

**MINUTES of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee**  
 held  
**Remotely**  
 on  
**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021 at 7.02pm**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Councillors Calver, Davidson, Fay, I Henderson, J Henderson, Saunders, D Smith, G Smith and Todd.</b>
<b>In the Chair:</b>	<b>Councillor Morrison</b>
<b>Clerk:</b>	<b>Ms Lucy Ballard</b>
<b>Also present:</b>	<b>0 members of the public, 0 members of the press, Apprentice Administration Assistant Jessica Griffiths and Estates Supervisor Andy Wells.</b>

**Public questions: None**

The chairman informed members that the meeting would be adjourned for 10 minutes from 7.55pm for a period of reflection in relation to the anniversary of the first lockdown.

<b>F62/20</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b> Cllrs Powell (Sub Cllr Saunders) and Richardson (sub Cllr Davidson)
<b>F63/20</b>	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u></b> None
<b>F64/20</b>	<b><u>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u></b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 8 <sup>th</sup> December 2020 (previously circulated) be approved and signed by the Chairman as a true record.
<b>F65/20</b>	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u></b> Members considered the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MIN 49/20</b> – Members reviewed changes to the Grant Funding policy and <b>RESOLVED:</b> to adopt them with immediate effect.</li> <li>• <b>F37/20</b> – Members received confirmation that the tree survey was carried out on 5th March at the cost of £500, expended from the External Support Fund.</li> </ul>
<b>F66/20</b>	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MIN F23/20</b> – Members received confirmation that the 1607 Poor Rate and</li> </ul>

	<p>Guildhall Deeds had been framed and displayed in the hallway of the Guildhall.</p>
<b>F67/20</b>	<p><b><u>HARWICH INTERNATIONAL SHANTY FESTIVAL</u></b>  <b>RESOLVED to RECOMMEND:</b> To award £2550 s137 grant.</p>
<b>F68/20</b>	<p><b><u>HARWICH SOCIETY (HARWICH IN BLOOM)</u></b>  <b>RESOLVED to RECOMMEND:</b> To award £3000 s137 grant.</p>
<b>F69/20</b>	<p><b><u>HARWICH KINDERTRANSPORT MEMORIAL FUND</u></b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> To award £1000 s137 grant from the 2020/21 budget.</p>
<b>F70/20</b>	<p><b><u>THEATRE OF LEMMINGS</u></b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> To award £1000 s137 grant from the 2020/21 budget.</p>
<b>F71/20</b>	<p><b><u>ESTATES SUPERVISOR REPORT</u></b>  The Estates Supervisor, Andy Wells, reported on recent and current projects/issues concerning the Council's estate, including progress on building repairs works at the Hill School site, the impending installation of the replacement crazy golf hazard and the remaining works to be carried out on the newly-fitted Parlour windows.</p> <p>Cllr G Smith asked about the signage at the skate park and Andy Wells said some were being removed and but others remained, although it wasn't overly effective as people were ignoring them and still using the facility. The clerk confirmed that from 29<sup>th</sup> March, the restrictions were lifting and the signage would be changed to reflect that.</p>
<b>F72/20</b>	<p><b><u>PHASED RETURN TO WORKING FROM THE GUILDHALL</u></b>  Further to previous discussions (ref MIN F03/20), members considered a return to normal operations from the Guildhall and the clerk referenced the risk assessment, which had been updated to reflect that.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To agree the following phased return:</p> <p>Stage 1 (No earlier than 12<sup>th</sup> April) All staff to return to working from the Guildhall.</p> <p>Stage 2 (No earlier than 17<sup>th</sup> May) Councillors and members of the public to be able to access the Guildhall, by appointment only, to a maximum of 6 individuals at any one time (including employees).</p> <p>Stage 3 (No earlier than 21<sup>st</sup> June) Full reopening of the Council offices and Guildhall, to include provision for tours and Chamber hire.</p> <p>Flexibility will remain to accommodate home working should this be either necessary or requested (under Stages 1 and 2) and the return to face-to-face council meetings will be addressed as a separate issue in accordance to sector regulations.</p>
<b>F73/20</b>	<p><b><u>LEISURE SEASON 2021</u></b>  Members considered various matters for the 2021 leisure season and  <b>RESOLVED:</b> To agree to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A delayed start to the season (commencing 5<sup>th</sup> June) where the Putting Greens will open weekends only until the school summer holidays when full opening will commence, through to the end of August, facilitating the Motorcycle Rally in September.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To commence recruitment of Leisure Attendants and appoint at the highest band of NMW. Recruitment to be handled by the clerk with first refusal to those appointed last season.</li> <li>• To retain the pricing as agreed in 2019.</li> <li>• To authorise expenditure as necessary, up to the limits delegated to the chairman and clerk to implement safety measures in line with covid guidance.</li> </ul> <p>The request for private hire was not considered as no further information had been received.</p>
<b>F74/20</b>	<p><b><u>SICKNESS POLICY</u></b> Members considered a draft sickness policy for adoption by the council including how to manage medical appointments.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To adopt the policy, with the option of allowing reasonable time off work, with pay, for medical appointments. The policy to apply to all HTC employees.</p> <p><b>FURTHER RESOLVED:</b> Not to impose limits on the duration of time taken on medical appointments.</p>
<b>F75/20</b>	<p><b><u>TRAINING</u></b> Members considered training opportunities for both employees and councillors in the areas of data protection and Equality &amp; Diversity.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To facilitate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Protection training for the Asst. Clerk and Apprentice Admin. Assistant at a cost of £28.</li> <li>• Equality &amp; Diversity training for employees and councillors of HTC up to a total cost of £500.</li> </ul> <p>Costs of both sets of training to be expended from the 2021/22 Training budget.</p>
<b>F76/20</b>	<p><b><u>TOOLS AND CONSUMABLES</u></b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> To purchase the following essential tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universal stopcock (£27.99)</li> <li>• Manhole key (£6.99)</li> <li>• Telescopic Tree Pruner (£21.43)</li> </ul> <p>All costs inc VAT and are to be expended from the 2020/21 Maintenance and consumables budget heading.</p> <p><b>FURTHER RESOLVED:</b> To purchase Weed Killer for the Hill School site (£28) to be expended from the 2021/22 Grounds Maintenance budget.</p>
	<p><b>The chairman adjourned the meeting for ten minutes to allow a period of reflection in relation to the anniversary of the first lockdown. The meeting resumed at 8.05pm.</b></p>
<b>F77/20</b>	<p><b><u>SHUTTLE BUSES</u></b> The chairman informed members that since the publication of the agenda, a light cruise schedule had been received, which was hoped would commence in July 2021. Members agreed that further information was needed before considering a shuttle bus provision, which could be discussed at an Extraordinary meeting, if necessary.</p>

F78/20	<p><b><u>PAT TESTING</u></b>  Members considered the purchase of PAT testing equipment as well as a one-day training course for the Estates Supervisor.  <b>RESOLVED:</b> To purchase the equipment at a cost of £259 and proceed with the arrangements to enrol the Estates Supervisor on the training course at a cost of £190. Costs to be expended from the Health &amp; Safety and Training budgets, respectively.</p>
F79/20	<p><b><u>PUTTING GREEN HUT MAINTENANCE</u></b>  Members considered a quotation for bi-annual maintenance at the cost of £720 plus £120 for the installation of 8x drips bars.  <b>RESOLVED:</b> the proceed with the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works as detailed, to be expended from the 2021/22 Leisure Maintenance budget.</li> <li>• An increase to the 2021/22 budget provision for Leisure Maintenance from £600 to £1000.</li> </ul>
F80/20	<p><b><u>LEISURE FACILITIES</u></b>  Cllr Saunders asked members to consider ways of increasing usage to include the involvement of local schools. She suggested a number of ideas including ways to make the facilities more visible from the road, involvement from the schools to make the obstacles more educational and exciting for the children, providing discounts (grandparents go free), additional promotion (i.e. posters in the library and supermarkets and on social media). She would like to facilities to accommodate older people and those with disabilities.  Members discussed various ideas and how this could work as well as how to involve the other facilities along the seafront (i.e. combined promotions etc.)  Cllr Calver suggested an all-council informal meeting with Ian Taylor (from TDC) as a facilitator to discuss an approach to the seafront. Cllr Saunders agreed to carry out some background work and contact the schools and it was agreed for the clerk to arrange a meeting for early May.</p>
F81/20	<p><b><u>ANNUAL LEAVE</u></b>  <b>RESOLVED:</b> To carry over untaken annual leave entitlement of all HTC employees to the next annual leave year.</p>
F82/20	<p><b><u>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS</u></b>  Cllr D Smith reported findings following a review of the accounts on 8<sup>th</sup> March for the period Oct-Dec. He reported that everything appeared to be in very good order, and he found no irregularities. He was impressed with the social distancing measures put in place. The Chair thanked Cllr Smith for his time and congratulated the clerk.</p>
F83/20	<p><b><u>FINANCIAL REGULATIONS</u></b>  Members reviewed the Financial Regulations in light of some minor amendments, which the clerk explained and <b>RESOLVED:</b> To adopt for 2021/22.</p>
F84/20	<p><b><u>FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT AND SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members reviewed the Financial Risk Assessment conducted by the RFO and the measures put in place to mitigate any risk.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To accept the Financial Risk Assessment and confirm measures taken to mitigate risk are adequate.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members further considered the current System of Internal Control (the measures in place to safeguard the Council's finances) and reviewed its effectiveness.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To accept the System of Internal control and agree that the systems in place for the prevention and detection of fraud were effective.</p>
<b>F85/20</b>	<p><b><u>MATTERS RECEIVED IN THE POST OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>F86/20</b>	<p><b><u>MATTERS TO BE REPORTED</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members noted the renewal of the council's telephone/broadband/cloudphone services with BT on 14<sup>th</sup> Dec 2020 at a reduction of £20.25 p/m. Price increase of £3.40 online rental charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April. (Costs £136.15pm/ £139.55 from April)</li> <li>Members noted the Section 137 expenditure limit for 2021/22 had been set at £8.41.</li> </ul>
<b>F87/20</b>	<p><b><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></b></p> <p>The next meeting of the Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee will be held on <b>a date to be agreed at 7.00pm.</b></p>
<b>F88/20</b>	<p><b><u>EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS</u></b></p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Pursuant to Sub-Section 2 of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the meeting was closed to the press and public for the transaction of the under-mentioned business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Payroll provision</b></li> </ul>

The chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 8.55pm.

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATE**