

Sevenoaks Town Council

Notes on Report to Finance & General Purposes Committee
8th June 2020

Cllr Keith Bonin		Cllr Roderick Hogarth
Cllr Nicholas Busvine (Ex-officio)		Cllr Morris Brown
Cllr Dr Merilyn Canet		Cllr Robert Piper
Cllr Sue Camp (Apologies)		Cllr Simon Raikes (Chairman)
Cllr Tony Clayton (Vice-Chairman)		Cllr Edward Waite
Cllr Andrew Eyre (Apologies)		

Substitute	For
Cllr Lise Michaelides	Cllr Sue Camp
Cllr Richard Parry	Cllr Andrew Eyre

The Councillors listed above were consulted electronically, facilitated by the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive, Responsible Financial Officer and Senior Committee Clerk.

There were no representations received from Members of the Public.

42. Chairman and Vice-Chairman

Noted that, following the decision by Council to roll over current governance arrangements until May 2021, the following appointments made on 13th May 2019 remained in place:

- a) Chairman – Cllr Simon Raikes
- b) Vice-Chairman – Cllr Tony Clayton

[Minute 64, 13.05.2019 refers]

43. Declaration of Interests: None**44. Notes of Report to the Finance & General Purposes Committee on 27th April 2020**

The Notes of the Report to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 27th April 2020 were received and agreed.

45. Finance Reports**45.1 Management Accounts March 2020 (Year End)**

Committee members received and noted, for the period 1st to 31st March 2020, the Finance Officer's Report with Variance Analysis, Working Capital Summary and Statement of Fund Balances, together with the:

- Suppliers Accounts, balance as at 31st March 2020 - £436,370.71
- Payroll Account, balance as at 31st March 2020 - £77,233.44
- Petty Cash Account, balance as at 31st March 2020 - £1,034.39

It was noted that the year-end net surplus was £12,572.

It was suggested that revenue reserves could be increased by moving some items out of capital reserves; the Responsible Financial Officer to consider adjustment options. It was noted that the level of revenue reserves required going forward would be considered ahead of the budget setting process.

The Draft Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2020 was received and noted.

45.2 Management Accounts April 2020

Committee members received and noted, for the period 1st to 30th April 2020, the Finance Officer's Report with Variance Analysis, Working Capital Summary and Statement of Fund Balances, together with the:

- Suppliers Accounts, balance as at 30th April 2020 - £288,262.10
- Payroll Account, balance as at 30th April 2020 - £86,905.64
- Petty Cash Account, balance as at 30th April 2020 - £1,034.39

It was noted that £11,500 grant income had been received from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

45.3 Coronavirus Impact on Sevenoaks Town Council Finances

The Committee received and noted the report reviewing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on income streams and reserves. The conservative estimate based on April data and planned reopening of the Vine Café on 3rd June was c£70k.

45.4 Hospitality and Gifts Register

Nothing to report.

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

46.1 Noted that, following the decision by Council to roll over current governance arrangements until May 2021, the following matters adopted at Annual Council Meeting on 13th May 2019 in accordance with the Town Council's Standing Orders, remain in place:

- Complaints Procedure
- Freedom of Information Procedure
- Press/Media Policy

[Minute 62 Appendix A, 13.05.2019 refers]

46.2 Noted that the Review of the Inventory - A Review of Land and Assets, including buildings and office equipment, which had been deferred to 2020 would now be completed in 2021.

[Minute 62 Appendix A, 13.05.2019 refers]

47. Internal Audit Process

Noted that the Internal Audit year end visit was being arranged for the end of June, and that the following matters would therefore be considered at the report to this Committee on 3rd August 2020:

- Review of Internal Controls

Internal Audit Report for the year end Visit
Annual Review of Internal Audit
Statement of the System of Internal Control

- Annual Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2020

Annual Governance Statement
Statement of Annual Accounts to 31 March 2020
Supporting papers for submission to the External Auditors

48. CIL Update Report

The Committee noted receipt of £49,847.19 in March 2020 for its portion of the Community Infrastructure Payment (CIL)

RESOLVED: That the funds be allocated to support decisions already made by the Town Council awaiting funds, as set out below.

1	Jubilee Clock	£7,328.17
2	Mess Room Contingency	£10,000.00
3	Cemetery Path Repairs	£25,000.00
4	OSL Capital Items – to be confirmed by Cttee	£7,519.02
	Sub Total	£49,847.19
5	Underspend on CIL – OSL Capital Items to be confirmed by Cttee	£89.50
	Total	£49,936.69

49. Sevenoaks Allotment Holders Association (SAHA) Trading Hut Lease Renewal

RESOLVED: That the Sevenoaks Allotment Holders Association lease for the Trading Centre at Quakers Hall Allotment Site be renewed for three years, at a peppercorn rent, with effect from October 2020.

50. No.8 Bus

The Committee noted that the No.8 Bus service was currently suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that an on-demand taxi service was in operation (DRT).

RESOLVED: That the Town Council’s funding of £3,308.66 per month for the No.8 bus service be suspended until the service is reinstated.

51. Multi Use Games Area at Bat and Ball Centre

Noted that, under delegated powers, the Chairman of the Community Infrastructure Committee and Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, in consultation with the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer, had approved the acceptance of the quotation of £95,941 in respect of the Multi Use Games Area for the Bat and Ball Centre.

52. Grant Applications Update – Community Resilience Fund

Noted that, following the launch of the Sevenoaks Town Council £30,000 Community Resilience Fund on 24th March 2020, grant aid has been awarded, as set out below, under the General Power of Competence (Localism Act 2011 Sections 1-8 refers) and under the statutory delegation powers agreed by Council at its Extra-ordinary meeting held on 23rd March 2020 (Minute 567(iii) refers).

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE FUND 2020 - GRANTS AWARDED				
Applicant	Amount applied for	Grant Awarded	Total Grants awarded	Balance
				£30,000
1. Age UK Sevenoaks & Tonbridge	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000	£28,000
2. PSB Breastfeeding CIC	£1,805	£780	£2,780	£27,220
3. Citizens Advice North & West Kent	£611	£611	£3,391	£26,609
4. The Hygiene Bank	£3,000	£1,500	£4,891	£25,109
5. Care for Our Community (Lockdown Larder)	£1,000	£1,000	£5,891	£24,109

53. Town Team (formerly Sevenoaks Town Partnership) Draft Sevenoaks Town Recovery Plan

The Committee received and noted a report outlining: the open forum held by the Town Team (formerly Town Partnership) to consider proposals for the recovery of Sevenoaks Town Centre; a meeting with Kent County Council (KCC), Sevenoaks District Council and the Town Team; and the proposals put forward by the District Council for consideration.

At a discussion held on 5th June 2020 to consider these proposals, Sevenoaks Town Councillors unanimously welcomed the proposals to put in place a COVID 19 plan

from KCC of temporary measures to install a one-way traffic system within the High Street and London Road, lower the speed limit to 20mph in both roads, create a safer environment for cyclists, and widen the pavements to aid distancing for pedestrians and the proposals from SDC for a Business Pack, additional street cleaning, free car parking up to 23rd June 2020 and the opportunity to develop Buckhurst 1 car park for alternative uses.

Sevenoaks Town Councillors believed that these initiatives by both KCC and SDC would help to make Sevenoaks a safer place during COVID 19 and hoped to work with them to move these initiatives through to a positive conclusion.

54. Press Releases

Press Release to be issued regarding the campaign to save The Stag.

RESOLVED: Under the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the following item by reason of the confidential nature of the business.

55. The Stag Sevenoaks

The Committee considered the possibility of grant aid for The Stag Community Arts Centre in the light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At the request of the Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order 1(s), a recorded vote was taken:

In Favour of the Resolution:	Against the Resolution:
Cllr Bonin Cllr Clayton Cllr Hogarth Cllr Michaelides Cllr Morris Brown Cllr Parry Cllr Piper Cllr Raikes	Cllr Dr Canet Cllr Waite

Cllr Busvine indicated support however was not a voting member of the Committee.

RESOLVED: The Finance and General Purposes Committee agreed in principle, and recommended to Council, that, subject to the provision of further information from the Stag setting out its business plan to address different scenarios due to the impact of COVID 19, and the plan to reach a break even financial balance position:

- 1) Sevenoaks Town Council makes a further grant to The Stag Community Arts Centre during the current financial year of up to £220,000, being drawn down at a maximum of £22,000 per month up to March 2021. It was expected that the monthly sum would be reduced if the impact of COVID-19 circumstances and local funding permit;

- 2) Sevenoaks Town Council continues to support The Stag in raising awareness and generating community support and exploring additional methods to obtain funding e.g. crowdfunding, events and sponsorship;
- 3) Sevenoaks Town Council performs a structured review of the level of funding needed and being provided once a quarter; and
- 4) Sevenoaks Town Council formally requests funding support from Kent County Council and Sevenoaks District Council.

Council Meeting 23rd March 2020 Minute 567 ii)

RESOLVED: To agree emergency measures that if it was not possible to convene a meeting of the Council or Committee in reasonable time or where restrictions are in place, the Town Clerk (and Deputy Town Clerk) shall have delegated authority under s.101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such decision cannot be reasonably deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. This will be carried out where possible by consultation with members by electronic means or telephone. The Town Clerk will further consult with the Mayor for guidance as necessary. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decision made under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations.