

MINUTES
of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
 held at
The Guildhall, Church Street
 on
Thursday 21st March 2024 at 7.00pm

Present:	Councillors Calver, Chable, Fay, Richardson, Saunders and Todd
In the Chair:	Councillor Morrison
Clerk:	Ms Lucy Ballard
Also present:	0 members of the public, 0 members of the press and Estate Supervisor, Andy Wells

Public questions: None

F81/23	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> Cllrs Fowler and Wade
F82/23	<u>DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS</u> None
F83/23	<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 Tuesday 12 th December 2023 (previously circulated) be approved by the committee and signed by the chairman as a true record.
F84/23	<u>MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F55/23 – It was confirmed an order had been placed for the free A3 sized Portrait of the King. Members discussed whether to display the A3 copy or resize to roughly 500mm x 600mm at a cost of £25 and purchase a new frame at a cost of £339.98 with recommended art glass or non-reflective glass at £276.76. Cllr Calver explained there was a gap in the panelling which would have to be addressed that if the council didn't resize the portrait. It was RESOLVED: To proceed with resizing the print and purchasing a new frame with art glass at a cost of £364.98. • F55/23 – It was confirmed that investigations into installing CCTV at the skatepark were ongoing and currently with TDC for discussion. The quotation validity has been extended until June. • F65/23 – It was confirmed the recruitment process was underway for Seasonal Leisure Attendants and may require an extraordinary meeting to ratify the appointments following interviews, which were expected early April. The clerk briefed members on the progress of recruitment. • F68/23 – It was reported that one office PC will be replaced at a cost of £575.46 to include a 3-year warranty and will be repurposed as a PC for the

	<p>Archivists office. Installation and configuration are expected to cost £44. Members RESOLVED: to replace the Archivists' printer at an equivalent specification at a cost of £146.33 to be expended from the ICT EMR.</p> <p>• F69/23 – An update was provided on the investigation into acquiring Consort's Regalia. Cllr Morrison explained the actions which had been taken so far to investigate styles and costs and gauged the feeling of the committee. Members agreed it needed to reflect the dignity and felt that the piece should not exceed £2000. Investigations will continue and will be discussed at a future meeting.</p>
F85/23	<p><u>MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES</u> None</p>
F86/23	<p><u>THE HARWICH FESTIVAL</u> Members discussed the level of previous grants and acknowledged the request was greater than 10% of the annual grant budget. Members felt it would be appropriate to fund the free concerts and public art projects. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: To award a £3500 grant.</p>
F87/23	<p><u>ESTATES SUPERVISOR REPORT</u> Members acknowledged the latest report from Estate Supervisor, Andy Wells, which detailed recent and current projects/issues concerning the Council's estate, including the ongoing issue with graffiti at the skatepark, repairs and site preparation at the Putting Green, and various works carried out at the Guildhall, which included electrical works following a periodic inspection, smoke alarm servicing and the installation of a curtain in the Robing room to provide added protection to the robes.</p> <p>Cllr Morrison referred to the Holocaust Memorial Day event and how well it went. She offered her appreciation to the office team for their work in helping to organise the event.</p>
F88/23	<p><u>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE ACCOUNTS</u> Members acknowledged a report from Cllr Smith following a review of the accounts for the periods Oct-Dec on 26th February. No irregularities were found, and everything appeared to be in excellent order.</p>
F89/23	<p><u>LEISURE SEASON 2024</u> Members considered the Pricing for the 2024 season. Members acknowledged there had been no increase since 2018 and the need to keep prices stable following Covid. A small increase was suggested.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To set the following prices: Putting Green and Crazy Golf £3 adult; £2 child (up to 16 yrs); Combined ticket £5 adult; £3 child; Pétanque to remain at £3 per person per hour.</p>
F90/23	<p><u>HILL SCHOOL SITE – BUILDING 3 WORKS</u> Members considered a request from the Harwich Amateur Boxing Club in relation to required works to the building. Members' attention was drawn to the lease. The Estate Supervisor confirmed that some windows had already been replaced by both the tenant as well as other tenants on the site. The clerk suggested that one option could be to encourage the club to submit a grant application. Cllrs agreed a decision should be made as to where the responsibility lies and the clerk confirmed that it would be wise to seek further clarification on the terms of the lease, which could be done via the council's usual advisory channels.</p>

	RESOLVED: to make further enquiries on the terms of the lease and report back to Committee for a decision.
F91/23	<u>FINANCIAL REGULATIONS</u> Members reviewed the Financial Regulations. The clerk relayed that changes were expected but she'd not yet been advised of them and therefore, it was RESOLVED: To adopt for 2024/25.
F92/23	<u>FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT AND SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL</u> • Members reviewed the Financial Risk Assessment conducted by the RFO and the measures put in place to mitigate any risk. The clerk drew members' attention to any risks that required addressing. RESOLVED: To accept the Financial Risk Assessment and confirmed that measures taken to mitigate risk were adequate. • Members further considered the current System of Internal Control (the measures in place to safeguard the Council's finances) and reviewed its effectiveness. RESOLVED: To accept the System of Internal control and agreed that the systems in place for the prevention and detection of fraud were effective.
F93/23	<u>LONE WORKER RISK ASSESSMENT AND POLICY</u> • Members reviewed the Lone Worker risk assessments for Harwich Town Council employees and the measures put in place to mitigate any risk. RESOLVED: To accept the Lone Worker Risk Assessment and confirmed that measures taken to mitigate risk were adequate. • Members also reviewed the Lone Worker Policy, which had been updated. RESOLVED: To adopt the policy with immediate effect and review in 3 years or as necessary.
F94/23	<u>COUNCIL INSURANCE</u> Members noted receipt of the premiums for 2024/25, which was year 2 of a 3-year long-term agreement and considered whether to proceed with Debt Recovery and Contract Dispute cover included or excluded, since this now came at an additional cost. The clerk confirmed that without detriment to the cover, some savings had been made this year, which would largely offset the additional cost. RESOLVED: To proceed with the policy to include Debt Recovery and Contract Dispute cover at a cost of £5323 to be expended from the 2024/25 insurance budget.
F95/23	<u>D-DAY 80 OFFICIAL FLAG</u> Members considered purchasing a D-Day 80 Flag of Peace to fly during the 2024 commemorations. RESOLVED: To purchase an official flag size 5ft x 3ft at a cost of £24 to be expended from the FGP General Fund.
F96/23	<u>AUDIT OF THE GUILDHALL CONTENTS</u> Following a brief walk around of the building prior to the commencement of the meeting, members considered the items on display within the Guildhall in respect of it being a visitor attraction. It was suggested that as part of the project, the Chiffonier, bureau and accompanying chair in the Gaol, and two Alderman's chairs in the Parlour are disposed of. Cllr Calver proposed the removal of certain items presently exhibited on the walls (but to be retained) to be replaced by digital reproductions of other items presently in the archives, and to recommend the disposal of other items, as detailed, to the Full Council as required in accordance with Financial

	<p>Regulations, giving authority to officers to approach the Harwich Museum in terms of rehoming.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To proceed with the upgrade of wall displays and to recommend the disposal of identified items to Full Council.</p>
F97/23	<p><u>BOOK RESTS</u></p> <p>Members considered a request by the Archivists to acquire more bookrests.</p> <p>RESOLVED: To purchase 3x standard size Norfolk Book Sofas at a cost of £139.50 to be expended from the FGP General Fund.</p>
F98/23	<p><u>MATTERS RECEIVED IN THE POST OR RAISED BY MEMBERS</u></p> <p>Members noted receipt of the following correspondence:</p> <p>Grant acknowledgements received from: Spring Meadow Primary School.</p> <p>Evaluation form following grant received from: Harwich & District Social Stroke Club, Harwich International Shanty Festival and the Harwich Museum.</p>
F99/23	<p><u>MATTERS TO BE REPORTED</u></p> <p>Members noted the following matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 137 expenditure limit for 2024/25 is set at £10.81 per elector. • Expenditure of £82, authorised under delegated authority, for Asbestos Awareness, Working at Heights, and Ladder safety training courses for the Estate Supervisor, to be expended from the Training budget. • Expenditure of £440, authorised under delegated authority, on remedial repairs to the Guildhall extension roofing, following leaks, to be expended from the Building Maintenance EMR. • Expenditure of £29.98, authorised under delegated authority, for the purchase of a curtain and rail for the Robing Room, to be expended from the Premises budget. • Expenditure of £195, authorised under delegated authority, for employee Belbin reports, to be expended from the Training budget. • Expenditure of £140, authorised under delegated authority, for repairs to external lighting on Building 1 at the Hill School site, to be expended from the Repairs & Maintenance budget.
F100/23	<p><u>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</u></p> <p>The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be held on a date to be confirmed in 2024 at The Guildhall, Church Street, Harwich, at 7.00pm.</p>
F101/23	<p><u>EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS</u></p> <p>Pursuant to Sub-Section 2 of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to 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"> • Salary Reviews • Annual Leave

The chairman closed the public part of the meeting at 9.11pm.

CHAIRMAN

DATE