

MINUTES
of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
 held at
The Guildhall, Church Street
 on
Tuesday 20th June 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors Calver, Chable, Fay (Sub for Saunders), J Henderson, Richardson, Todd and Wade
In the Chair:	Councillor Morrison
Clerk:	Mrs Marie Snell
Also present:	0 members of the public, 0 members of the press

Public questions: None

F01/23	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Fowler and Saunders (Substituted by Cllr. Fay)
F02/23	<u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u> None
F03/23	<u>ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR</u> With only a single nomination it was RESOLVED: To elect Cllr. Calver as Vice-Chair of the F&GP Committee for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.
F04/23	<u>MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING</u> RESOLVED: That the Minutes and Confidential Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on 21 st March 2023 (previously circulated) be approved by the committee and signed by the chairman as a true record.
F05/23	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u> None
F06/23	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN F65/22 – Members were informed that the new firewall had been installed and approved the additional cost of £44 which was due to unexpected software support. • MIN F34/22 – The Estate Supervisor gave an update on graffiti removal at the skate park, with suggested methods of removing including painting over part of the graffiti where appropriate. Tendring District Council have quoted before to fully remove graffiti, this could be costly and should be revisited if the problem persists. Cllr Henderson thanked the Guildhall staff for acting swiftly in removing any graffiti from the skate park. • MIN F79/22 – Members noted an extra cost, that is yet to be confirmed by contractor, for additional woodwork which was required as part of the external

	<p>decoration of the Guildhall. Members were informed a contingency plan was set up for extra costs when the original costing was agreed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MIN F108/22 – The clerk confirmed that all items had been purchased for National Events with exception of floral arrangements, which would be purchased as required.
F07/23	<p><u>JAMBO COMMUNITY CAFÉ</u> RESOLVED (TO RECOMMEND): Cllr Wade declared a personal interest in the café as he is a friend to the owner of the building. Cllr Todd queried the grant applicant which shows an irregularity in the funding requested and whether the youth club is to be inclusive for all rather than a particular ethnic group. Cllr Henderson expressed that within the community they are very active, and believed it is nice to see a new application that brings the community together, query raised whether they have sought relevant permissions to convert the garage into a youth club. Cllr Morrison suggested to members to defer this application until the next committee meeting following initial enquiries. Clerk to follow up with applicant in clarifying relevant queries of the application.</p>
F08/23	<p><u>ESTATES SUPERVISOR REPORT</u> Members acknowledged the latest report from Estate Supervisor, Andy Wells, which reported on recent and current projects/issues concerning the Council's estate, including drain repairs at the Hill School Site, the ongoing problem with graffiti removal at the skate park, vandalism at the putting green, decoration and maintenance at the Guildhall and noticeboards and some ceremonial activities he has been active in. Cllr Todd thanked HTC staff for their roles in ceremonial duties for the recent events held. Cllr Wade queried why the putting green is regularly closed which Cllr. Pam Morrison answered that there are opening dates throughout the summer which are agreed. Cllr Calver informed members that whilst generally the amenity runs at a loss, this is a balancing act between the customers through the door and the wages of the hired staff.</p>
F09/23	<p><u>GUILDHALL HIRE CHARGES</u> Members considered hire charges for the Guildhall. RESOLVED: To retain current prices for 2023.</p>
F10/23	<p><u>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS</u> Members acknowledged a report from Cllr Smith following a review of the accounts for the periods Jan-Mar on 14th June. No irregularities found and reported that everything appeared to be in excellent order.</p>
F11/23	<p><u>PORTRAIT OF THE KING</u> Members considered the acquisition of a portrait of the newly crowned King. This, to be hung in the Council chamber, replacing the portrait of the late Queen HM Elizabeth II with the intention of moving this to the adjacent wall of the Chamber. This based on the consideration that the Late Queen signed the portrait upon her visit to the chamber in 2004 and should therefore stay in the room. Cllr Calver informed members that the framed photograph of the King is worth hanging in the same place as the Late Queen, to be framed in keeping with the room. The clerk confirmed that new funding has been announced to enable public authorities to obtain a free official portrait and the scheme will be opened later this year. Members queried the size and agreed to enquire to obtain the free print with the potential to pay to enlarge the photo later.</p>

	<p>RESOLVED: To explore the size of the print through the scheme and the potential costing to buy an enlarged copy. Clerk to make enquiries and report back to next meeting.</p>
F12/23	<p><u>PHOTOCOPIER</u> Members considered the acquisition of a new photocopier on a lease basis following the end of the current contract period (September 2023). RESOLVED: To proceed with a new lease from September 2023 with quotations to be considered under confidential business.</p>
F13/23	<p><u>DRAIN REPAIR AT THE HILL SCHOOL SITE</u> Ref MIN 17/23 - Members considered works required to rectify broken underground drain at the Hill School Site. RESOLVED: To proceed with necessary repairs and consider options and quotes under confidential business.</p>
F14/23	<p><u>CRAZY GOLF REFURBISHMENT</u> The Estate Supervisor briefed members on the current condition of the council-owned crazy golf where the equipment is tired and in need of updating. The options for addressing this include buying brand new equipment, recarpeting the existing apparatus or continue for one further season and address next year. Cllr Todd asked if the carpet could be fitted on top of the existing carpet which has been enquired by Estate Supervisor, but this is not viable. Cllr Chable considered that whilst the Putting Green already runs at a loss financially, what is the worth in spending more money on the site. Cllr Calver made expressions to the future of the Putting Green and the need to have further conversations as a full council on this in good time for the next season. Cllr Calver also advised members that under the virements agenda item, there is funding to top up the EMR for this amenity. RESOLVED: To keep the current crazy golf equipment as it is currently and address the future of the asset at a future date.</p>
F15/23	<p><u>CHRISTMAS LIGHTS REPAIRS</u> Members considered options for the council-owned festive displays following notification that 9 of the 19 displays required repairs and new parts. The clerk confirmed that the displays were now 9 years old and whilst repairs were possible, this came with no guarantees that other parts wouldn't begin to fail. Replacements are possible, either with new or refurbished displays but unlikely the same styles would still be available resulting in a mixture of styles if only the 9 were to be replaced. RESOLVED: To arrange a working party consisting of Cllrs Chable, Henderson, Morrison, and Wade to discuss this concept further and report back to members at an extraordinary meeting of the committee.</p>
F16/23	<p><u>VIREMENTS</u> Members considered the following in-year virements: Debit: • £24326 from the General Reserve. Credit: • Elections EMR with £5k; Building Maintenance EMR with £10k; Hill School Maintenance EMR with £3426 to bring up to £35k and Christmas Lights EMR with £3900. Create: • Crazy Golf Refurbishment EMR and credit with £2k. RESOLVED: To proceed with the virements.</p>

F17/23	<p><u>CCTV AT THE SKATE PARK</u></p> <p>Cllr Henderson asked members to consider and investigate the possibility of providing CCTV coverage at the council-run skate park following regular antisocial behaviour and graffiti. Cllr Henderson stated this CCTV could protect those using the skatepark as well as protecting the Town Council owned equipment. Current CCTV at the Swimming Pool does not cover the area of the skatepark, and further enquiries could be made to link into the current lamppost lighting there and connect to the swimming pool software which could offer a cheaper costing. Cllr Chable asked if the current CCTV is monitored or recorded which Cllr Henderson stated it is recorded. Andy Wells reported of a recent theft of the Skatepark sign, there was CCTV that caught this act but not a wide enough view to identify the perpetrator. Cllr Todd queried if CCTV was installed, could people be easily identified and if there was a way of convicting any perpetrators or is this to act as a deterrent. Andy Wells referred to recent Hill School Site break in that the CCTV recording was provided to the police for them to act upon.</p> <p>RESOLVED: Clerk to approach TDC regarding Dovercourt Bay's CCTV system, and options to combine services. Clerk to report back at next meeting.</p>
F18/23	<p><u>COUNCILLOR TRAINING</u></p> <p>Members discussed training needs for councillors and setting a policy to ensure essential training is periodically provided. Cllr Calver informed members that at the beginning of each new council, HTC might seek to repeat standard training to all members and be new training for new members (in addition to an induction) and refresher training for continuing members. Cllr Henderson asked for them to be referred to as development sessions rather than training sessions. Cllr Richardson reminded members of the Code of Conduct training at TDC that members are invited to attend in the upcoming weeks.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To set up development sessions for council members as a way of establishing the development policy.</p>
F19/23	<p><u>MATTERS RECEIVED IN THE POST OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></p> <p>Members noted receipt of the following correspondence:</p> <p>Letters of thanks/acknowledgement for grants from Harwich International Shanty Festival, Harwich & District Social Stroke Group and Harwich & Dovercourt Partnership.</p> <p>Evaluations form from Harwich Quay New Years Eve Fireworks; Harwich & District Indoor Bowls Club.</p>
F20/23	<p><u>MATTERS TO BE REPORTED</u></p> <p>Members noted the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A £1 per hour increase in weekly cleaning of the Guildhall. • An Update on Local Government Pay Claim 2023/24, which confirmed that employers and unions were yet to reach an agreement and unions would be balloting their members for industrial action.
F21/23	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be held on Tuesday 19th September 2023 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich, at 7.00pm or at the rise of the Planning Committee meeting, whichever is later.</p>
F22/23	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS</u></p> <p>Pursuant to Sub-Section 2 of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to</p>

	<p>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">• Boundary wall repairs• Photocopier• Drain Repair at the Hill School Site
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The chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 8.25pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATE