

**Minutes of the meeting of the Sandwich Town Council Finance Committee,
held remotely on 9th December 2020, at 6.00pm**

The statutory requirements for meetings under the Local Government Act 1972 cannot be met during the current Coronavirus pandemic. As a result, s78 of the Local Authorities and Police Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ('the 2020 Regulations') have come into force which enables the Town Council to hold meetings remotely.

**Present: Councillors: The Mayor, Cllr PG Graeme (in the Chair) (PG)
MJ Holloway (MH)
AC Broun (AB)
Mrs D Carter (DC)
DR Friend (DF)
WP Staple (WS)**

**Officers: Mrs K Palmer
Miss L Fidler (Minutes)**

Councillors Ms A Fox was also in attendance as HR Councillor, and Cllrs Lintott and Sampson were observing the meeting.

01.12.20 APOLOGIES

Apologies have been received from Cllr Wood due to a personal commitment. No apologies were received from Cllr Bragg.

**02.12.20 DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS
AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

03.12.20 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)

Members received the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ending 31/03/20 and accompanying report from Mrs K Palmer, Responsible Finance Officer.

**RECOMMENDATION: That the Annual Governance and
Accountability Return and the comments from the external
auditor be noted**

For : PG, MH, AB, DC, WS

Against: Nil

Abstain: DF

04.12.20 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

(i) It was recommended that under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

RESOLUTION: That members of the public and press be excluded for the following items of business.

For : PG, MH, AB, DC, WS

Against: Nil

Abstain: DF

05.12.20 FINANCIAL FORECAST 2020

Members received an updated financial forecast / cash flow spreadsheet for 2020/21 and accompanying report from Mrs K Palmer, Responsible Finance Officer. Councillors were asked to consider if any further reports, specific work or scenarios should be worked up, or if there are any recommendations for Council. It was recommended that this item be considered confidential due to the inclusion of staffing and tenancy agreement information contained within the report.

RECOMMENDATION: That this information is noted.

For : PG, MH, AB, DC, WS

Against: Nil

Abstain: DF

06.12.20 STAFFING SALARIES 2021/22

To receive and consider the salary budgets. Members noted that Cllr A Fox (HR Councillor), had been invited to the meeting to answer any questions. It was recommended that this matter be considered confidentially due to the inclusion of information about individual salaries.

RECOMMENDATION: Those officers not on minimum wage should receive a salary increase of 1.25% with a further 0.5% made available as a pot from which one off bonuses could be awarded to staff at the discretion of the HR Group (appraisal panel). Any amount not awarded from the pot will be placed in the Project Budget. Those staff on minimum wage will receive the requisite increase required by law, but would also be eligible for the bonus pot. Additional funds that had previously been proposed for staffing increment will also be now put in the Projects Budget.

A record of votes was not kept for this motion, as officers had not been present to do so.

07.12.20 BUDGET 2021/22

Members received a draft budget and report for the 2021/22 financial year based upon continued activities, projects that Mrs K Palmer had been informed about and ideas raised by the Budget Working Group. Members were asked to consider the budget again once item 6 had been discussed. This budget assumes normal activity would resume in 2021/22, although further calculations had been undertaken to determine the possible impact of the continuing pandemic.

Members were asked to consider if amendments were needed to this budget. The Responsible Finance Officer had not yet received information from Dover District Council regarding the precept deadline, or the expected 2021/22 tax base. The draft budget presented shows a 10% rise on the precept, equivalent to £23,973.60, or an annual increase of £12.36 per Band D Property when based on the 2021/22 tax base. The Responsible Finance Officer also advised that it may be

possible to delay finalising the budget until the meeting on the 25th January 2021, however reaching a decision by December is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION: That the budget be approved, with funds saved on staffing salaries to be put into the Projects Budget.

For : PG, MH, AB, DC, WS, DF

Against: Nil

Abstain: Nil

08.12.20 THURSDAY MARKET FINANCES

Members received the attached email from Mr S Laslett, from Sandwich Town Community Interest Company, which provided an update on income for hire of the Guildhall Forecourt in 2020/21. It was recommended that this matter be considered confidential due to the 3rd party financial information contained therein.

RECOMMENDATION: That this information be noted, and the Committee await further information.

For : PG, MH, AB, DC, WS, DF

Against: Nil

Abstain: Nil

09.12.20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 18th January 2021 at 6pm.