

**HARWICH TOWN COUNCIL**  
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**MINUTES**  
**of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee**  
 held at  
**Mayflower Primary School, Main Road, Dovercourt CO12 4AJ**  
 on  
**Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2021 at 7.01pm**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Councillors Calver, Davidson, Fay, J Henderson (until 7.49pm), Powell, Richardson, D Smith and G Smith</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</b>

**Public questions:** None

<b>F29/21</b>	<b><u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u></b> Cllr I Henderson
<b>F30/21</b>	<b><u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u></b> None
<b>F31/21</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 held on 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2021 (previously circulated) be approved by the committee and signed by the chairman as a true record.
<b>F32/21</b>	<b><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>F06/21 – Description of the Poor Rate and Guildhall Deeds</b> has been framed and hung in the Guildhall hallway.</li> <li>• <b>F14/21 – Hill School Site Landscaping</b> – The Clerk and Estates Supervisor met with TDC representative on site to confirm duties and frequency of each and were happy with the agreed programme of grounds maintenance, which could be supplemented in house if needed. It was agreed not to pursue any investigation into a change of arrangements for the planting at the Putting Green.</li> <li>• <b>F15/21 – A Prospect of the Town and Harbour of Harwich</b> has been framed and hung in the Guildhall hallway.</li> <li>• <b>F16/21 – Fire safety measures</b> have been carried out at Guildhall.</li> <li>• <b>F20/21 – Bungee Trampolines</b> – The clerk reported her findings of enquiries into the implications of providing this additional facility and it was agreed to defer further discussion in conjunction with item 12.</li> <li>• <b>F21/21 – Pressure washer</b> purchased, and skate park cleaned. Estates Supervisor, Andy Wells confirmed it took around three mornings to complete</li> </ul>

	<p>the clean and could be carried out manually as the pressure wasn't too strong to be harsh on the surface.</p>
<b>F37/21</b>	<p><b><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To review decision on <b>rent freeze</b> for 2021/22 to Hill School Site tenants. There was significant discussion on the benefits of retaining the rent holiday, which has been in place since April 2020. Members asked questions including whether the savings were being passed on by the groups to their members and how the loss of income would impact on the budgets. It was clarified that the agreement to hold the rents was purely Covid related as the groups weren't taking an income during the lockdown. Cllr J Henderson confirmed that TDC wouldn't be charging rent on some of their leases for the remainder of the financial year.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To retain rent freeze for the remainder of the 2021/22 financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>F19/20</b> – Brickwork on buildings at the Hill School is complete and due to a change in method, the final invoice was £300 less than quoted. The clerk confirmed that the works had been inspected and met with the specification.</li> </ul>
<b>F38/21</b>	<p><b><u>HILL SCHOOL SITE RENT REVIEWS</u></b></p> <p>Members considered recommendations by the Working Party in relation to mid-term rent reviews and discussed the necessity of a second rent review to be held in 2022, to enable a decision on rent levels later on in the lease term. This would be subject to lease permissions, the investigation of which would incur costs of £275 for legal work. Members discussed that historically, rents had not been increased during the term of a lease.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED to:</b> To accept the recommendations of the working party not to increase the rents in 2022, and to retain at this level for the remainder of the lease and not to enquire about a second rent review.</p>
	<p>There were no grant requests</p>
<b>F39/21</b>	<p><b><u>ESTATES SUPERVISOR REPORT</u></b></p> <p>Estates Supervisor, Andy Wells, reported on recent and current projects/issues concerning the Council's estate, including completion of the brickwork and installation of new outside lighting at the Hill School Site, the cleaning of the skate park and completion of works to the Parlour windows and installation of new fire safety measures in the Guildhall.</p>
<b>F40/21</b>	<p><b><u>AGE CONCERN DONATION</u></b></p> <p>Members considered a request for a donation towards the Age Concern 'Information and Welfare Benefits' advice and Befriending service. The clerk confirmed that under s137 rules, a contribution was permissible as the applicant had demonstrated that there is already a benefit to residents within the parish (90 cases of support with 135% increase in the current year) and the amount requested was commensurate with that benefit.</p> <p>Some members felt that the local branch might benefit more directly from funds and making a donation to a branch that covers a wide area could set a precedent going forward with no guarantee that the donation would be spent supporting residents within the parish. Other members were keen to investigate ways to enable some support.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> to defer until a future meeting whilst contact is made with the applicant to ascertain what they consider a 'case' and to ask the HTC representative of the local branch of Age Concern (Cllr McLeod) what support the local group provides to residents.</p>

F46/21	<p><b><u>LIGHTING IN THE GUILDHALL</u></b>  Members considered a quotation for the installation of additional lighting in the hallway, which would be subject to planning permission, if required. The clerk informed members that should there be a need for planning permission or building regulations, this could incur additional costs.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To proceed with the works at the cost of £470 for supply and installation, subject to obtaining any consents that may be required and to agree to any additional expenditure that may be incurred in the process of applying for these consents.</p>
F47/21	<p><b><u>LEISURE SEASON ANALYSIS 2021</u></b>  The clerk provided an analysis of income against expenditure for the 2021 season. Members felt that the additional facilities, which were new to the area this year may have encouraged additional footfall. Member agreed to discuss opening dates and times at a future meeting.</p>
F48/21	<p><b><u>PUTTING GREEN LEASE</u></b>  <b>Ref MIN F31/20</b> – Members considered the terms of a draft lease with the district council for the putting greens. Some members raised concerns over the costs involved in proceeding with a lease. The clerk confirmed that the legalities were too complex and time-consuming and appointing a solicitor would be appropriate for this if the council were to proceed.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Not to proceed with a lease and instead request to continue with a licence on an annual basis.</p> <p>Discussions deferred from MIN F24/21 (Bungee trampolines) were discontinued.</p>
F49/21	<p><b><u>CIVIC ROBES</u></b>  <b>Ref MIN F12/21</b> - Members considered a condition report of the council's robes along with a recommendation for replacements and/or cleans.</p> <p><b>RESOVLED:</b> To proceed with proposal 1 (as detailed below) as budget provision allows over the 3-year period commencing in the current financial year.</p> <p>Replace ROBE003, 004, 005, 010 (4 new robes in total) and clean ROBE001, 002, 017, 018 at the cost of £2818 as broken down below and expended from the Civic Expenditure budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Councillor Robe: £633.25 per robe</li> <li>- Cleaning: £55 per robe</li> <li>- Chain ribbon on Mayor's robe £10</li> <li>- Robe covers x3 £55</li> </ul> <p>The robes will be made to the specifications as previously agreed in terms of length colour and use of faux fur.</p>
F50/21	<p><b><u>HILL SCHOOL SITE – BOXING CLUB</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members considered a request for parking of the club vehicle on the site. Some members felt this would set a precedent for the other clubs on the site, which wouldn't be practical.</li> </ul> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To decline the request.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members also considered the purchase and installation of a defibrillator on the site, which in general, they were keen to support. The clerk informed members that the request had come as a result of a directive from the club's governing body but that the site was not accessible to the whole of the community, and that a grant or other source of funding, to enable the club to purchase one themselves, might be a more appropriate way forward.</li> </ul>

	<b>RESOLVED:</b> Decline the request and discuss other forms of funding with the club.
<b>F51/21</b>	<p><b><u>MATTERS TO BE REPORTED</u></b></p> <p>Members <b>noted</b> the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the annual play inspection had taken place at the skate park and all recommendations for action had been carried out.</li> <li>• WEF 11<sup>th</sup> September, the monthly tariffs for the council's 2 current accounts increased by £2 taking the total fees to the equivalent of £198 per annum.</li> <li>• Expenditure of £35 had been authorised through delegated authority for the pre-planning application in relation to investigating additional lighting in the hallway (MIN F06/21).</li> <li>• The present Local Government pay offer is expected to be rejected by the unions when it goes out to ballot towards the end of September/early October. Cllr Richardson asked what happens after then and the clerk explained that she expected negotiations to continue.</li> <li>• Anti-virus protection had been renewed until 7<sup>th</sup> August 2025 at a cost of £163.98 (£41 per annum).</li> <li>• A Battle of Britain Flag had been purchased via petty cash at the cost of £7.50.</li> <li>• Expenditure had been agreed under delegated authority for a new photo cell to be supplied and fitted at the Hill School Site at an estimated cost of £60.</li> </ul>
<b>F52/21</b>	<p><b><u>ITEMS RECEIVED IN THE POST OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></b></p> <p>Members noted receipt of the following correspondence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of thanks for grant received from <b>Harwich Quay Fireworks</b></li> </ul>
<b>F53/21</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>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021</b> at <b>The Mayflower Primary School, Main Road, Dovercourt, at 7.00pm.</b></p>

The chairman closed the meeting at 9.02pm.

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATE**