It was asked as to the Election costs, why were they so late if they were for 2023 and why so much higher? It was clarified that they had been queried and a full explanation received as to the increases, and yes they were for the 2023.

The Committee received the payment lists for March 2024, April 2024 and May 2024

The reports were noted.

72. TOWN COUNCIL FINANCES - POSITION STATEMENT

The committee noted the position

73. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS & HR UPDATE

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

74. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEE

There were none.

75. DELEGATED DECISIONS

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

76. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Chair introduced the item. Advising that the request is that the Town Meeting set as Wednesday 26th March, be changed to Tuesday 25th. It is further recommended to no longer schedule it on a Wednesday to avoid having to move the meeting once the Mid Sussex dates are announced.

RESOLVED: To change the date of the Annual Town Meeting to Tuesday 25th March and in future, schedule the meeting for a Tuesday.

77. WORKING GROUPS/ SUB-COMMITTEES 2024/25

RESOLVED: The Working groups & Sub Committees for 2024/25 to be:

- Consultation group (Chair and Vice Chair F&GP, Chair of planning, the chair of the relevant committee and Mockford supported by Town Clerk) reporting to F&GP Committee
- Neighbourhood Plan Review Group (Chair and Vice Chair F&GP Chair and Vice Chair of Planning, Cllr Gibson, supported by the Town Clerk) reporting to F&GP Committee
- Personnel Sub Committee (Chair and Vice Chair F&GP and Town Mayor with support from the Town Clerk) reporting to F&GP Committee
- Budget 2025/26 Working Group (Chair and Vice Chair of F&GP, Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Barnett with support from the Clerk and RFO) reporting to all Committees.

- Shared Surfaces working group (Chair and Vice Chair of E&ST, Cllr Whittaker, Cllr Gibson, Mr Grahame Russell (EGBA) & Mr Charlie Martell (EGBA) with officer support from the Clerk or Deputy Clerk) reporting to E&ST Committee.

Cllr Gibson noted that NALC is running a Neighbourhood Planning Seminar in September. The Clerk advised that the Chair of the Planning Committee has been advised and at least one place has been booked.

78. 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.

79. ANNUAL RETURN & STATEMENT OF ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Chair introduced the report, She mentioned that the pre-approved movement in reserves of £95,000 was not needed in full but at £51,708 due to prudent budgeting. She thanked the RFO for his reports and moved to the recommendations.

It was asked whether the loss in reserves should be a matter of concern, it was noted that the council assets had increased due to the purchase of (Sunnyside) St Barnabas. The Council was slightly below the CIPFA recommended levels, it was noted that all Councils are struggling with costs over the past year.

RESOLVED: To recommend to Council to approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2023/2024 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 20.06.24, 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 20.06.24

80. COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES CLAIMED 2023/24

The report was noted as to the amounts claimed by the Councillors in 2023/24

81. ANNUAL STAFF AND TRAINING REPORT 2023/24

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.

82. POLICY REVIEW

The chair noted that the policy review of the Council was ongoing and that four policies were before the Committee for consideration.

- RESOLVED: To approve the new and revised policies contained in the papers of the meeting namely:
- Eye Test Policy
 - Flexible Working (attached as *Appendix I*)
 - Protocol on the Recording or Filming of Council and Committee Meetings
 - Sponsorship Policy (attached as Appendix J)

It was clarified that the flexible working policy is a legal change to allow a member of staff to request flexible working from the first day of appointment, but this does not guarantee it would be awarded.

83. REVENUES GRANT APPLICATION

The Chair introduced the matter and advised that the remainder will come to the Committee in September, however this was an urgent need for the club.

- RESOLVED: To award £500 to the East Grinstead Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club from the Revenues Grant Budget.

There being no other business the Chair announced that the next meeting of the Committee will be held on **Thursday 26th September 2024** and ended the meeting at 19.22pm

SIGNED:

CHAIRMAN