

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE
OF TRING TOWN COUNCIL HELD VIRTUALLY ON
MONDAY 9th NOVEMBER 2020 AT 8:18 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: C. Townsend (Chairman)

P. Elley

P. Hearn

H. Piper

R. Ransley

Also present: Mr M. Curry, Town Clerk

L. Housden (Newly appointed Town Clerk)

Mrs. D. Slade (Deputy Town Clerk)

Cllr. Hollinghurst

Cllr. Nutkins

20239. APOLOGIES

All Members present

20240. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Hearn expressed a pecuniary interest in matters relating to the review of property rents for 2020/21 and would leave the meeting at that point.

20241. TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8th JUNE 2020

RESOLVED: To accept the Minutes as presented and for the Chairman to sign them.

20242. MATTERS OF REPORT FROM THE MINUTES

Nothing to report

20243. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

None received

20244. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public present nor email communications from members of the public received.

20245. FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21

A review of the Qtr 2 out turn forecast had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following points were raised:

- Council business had been disrupted by the COVID outbreak with only necessary tasks being continued.
- 1/3 of the Council's income is from property rents and this had been reduced due to a Qtr 1 rent holiday for the Friday Market and the Farmers Market because of the lock down
- Old School Yard income was only slightly less than budgeted
- Expenditure not used can be carried forward to 2021/22 in the general reserve or as an earmarked reserve
- VE Day (£1000) did not happen as no social gathering was permitted ● Staff costs will increase by £11,000 due to handovers to new staff members (new Clerk and Town Warden in post)

- The Warden's van is being delivered on Wednesday 11th November 2020

RESOLVED: To note the review of the Qtr. 2 out turn forecast

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20246. THE BUDGET 2020/21

A draft baseline budget had been circulated prior to the meeting. The following factors had been taken into account in its preparation:

- 1) Possible 2% increase in salaries
- 2) No change in tax base as figures not available until Dec/Jan
- 3) CILCA training for new Clerk
- 4) Accessibility issues on website to be resolved
- 5) Telephone system needs upgrading and possibly changes to the IT system
- 6) The annual provision to cover election costs could be reduced and still cover the cost of the election at the end of the Council's term of office, but if a by-election was required, Tring Town Council would have to pay all costs
- 7) A 2% increase in the precept

The budget was discussed, and the following possible allocations identified:

- 1) Charities in Tring may need additional support due the long term effects of the COVID situation so the grants budget may need to be increased
- 2) The Climate Change agenda should be unchanged and utilised e.g. tree planting scheme, the Bee Friendly Tring initiative
- 3) Funding for improvements to the skate park was required
- 4) The purchase of adult outdoor gym equipment
- 5) A post COVID project e.g. revitalising the High Street, could be implemented working with Tring Together to support local businesses
- 6) CIL monies could be used to assist in meeting costs of infrastructure projects
- 7) The Council reserves could be used if necessary to support community projects to mitigate the impact of COVID

RESOLVED: To recommend the above allocations to Council for possible inclusion in the budget for 2021/22

20247. GRANT APPLICATIONS

None Received

20248. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

A resolution was considered that under section I of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded during the following items of the agenda for this meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business.

RESOLVED: To exclude members of the press and public.

Councillor Hearn left the meeting before the next item was heard

20249. REVIEW OF COUNCIL PROPERTY RENTS

In light of the second lock down in England, a review of the rents had been circulated prior to the meeting to be considered in the context of item 20245 the Financial Outturn Forecast.

RESOLVED: To recommend a quarter rent holiday for the Friday Market and Sands

Trading to support local retail business in the High Street.

The meeting ended at 9:27p.m. Chairman