FINANCE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY
14th MARCH 2019

PRESENT
Cllrs: J. Sinnott (In the Chair) A. Hall and H. Vasey.

IN ATTENDANCE
Zoë Dean – Town Centre Manager/Assistant Town Clerk
Hilary Seward – Whitchurch Chamber of Trade

1. Apologies
   Cllr Chesters – unwell
   Cllr Broders – away
   Cllr Hamlyn – away
   Cllr Martin – another engagement

2. Declarations of interest
   None received.

   Cllr Hall asked why no minutes had been presented for this meeting. The Town Centre Manager noted that this was due to staff illness. Cllr Hall responded that the Council should not grind to a halt for that reason.

3. Public Participation
   Following a proposal from Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Hall,
   It was FIN/75/1819 RESOLVED To suspend Standing Orders for the purpose of Public Participation.

   Hilary Seward – Whitchurch Chamber of Trade.
   Ms Seward noted that the Chamber of Trade donates £200 annually towards Party in the Park and therefore had questions regarding the event.

   i.) Party in the Park
   Please could the Council explain what financial information they received and what guide as to how much time it would take to organise Party in the Park, hopefully as a growing event?

   Ms Seward noted that she was part of the organising team for the event for several years and had asked the Town Clerk for accounts for the previous years as the information and paperwork was held under the Town Clerk’s previous role at Shropshire Council. Ms Seward noted that she had received none and failed to see how the Council had sight of anything.
   There is a balance of around £730 in the original Party in the Park bank account and, as the second signatory, Ms Seward pointed out that she had been asked to sign a cheque so these funds could be released for a future event. Ms Seward acknowledged that without receiving accounts for the spending on previous years and justification of the rationale for Party in the Park no longer being branded as community event that this was
not possible. Ms Seward also stated that the bank statements for this account had been sent to Cllr O’Neill’s home address.

Ms Seward informed the committee that in previous years she had personally funded the running of the bar. A budget cannot be set without previous knowledge and last year the event operated at a loss but the Town Council made up the shortfall. The Council appears to be lacking minutes and records on the website, so why has the event not been left like Blackberry Fair & the Food & Drink Festival as just a partner assisting in booking stalls? Ms Seward believed there was a fundamental governance issue and asked how could the Town Council take on the event?

Response: In 2017 the event operated within Worldwide Whitchurch and the accounts were documented accordingly within the Town Council’s accounts. The 2018 event accounts were recorded within the main Town Council accounts.

Cllr Sinnott pointed out that normal accounts are not presented in the same format as Town Council Accounts, as all of the Council’s functions are budgeted for and then all income is recorded separately.

Cllr Sinnott noted that he vaguely recalled a discussion surround staff working at the Party in the Park event but could not recall a minute which agreed a takeover.

The Town Centre Manager noted that was not on the agenda therefore no paperwork had been circulated for discussion at the meeting.

Cllr Vasey asked whether a working group could be set up to discuss this matter.

Cllr Sinnott requested that this item be added to the Full Council agenda for discussion the following week.

ii.) Advertising of Grants

Please could you explain where and how the grant system was advertised?
Response: The grant scheme was advertised in the Herald newspaper, Whitchurch Gossip Magazine and on the Town Council’s Facebook account. Ongoing issues with the website meant that the information was not uploaded due to problems with the site.

iii.) Hanging Baskets

Has every trader & commercial property been asked this year about additional flowers, should there be a scheme introduced? It is March and many would like to contribute so all should be asked please ASAP or at end of each season to plan for the next.
Response: a hanging basket scheme was introduced in 2017 for the 2018 scheme and implemented for businesses within Whitchurch Town Centre, of which many consist of those businesses within the Chamber. Therefore payments for the town’s hanging baskets are now received each year from businesses.

After a proposal from Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Hall,
It was FIN/76/1819 RESOLVED To reinstate Standing Orders.

Ms H. Seward left the meeting at this point.

4. Accounts Month 11
a.) Balance Sheet

After a proposal from Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Hall,
It was FIN/77/1819 RESOLVED To accept and sign the Month 11 Balance Sheet,
b.) Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading

Cllr Sinnott noted that expenses were overpaid and a budget line 101/4010 should change its name to “Hosting”.

Signature: .................................................. 2
After a proposal from Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Hall, It was FIN/78/1819 RESOLVED to accept and sign the budget.

5. Monthly Purchase Ledger, BACS and Cheque Payments
After a proposal from Cllr Sinnott, seconded by Cllr Hall, It was FIN/79/1819 RESOLVED that the monthly purchase ledger for all payments, including the BACS and manual cheque payments, be signed totalling £47,560.85 for the month ending February 2019.

6. Credit Card
A question was asked regarding the Find My Past entry which was identified as a payment on behalf of the Heritage Centre.
After a proposal from Cllr Vasey, seconded by Cllr Hall, It was FIN/80/1819 RESOLVED to approve and sign the Credit Card ledger totalling £248.59.

7. Petty Cash
After a proposal from Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Sinnott, It was FIN/81/1819 RESOLVED to approve and sign the petty cash account ledgers, noting that a sum of £45.88 had been spent.

8. Virement Report Month 11
A virement was required from ‘Maintenance Contracts’ to ‘Benches, Trees and Bins’ which was still within the Parks Budget.
Cllr Sinnott noted that the Narrative needed clarification which should read 25% of the original budget.
After a proposal from Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Vasey, It was FIN/82/1819 RESOLVED to approve the virement.

9. Correspondence to the CCLA
The letter received to the CCLA regarding the separation of the remaining £18.18 was noted.

10. Grant Applications
Cllr Sinnott was keen to note that several Grant Applications had been received through the Whitchurch Gossip Magazine format.
After a proposal from Cllr Hall, seconded by Cllr Vasey, It was FIN/83/1819 RECOMMENDED to propose that the following grant applications be endorsed by Full Council (table attached).

11. Confidential Business
There was no Confidential business.

The meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Chairman.................................................................. Date...........................................

Signature: .......................................................... 3
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*Note: Amounts are in USD.*
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