

Snodland Town Council – Policy and Finance Minutes

16 April 2024

Committee Members in attendance:	Cllr Miss V Lawrence (C), D Lettington (VC), Mrs Sue Bell, Angus Bennison, Paul Hickmott, Ms D King, Mrs V Barker, Mr S Loader
Non Committee Members in attendance:	Cllr G Miners
Committee Members Absent with apologies:	Cllr W Mallard
Committee Members Absent without apologies:	
Council Staff Present:	Mrs K Sowten (CEO)
Members of the public:	

The Chairman reminded members to raise their hand when they want to raise a point of order.	
1.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> see above
2.	<u>Declaration of Interests</u> None
3.	<u>Minutes - To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 7th March 2024</u> The minutes of the meeting held on the 7 th March 2024 were agreed as a true record.
4.	<u>Questions from the Public</u> <i>Pursuant to Standing Order 3 e & g Members of the public may make representation, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes</i> There were no members of the public present
5.	<u>Audit Trail to be given by a Councillor</u> No audit was carried out for this meeting. The Chairman advised that she was happy to carry out a retrospective audit. The Chairman advised that the current audit cycle had come to an end. A new rota can be put forward once the new committee is appointed.
6.	<u>Year End review</u> A copy of the year end report was presented to committee. (A copy is available on file).The CEO reported on the year end general reserves and advised that the Auditor will be attending in May. The full year end report and financial statements will be submitted to Full Council at the next appropriate meeting.
7.	<u>Financial Review</u>

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	<p>The CEO advised that following the initial acceptance of the quotation for the intruder alarm at the museum, the committee asked to investigate the costs to extend the wifi from the Devonshire Rooms to the museum, to enable the intruder alarm to be upgraded in line with all the other alarm systems to enable remote access.</p> <p>This work will be carried out by the existing security alarm Company that the council have already instructed.</p> <p>The quote to install a Wifi transmission between the Devonshire Rooms and the museum £686.07 plus VAT. Annual Maintenance cost £80.00 plus VAT. The quote to install a new intruder alarm system at the museum £747.37 plus VAT. Annual maintenance £86.00 plus VAT.</p>
1209	<p>RESOLVED to accept the quote to install a Wifi transmission between the Devonshire Rooms and the museum £686.07 plus VAT. Annual Maintenance cost £80.00 plus VAT. Costs to come from Museum Earmarked Reserves.</p>
1210	<p>RESOLVED to accept the quote to install a new intruder alarm system at the museum £747.37 plus VAT. Annual maintenance £86.00 plus VAT Costs to come from Museum Earmarked Reserves.</p>
1211	<p>The CEO advised that Brooklands Lake had been broken into on Friday evening and emergency work has been carried out to make the building safe. The Committee agreed that a more secure method to make the building safe would be appropriate and also to report to insurers to cover the costs for the replacement door and window.</p>
1212	<p>RESOLVED to carry out repairs at Brooklands Lake Cafe to provide a more secure method to make the building safe.</p>
1213	<p>RESOLVED to report to insurers to cover the costs of the replacement door and window at Brooklands Lake Café.</p> <p>The Committee discussed the usage of the building and the need for CCTV and an intruder alarm, however decided that once the usage for the building had been finalised they would reconsider the CCTV and intruder alarm options.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED that once the usage for Brooklands Lake Cafe had been finalised the Council would reconsider the CCTV and intruder alarm options.</p>
	<p><u>7.1 Income and Expenditure Report</u></p>
	<p>A copy of the financial review was sent out to members of the committee prior to the meeting, a copy is available on file. The CEO advised that there was little variance as the report was for the very start of the new financial year.</p>
	<p><u>7.2 Expenditure under delegated authority – None</u></p>
	<p><u>7.3 Aged Debtors</u></p>
	<p>The CEO advised the all outstanding debtors had been chased for their balances and many had been paid since the report had been produced. The CEO advised the small claims court cost relating to one aged debtor that had been processed.</p>
	<p><u>7.4 Earmarked Reserve and Capital Reserve Balances</u></p>

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	<p>The election reserves were queried regarding how much it had been reduced to? The CEO advised that it had been reduced down to £1000 per year as there were sufficient funds to cover an uncontested election.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the £2000 grant funding had been received for the winter grant scheme, which was not included in the balances on the report. Cllr Barker had received a request for feedback regarding who the money was being allocated to. This would enable her to provide feedback on an evaluation form. The Chairman asked if Cllr Barker could ask KCC if there was a deadline for the completion of the evaluation form. It was advised that the money would be spent via a joint venture between Snodland Town Council and the Henry Peters Trust for the Community Hub.</p>
8.	<p><u>To confirm fees for the proposed Internal Audit plan for 2024/25 from KCC Audit.</u></p> <p>The CEO reported on the procurement of internal audit services for the 2024/25 financial year. Despite seeking quotes from various sources, including those recommended by the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC), no responses were received from alternative auditors, raising concerns about feasibility. The deadline for confirming audit requirements with Kent County Council (KCC) was tight due to the delayed letter from KCC. Consequently, the CEO, along with the Chair of the Council and Chair of Policy and Finance, decided to continue with KCC audit services for 2024/25. To prevent similar challenges in the future, it is recommended to initiate the procurement process earlier for adequate time for evaluation and decision-making.</p>
1214	<p>RESOLVED to retrospectively accept and continue with KCC audit services for 2024/25.</p>
9.	<p><u>To advise of additional costs set by the grave digger to be reflected in the new cemetery pricing for April 2024.</u></p> <p>The Committee considered the new price list from the grave digger for Snodland Cemetery includes updated costs for grave excavations and backfill. While standard grave prices were already accounted for in the agreed cemetery prices from October 2023, the prices for Wicker and Willow Coffins and Caskets were not considered initially. The updated prices for these items have now been added.</p>
1215	<p>RESOLVED to accept the revised prices for the Cemetery for the updated grave excavation costs for the Wicker and Willow Coffins and Caskets for be increased from April 2024.</p>
10.	<p><u>To advise on new prices on the Cremation Kerbs following the acceptance of a quote to be reflected in the new cemetery pricing for April 2024.</u></p> <p>Following the acceptance of the quotation for 14 new kerbstones at the cemetery at Full Council, the pricing has been revised to reflect increased costs. Despite negotiating a small price drop from the Memorial Mason, the new cost for 2024 would be £1435.</p>
1216	<p>RESOLVED to accept the revised price for new kerbstones on the cemetery price list for 2024 at £1435.</p>

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<p>11.</p> <p>1217</p> <p>1218</p>	<p><u>To consider additional costs relating to the external refurbishment at the Devonshire Rooms.</u></p> <p>The builder has advised that now that the scaffolding is in place, they have been able to ascertain the level of deterioration in the timber on the gable end wall. The additional cost of these repairs is £1736.00 plus VAT.</p> <p>RESOLVED to accept the cost of the additional works to the gable end wall at the Devonshire Rooms of £1736.00 plus VAT, which would be more cost effective to be carried out whilst the existing scaffold is in place.</p> <p>The rear roof gulley inspection has been carried out and there is a deterioration to the mortar along the gulleys. Also the builder is unable to gain access to the internal area where the leak is so has quoted to install a loft hatch at the top of the stairs to enable them to access and inspect the area to ensure no further damage has been caused. The cost of these repairs is £1920.00 plus VAT.</p> <p>RESOLVED to accept the cost of the additional works to the rear roof gulleys and internal loft inspection hatch at the Devonshire Rooms at a cost of £1920.00 plus VAT.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p><u>Correspondence</u></p> <p>None</p>

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 20:06