

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held at the Pavilion, Soham, on Monday 24 February 2020.

- Present: Cllrs C Warner, D Dyer and L Johnston
- FP10/20 PUBLIC COMMENT TIME
There were no representations made by members of the public in respect of matters under discussion or those arising from previous minutes.
- FP11/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
There were no declarations of interest made by members to items on the agenda or more generally matters under discussion.
- FP12/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Apologies were received from Cllrs Pallett and D Woricker and duly authorised by those members present,
- FP13/20 FINANCIAL MATTERS & ACCOUNTS –FEBRUARY 2020
NOTED income & RESOLVED to recommend to Council at its March 2020 meeting ratification of debits & payments made and/or issued by the four authorising signatories to current account, consistent and compliant with the town council's Financial Regulations in February 2020¹.
NOTED financial year end fast approaching and with the likely significant deficit (over spend) to budget (precept for financial year) there will need some readjustment (virement) from ring fenced reserved/allocated funds currently held by Soham Town Council.
NOTED Chairman's suggestion of virement of £20 000 from the ring fenced reserves designated under "s106/general funds" currently standing £30197.28 of which £12104.00 is known to have been derived from s106 contribution for upkeep of bus shelters (payment received from CCC Highways wrt Celandine development Bovis Homes).
APPROVED any virements to general funds be undertaken at start of new financial year.
- FP14/20 GOVERNANCE-PROCESS AND PROCEDURES INCLUDING HR MATTERS (FP 89/19, FP 05/20)
NOTED email from Colyer Reproprint (Woking) concerning warranty on the Hewlett Packard DesignJet T510 landscape printer (installed by Corporate Plan Services Ltd-no longer trading- see recent article <https://www.edp24.co.uk/business/charity-missing-kind-mis-sold-printer-contracts-1-6341355>) expires 10th March 2020.
APPROVED not enter into any other agreement regarding maintenance toner etc for either printers.
NOTED Clerk to confirm that ownership of Ricoh printer vests with lessors (BNP Paribas) when lease expires.
NOTED Clerk has relisted 'request for expression of interest CIL' at upcoming March 2020 meeting to be considered in conjunction with

¹ Acknowledged that due to the change in timings of this Standing Committee it can no longer review monthly accounts prior to their presentation to full council

those strategic infrastructure and amenity improvements in Local Plan 2015 and also the town councils own approved list of works.

NOTED Clerk to meet with Soham's ecumenical/other religious leaders 4th March 2020 to progress those faith-based activities in event of passing of Senior Royal figure (information exempt due to the sensitive and confidential nature of the document related to named individuals).

NOTED should CAPALC (Local County Association) vote to incorporate (EGM 4th March 202) to company limited by guarantee of membership by £1 share Soham Town Council will no longer be member effective 31st March 2020 and interim alternative arrangements for legal advice for employer will need to be considered. NOTED that Cllr Lane delegated to the role of Carbon Champion/climate emergency has liaised with the Lord of the Manor who is amenable to further tree planting on the common and that whilst there are central government budgets currently available for this initiative there is no allocated Soham Town Council budget for such works in next financial year.

- NOTED Cllr Warner and Johnston to approach CCC Land team with a request to possibly adopt the derelict land beyond where the Christmas trees are currently planted (off the roundabout BP corner) to allow for further tree planting activities (orchard).

NOTED template with necessary GDPR requirements for ASB reporting via town council office still be prepared by Clerk.

NOTED kind offer from Soham resident who works with another local authority in supporting communities in growth areas plans and preparing for that change in terms of health, wellbeing and community integration (matter signposted to Cllr A Woricker, delegated with youth & social matters)

NOTED implementation of Good Work Plan regulations effective April 6th 2020 (no additional works required to be currently compliant)

NOTED any further issues will be reported as matter(s) arising and considered by full council at the up March 2020 meeting.

FP15/20 COMMUNITY AMENITIES REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION
(FP 90/19, FP 06/20)

NOTED no update in regards to repair or removal of street lights² (Soham Town Council stock) or town signs³ due to Cllr D Woricker's absence both of which need urgent progression/completion.

ACKNOWLEDGED the UNDERSTANDING that with exception of post installation costs (see footnote 2 below) Soham Town Council is not expecting any costs associated with the steel brackets to make the signs fit for purpose which remain the responsibility of the sign Supplier. NOTED Cllr Warner still to provide quote for replacement of 5x double hanging basket brackets to be reimbursed by Balfour Beatty who removed them in error during PFI changeover works to street light efficiency and column removal works between Balfour Beatty and CCC (2015/16) .

² Still to transfer electricity supply from CCC (service level agreement expired last financial year)

³ Post meeting note Cllr Johnston having spoken with benefactor (costs related one of the two installation costs) will be undertaken Monday 2nd March 2020 (weather permitting)

NOTED due to support from Office required by Planning Committee this month (two major PA's for proposed large scale housing development-see FP08/20) work on lease preparation (Scout and Girl Guide Community building) and other programmes of works delayed/interrupted (see FP 17/20 below).

NOTED purchase and install of brass plaque on refurbished bench undertaken by Soham 'Men Shed' at Garden of Rest who would appreciate some local press attention.

NOTED correspondence from builders/Fire Station to replace boundary fence (along access easement to Pavilion from Fountain Lane) who will proceed with work after flowering of the spring bulbs planted along this border.

NOTED Ambulance station and its potential purchase is listed as an agenda item (exclusion of public and press) on upcoming full council meeting⁴

NOTED Lloyds Bank Mobile banking Branch has agreed to a 3 year site arrangement (same days, times, terms and conditions as current) with a 10% applicable discount which becomes payable should they terminate contract early.

NOTED full council's decision to ratify its recommendation not to undertake verge cutting for CCC owned lands in Soham this growing season and CCC Network Management team have indicated Soham will be put on the Village Maintenance Cutting Programme of works for 3 cuts per year only with additional cuts only being undertaken for reported safety issues⁵.

- NOTED Clerk has undertaken pre-emptive due diligence and obtained 4 (require 3 under best endeavours) quotes under Financial Regulations should matters material change regarding verge cutting⁶.

NOTED full council's decisions regarding land purchase(s) at its previous meeting to be concentrated in South area of town where current town council amenities are located but agreed that Cllr Johnston as Asset Manager should in addition look towards parcels towards North end of town which provide good road links and connectivity and to report finding/recommendations to either Finance & Policy or full council for its review in due course.

NOTED QC's initial report regarding status of The Shade Common has been received but a number of questions remain to be investigated prior to matter being listed for review by full council.

NOTED current risk relating to gas cooker which under safety regulations requires gas interlock system and ventilation hood (not same as extractor hood) has as consequence has had to be disconnected.

⁴ Page 282 current Local Plan 2015 The public car park is one of the two main car parks which serve the town centre. It also contains some public toilets and a disused ambulance station. The car park is currently small, and the whole area is unattractive and could benefit from being re-developed in the future as funds become available. Any re-development should look at the potential to reconfigure and increase the number of car parking spaces available, whilst retaining as much of the open space and green areas as possible. Access to the car park should be made clearer, and more user friendly. The frontage of the site should be opened up and landscaped, with views into the park from Fountain Lane. To facilitate this the ambulance station will need to be demolished, and opportunities explored to refurbish or re-locate the public toilets within the site.

⁵ Matters need to be reported by residents via CCC report highway issues

⁶ Will be subject to CCC providing usual allowance.

- NOTED gas cooker use is infrequent but event organised at end of month for hall hire (private function requiring hot food catering)
- APPROVED to ask whether event organisers can change from hot to cold buffet but where not to approve gas safety works by CPS of £974.56 (net) and suitable signage to inform users that when in use the windows in kitchen must remain open (for through room ventilation)
- NOTED 3 quotes obtained in regards to solving current gas cooker issues- all prices are ex vat: (£5291.68 compliance full commercial catering standard;£1815.00, £1045.87, £974.56 gas interlock only, £1245.00 conversion to electric cooker + install⁷ costs of circa £100.00)

NOTED request for outside 3 phase socket to assist in events requiring public address (PA) systems

- APPROVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL not to install such a amenity but to review in new financial year

NOTED current issue regarding acoustic partition wall (wear and tear)

- NOTED previously approval under FP 118/18 not to engage London Wall Installation Ltd (Suppliers and installers in Pavilion refurbishment) on a 3 year annual maintenance programme but to repair partition as and when needed and accordingly:
- APPROVED £732.00 (ex vat) for service and repair.

NOTED WITH VOTE OF THANKS to Cllr Warner who has offered to pay from his annual allowance of £620 (cheque issued) £30 to enable wheels to be provided on the 'push train' used by children in the library.

NOTED carnival event organiser have indicated they will not be having a dog show this year as as not to breach current byelaws wrt to dogs on recreation ground and consequently not to incur penalty payment of £500 (per event).

- NOTED letter from Fordham Parish Council requesting support to a District-wide PSPO for dogs to be on leads in public will be considered under 'correspondence' at the full council's March 2020 meeting

NOTED any further issues will be reported as matter(s) arising and considered by full council at March 2020 meeting.

FP16/20

CEMETERY & ALLOTMENT ISSUES REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION (FP 91/19, FP 07/20)

NOTED those continued works and related costs in relation to structural integrity reinstatement works to South Chapel

NOTED & APPROVED TO RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL WITH A VOTE OF THANKS those kind offers from Soham Village College under supervision of Cllr Johnston for art works & other suitable cosmetic internal decorations/installations post structural repair works.

NOTED finally and after escalation to complaint an on-site meeting with Sedgwick (loss adjusters), Gawn Associates (Architects), Collaboration 23 (Flintworks) Chairman and Chairman of Cemetery & Allotment will take place on Tuesday 25th February 2020⁸

⁷ Noted that the electricians in the old part of the building would support this amenity however the electrical compliance in general to the back extension (which is subject to consideration by the town council for demolition and replacement with a new community hall plans in process) is no longer up to standards and as consequence this facility is fast becoming if not already unfit/not suitable for public use.

⁸ where it was agreed:

NOTED unrelated but significant damage to antique wall (northern border) caused by Yew tree damage as consequence of storm Dennis which has been reported to Insurers for repair and reinstatement.

NOTED any further issues will be reported as matter(s) arising and considered by full council at the March 2020 meeting.

FP 17/20 PLANNING REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION (FP 92/19, FP 08/20)

NOTED the significant HR resource needed to support last month's Standing Committee in its responses to large scale housing developments and the Clerks continued concerns regarding resources necessary which she indicates will be escalated to a complaint if matters do not materially improve (HR issue).

NOTED those correspondences from Soham Town Council (approved at its February meeting) in relation to developments at Broad Piece and Eastern Gateway will in addition to ECDC (Planning Authority) portal be uploaded to Facebook for residents information.

NOTED any further issues will be reported under matter(s) arising and considered by full council at the February 2020 meeting.

FP18/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Next scheduled meeting of the Finance & Policy Monday 30th March 2020 commencing 10am).

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- Revision of repair/reinstatement works needed as consequence of subsidence and its effect of racking the roof (Gawn Associates in combination with agreed contractors Collaboration 23)
 - Completion of works to baton and felt stage of roof (costs borne by Soham Town Council) whereby no further roof works can be undertaken until gable and end corners on all sides are repaired and as consequence of the interruption caused by Insuring Parties to agree costs between STC and Zurich regarding
 - Ongoing site costs (scaffolding and heras fencing post 6th March 2020).