

Sevenoaks Town Council

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Held on 6th June 2022 in the Council Chamber, Town Council Offices, TN13 3QG

Meeting commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.30 pm

Present:

Cllr Tony Clayton, Chairman	Present	Cllr Victoria Granville-Baxter	Present
Cllr Keith Bonin, Vice-Chairman	Apologies	Cllr Roderick Hogarth	Present
Cllr Libby Ancrum	Present	Cllr Mrs Rachel Parry, Mayor (ex-officio)	Present
Cllr Sue Camp	Apologies	Cllr Richard Parry	Present
Cllr Dr Merilyn Canet	Present	Cllr Simon Raikes	Present
Cllr Andrew Eyre	Present		

Substitute		For
Cllr Nick Busvine	Present	Cllr Keith Bonin
Cllr Claire Shea	Present	Cllr Sue Camp

In attendance: Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer and Senior Committee Clerk.

Representations received from Members of the Public:

David Finch and Jim Knight of Sevenoaks Climate Action Network (SCAN) attended and raised the following questions:

1. *Does the Town Council intend to publish a costed action plan based on the main priorities stemming from the proposals contained within Green Community Investment Plan? If so, when would the priority action plan be made public? (It should be noted that SCAN appreciates that this might be a dynamic and evolving action plan in order to facilitate flexibility and prioritisation).*
2. *How does the Town Council intend to involve local groups such as SCAN in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of a "Carbon Neutral Action Plan"? What form would this take?*
3. *Would the Town Council consider involving SCAN and other local groups in helping gain support from Sevenoaks District Council and Kent County Council in achieving carbon reduction related goals?*

The Chairman advised that:

- The Sevenoaks Town Council (STC) Green Community Investment Plan monthly report included a cost column. The majority of initiatives were at research stage, and as costs were identified they would be included in the monthly document which would be available to the public
- The Plan's aim was to organisationally make STC's facilities and activities as environmentally friendly as possible and to communicate to the public about practical initiatives or measures that they could participate in to be as environmentally friendly as possible
- The Town Council's initiatives had been produced primarily from extensive consultation within the creation of the Neighbourhood Development Plan which remained a priority, were available for the public and local groups to be aware of, and collaboration was welcomed. The Chairman requested that SCAN review the Plan, consider this evening's discussion, and let STC know how they could contribute. He drew attention to the current

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Climate Change Baseline Survey which was circulated to Resident Associations and local groups and requested help in encouraging people to complete it

- STC had a good record of working with partners, either other local authorities or voluntary groups, to obtain external grants and would continue to do this where appropriate.

124. Apologies for Absence

As noted above.

125. Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

126. Declaration of Interest

Cllr Raikes declared a pecuniary interest in respect of street lighting matters included in Agenda Item 9, Current Matters, insofar as they related to Woodside Road.

127. Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 11th April 2022

It was noted that Minute No 23 would be amended to read “funding to be met from the 2021/2022 underspend on annual budget”

RESOLVED: Subject to the above amendment, to receive and sign the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 11th April 2022 as a true record.

128. Finance Reports

128.1 Management Accounts Year Ended 31st March 2022

The Committee received and noted, for the year ended 31st March 2022, the Responsible Finance Officer’s Report with Variance Analysis, Income and Expenditure, Working Capital Summary, Statement of Fund Balances and Capital Expenditure and funds, together with the:

- Suppliers Accounts for year ended 31st March 2022, balance £915.75
- List of Payments for year ended 31st March 2022, total £2,264,445.38
- Payroll Accounts for year ended 31st March 2021, balance £87,517.78
- Petty Cash Accounts for year ended 31st March 2021, balance £95,790.62

It was noted that the year-end position at the end of March 2022 gave a revenue surplus of £22,326. This was favourable to budget full year by £2,326 and in line with the Town Council’s aim to deliver a surplus of £20,000 to increase its general reserves.

Variances to budget were noted, including the proposed write-off of an irrecoverable debt.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the write-off of an irrecoverable debt of £242 relating to a one month hire of an office pod in the Business Hub be approved; and

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- 2) the Management Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2022 be received and accepted.

128.2 Review of Internal Controls

The Committee received and accepted:

- Internal Audit Report for Visit 2
- Internal Audit Report for Visit 3
- Internal Audit Report for End of Year, Visit 4
- Statement on the System of Internal Control

The issue identified by the Auditors regarding the use of one of the Onecard purchase cards was noted, together with the Responsible Finance Officer's proposal to address the operational issue arising therefrom by applying for a further card.

RESOLVED that:

- 1) the Internal Audit Reports for Visits 2, 3 and 4 be received and accepted:
- 2) the application by the Responsible Finance Officer for a further card for the Onecard account, for operational reasons, be authorised; and
- 3) the Statement on the System of Internal Control be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee and Responsible Finance Officer.

128.3 Annual Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31st March 2022

The Committee received and considered the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, comprising: Annual Internal Audit Report 2021/22; Annual Governance Statement 2021/22; Accounting Statements 2021/22; and supporting papers for submission to External Auditors. It was noted that once the Annual Governance and Accountability Return documents had been approved and signed by the Town Council, they would be passed to the External Auditor for review and sign off.

The Committee reviewed and confirmed the Annual Governance Statement as follows:

1.	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	Agreed
2.	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	Agreed
3.	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	Agreed

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4.	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	Agreed
5.	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	Agreed
6.	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	Agreed
7.	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Agreed
8.	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	Agreed

RESOLVED: That the Annual Governance Statement 2021/22 be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee and Town Clerk

128.4 Annual Return for the Year Ended 31st March 2022

The Committee reviewed and confirmed the Accounting Statements 2021/22 and the supporting papers to be submitted to the External Auditors.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Accounting Statements 2021/22, signed by the Responsible Finance Officer, be approved and signed by the Chairman of the Committee;
- 2) That the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2021/22, including the Annual Governance Statement, Statement of Accounts to 31st March 2022, and supporting papers for submission to the External Auditors, be **RECOMMENDED** to full Council for adoption; and
- 3) That the approved accounts be made available for public inspection for 30 working days, from 9th June to 20th July 2022

129 Review of Financial Matters in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders

The Committee received and noted financial matters in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, adopted at the Annual Council Meeting on 9th May 2022 (*Minute 78, 09.05.22 refers*).

It was agreed that the reference to SMS (texting) be amended to include all app based or social media messaging systems.

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RESOLVED:

- 1) that the following be received and noted:
 - Inventory and Valuation of Building Assets (*F&GP, Minute 20.3, 11.04.22 refers*)
 - Insurance Cover with Zurich Municipal for 2022/2023 (*F&GP, Minute 20.2, 11.04.22 refers*)
- 2) that the following be received and re-adopted:
 - Complaints Procedure
 - NALC Guidance LTN37 as the basis of the Town Council's Freedom of Information Procedure; and the Freedom of Information Publication Schedule
- 3) that subject to the amendment above, the Social Media and Electronic Communications Policy be received and re-adopted

130 Public Realm Project – Wayfinding

The Committee received and noted details of the income and expenditure of the Public Realm Project to date and the ambition to introduce a Wayfinding Scheme for the Town. Details of the design development stage of the Wayfinding Scheme were considered. It was noted that accessibility for people with disabilities would be taken into account, and consideration given to signposting sports facilities and schools.

RESOLVED: That £7,800 of the Public Realm budget be used for the Design Development of the Wayfinding project.

131 Green Community Investment Plan

The Committee noted progress on the implementation of the Green Community Investment Plan, including a monthly review of the Action Plan to April 2022. A proposal to audit all the Town Council's properties was considered.

The following matters were noted in particular:

- the Joint Transportation Board had suggested that the Town Council lead on investigating the availability of On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) for EV charging on streets without private driveways
- EV bike charging would be considered at the next meeting of the Open Spaces & Leisure Committee
- As work progressed on the Plan and more information was available about costs, initiatives would need to be reviewed to ensure cost versus benefit
- consideration to be given to promoting the Greening Sevenoaks Survey in the Sevenoaks Chronicle
- consideration to be given to the best way to work with local groups to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience

RESOLVED: That Carbon Footprint Ltd be appointed to carry out a Carbon Footprint Appraisal of the Town Council's buildings, at a cost of £2,150.

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132 Current Matters

The update on Current Matters was received and noted.

133. Press Releases

Press Release to be issued on the Town Council's work with local groups to advance its green agenda.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting.

Signed

Dated

Chairman