



## Annual Town Meeting Saffron Walden 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023

### Finance & Establishment Committee

#### Chair's Report from Cllr Louise Millward

The Finance and Establishment Committee oversees the management of the Town Council's finance, and the "Establishment" element covers staffing and resourcing matters.

#### Finance

Officers successfully received grant funding from the Lottery Fund, Essex Association, Essex Activate and various sponsorship for events from local businesses including donations for the mayor charities tombola. SWTC received roughly £23,135 in sponsorship for the events taken place this past year and this support from local business has allowed us to provide affordable and free events for residents.

We approved the 2023/24 budget with a 2% increase in December 2022 (this increase is considerably below inflation) and these were recommended to Full Council – where it was resolved to adopt both in January 2023. It is recommended that F&E continue to review the impact of inflation and increases in fuel prices and other running costs over the coming financial year.

#### Budgets

- **Small Grants & Hall Hire:** SWTC has awarded £12,819 to local community groups and almost allocated the full budget of £5,000 in free of charge hall hire to support local groups and charities. Of note is that applications in support of free of charge/reduced hall hire has grown in popularity in this 'post-covid' year and will likely remain high in 2023/4. We were able to be flexible and provide a mechanism of support for Ukrainian families/individuals moving into the area under the 'Ukraine Fund' With thanks to the Town Clerk and Cllr Porch for their support.
- **TIC:** the income from the TIC has maintained its rise (largely from particularly popular line sales) and we continue to follow the development of the website with interest. With thanks to the staff team and Cllr de Vries for their commitment and enthusiasm.

#### Policies

F&E have reviewed a number of policies and procedures in 2022/3 including the Absence, Alcohol & Drugs, Anti-Corruption and Bribery, Capability, Disciplinary, Electronic Communications Systems, Emergency Time off for Dependents, Flexible Working, Grievance, Mobile Phone, Parental Leave and No Smoking policies and led the way in adopting a menopause well-being policy for staff.

The review of the Grants Policy was completed, and the Community Grants Scheme officially re-launched in February 2023 with a prize draw for all the community groups which so generously responded to the public review, and whose responses informed the changes adopted in the review (including simplifying the process and increasing the grant available). With thanks to the Town Clerk for her leadership of the review, we look forward to receiving more and varied applications for support thanks to the raised profile of the scheme.

SWTC also received for the second year in a row 'Gold Status' for its HR management and systems, leadership and administration of employment matters.

### **Summary comments**

It has been a privilege to Chair the F&E Committee for the past year, and I would like to formally thank the Town Clerk, Committee Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer for their rigorous and thorough work which ensures that the committee runs smoothly and efficiently. Another thank you to all staff involved in income generation (all hirings, bookings and sales) which has resulted in £1,579,223 in income so far, this financial year.