

**FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE****SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN COUNCIL**

MINUTES of the FINANCE & ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE MEETING held remotely via the online platform “Zoom” and in accordance with the Coronavirus Act, C 7, Part 1 Local Authority Meetings, Section 78. This Act allows members to be present and attend a meeting without being present in the Council Chamber or together in the same place.

Date of meeting: **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020** at 7.30pm

**Present (remotely via Zoom)**

Councillors: Asker, De Vries, Eke, Fairhurst (until Min Ref F & E 083-20), Hawke-Smith, Toy

Officers: Lisa Courtney, Town Clerk,  
David Broomfield, Responsible Financial Officer,  
Mark Starte, Rachel Thomas – Duty Managers at the Tourist Information Centre (TIC)  
Judith Thompson, Officer at the TIC

Members of Public: 2 Members of the Public

F & E 075-20	<p><b>Election of Committee Chair</b></p> <p>Cllr Asker nominated Cllr Toy, seconded by Cllr Fairhurst. Cllr Toy accepted the nomination, there being no other nominations, it was unanimously <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <p>To elect Cllr Toy as Committee Chair for 2020-21 with immediate effect.</p>
F & E 076-20	<p><b>Election of Deputy Committee Chair</b></p> <p>Cllr Eke nominated Cllr Millward, seconded by Cllr Hawke-Smith. Cllr Millward was not present but others advised she would accept the nomination, there being no other nominations, it was unanimously <b>Resolved</b>:</p> <p>To elect Cllr Millward (subject to formal confirmation of her acceptance) as Deputy Committee Chair for 2020-21 with immediate effect</p>
F & E 077-20	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>Apologies were received and accepted from: Cllrs S Coote, Millward and Porch</p>
F & E 078-20	<p><b>To receive any Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>Cllrs Asker, De Vries, Eke and Fairhurst declared generic non-pecuniary interests as District Councillors for Uttlesford District Council</p>
F & E 079-20	<p><b>Public Speaking Time</b></p> <p>There were no questions arising from the public</p>

Signed as a true and accurate record .....

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F & E 080-20	<p><b>Minutes of the Finance &amp; Establishment Committee May 2020</b></p> <p>The minutes of the previous Finance &amp; Establishment Committee were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chairman</p>
<b>Financial Matters</b>	
F & E 081-20	<p><b>Expenditure – to be authorised</b></p> <p>(a) Payment of the accounts received since 20th 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were approved. The RFO drew Committee’s attention to the grant payment of £8,500 to Uttlesford Community Travel (UCT), awarded from April 2020 to March 2021. It was noted that the UCT has not operated a service for 2 months (April and May) and had furloughed staff. Members therefore considered the validity of paying 12/12 of the grant payment and whether this should be scaled back to (say) 10/12 on the basis that staff are furloughed and other operational costs would have been significantly reduced.</p> <p>Queries were further raised regarding the temporary removal of the service and how were people who utilised the service, now getting to the shops, hospital appointments etc. After considerable discussion it was</p> <p><b>Resolved:</b></p> <p>That the grant payment of £8,500 to UCT be further endorsed for 2020-21 and that Officers ask UCT about any alternative provision or service which may have been provided during Covid-19 enabling people to access essential services or appointments.</p> <p>(b) Payment of accounts for (for cheques already issued) since 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were approved.</p> <p>(c) Cllr Asker queried why some suppliers were still paid by cheque and could the default payment process be via BACS, this being particularly pertinent during Covid-19. It was <b>Resolved:</b></p> <p>That the default payment mechanism for payment to suppliers is payment via BACS and this should move (where possible) to a weekly basis. The RFO noted the need for additional Councillors to become authorised in approving BACS payment.</p>
F & E 082-20	<p><b>Tourist Information Centre (TIC) Details</b></p> <p>Committee received and noted the following details:</p> <p>(a) Profit &amp; Loss Account for TIC  (b) Monthly report from TIC  (c) Profit Enhancement Plan</p> <p>Officers from the TIC were present to speak further to the profit enhancement plan. Committee undertook a comprehensive review of the proposals presented and focussed</p>

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	<p>on the on-line sales. Councillors were keen to progress with on-line sales, noting that the current pandemic had changed the manner in which people purchased products. Committee was keen not to undermine the traditional high street and wished to continue encouraging people to shop in the town centre; this did however need to be balanced against the opportunities offered and the wider audience in on-line sales.</p> <p>Concerns were expressed regarding on-line competition and how SW TIC could not compete with some of the large on-line retailers who may stock some of the same products, this was noted. Committee expressed a strong desire to trial on-line sales, it was <b>Resolved:</b></p> <p>(a) That TIC Officers should consider the stages of implementing a web-based offer, with due consideration to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feasibility costs</li> <li>Time scales</li> <li>Site investment</li> <li>Communications plan to include online/social media strategy</li> <li>Event planning</li> <li>Launch</li> <li>Consideration of the appropriate hosting platform</li> </ul> <p>(b) That £2,200 be set aside for the implementation of an on-line retail facility</p> <p>(c) That Officers progress further and present a progress report to the July F &amp; E Committee meeting</p> <p>(d) Cllr James De Vries offered to work with Officers in the progression of this matter</p>
	Cllr Paul Fairhurst gave his apologies and left the meeting
F & E 083-20	<p><b>Monthly Reports</b></p> <p>Committee received and noted the following monthly reports:</p> <p>(a) Bank reconciliation statement with supporting statements.</p> <p>(b) Cash Book – showing all income and expenditure for the previous ended month for May 2020</p> <p>(c) Payments by Supplier for May 2020</p> <p>(d) Income report, broken down by budget code – year to date including comparison of income year to date against the previous year.</p>
F & E 084-20	<p><b>Committee Hi-Light Reports</b></p> <p>Committee received and noted the Hi-Light reports.</p>
F & E 085-20	<p><b>Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019-20 (Annual Return)</b></p> <p>The RFO presented the year end accounts, it was <b>Resolved:</b></p>

	<p>(a) To receive and approve the internal auditor’s report. It was noted there were no matters arising for concern or for Committee to address from this report;</p> <p>(b) To note and approve the documents as presented in support of the Annual Governance Statement;</p> <p>(c) To approve the Annual Governance Statement and to recommend its adoption to the July Full Council meeting.</p> <p>Committee expressed thanks to the RFO for his hard work and diligence in the preparation of the year end accounts.</p>
<p>F &amp; E 086-20</p>	<p><b>Urgent Information Items</b></p> <p>There were no matters arising</p>
<p>F &amp; E 087-20</p>	<p><b>Date and time of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>Next meeting to be held remotely (via Zoom) on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.</p>

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.30pm