MINUTES of the Meeting of the FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE held at 7.30pm on Thursday 18 March 2021 via Teams Video Conferencing.

Members present:

Malcolm Llewellyn (Chair)
Julia Shorrocks (Vice-Chair)
Allan Brown
Seth Jee
John Lowman
Duncan Ranger
Claire Majsai

Also present: Sarah Groom, Clerk to the Council & Andy Beams Locum Finance Officer.

F20/21.110 Apologies for absence: Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Cllr Rodney Jackson.

RESOLVED: That the Committee ACCEPTS the apologies for absence from Cllr Rodney Jackson.

F20/21.111 Declarations of interest: There were no declarations of interest.

F20/21.112 Minutes of the meeting of Finance & Governance Committee of 18 February 2021: The minutes were received. The Clerk had stated January as month 11 instead of month 10 and this would be corrected in Minutes F20/21.099, F20/21.100 and F20/21.101. The minutes, as amended, were accepted and would be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREES the minutes of the meeting of 18 February 2021, as amended.

F20/21.113 Adjournment for questions from the public: There being no members of the public present the Committee was not required to adjourn the meeting in accordance with Standing Orders.

F20/21.114 Payments and receipts for month 11 (February 2021): The Committee noted the following:

i. payments of £27,265.90 (excl. VAT).
ii. receipts of £1,727.38 (no VAT).

F20/21.115 Financial monitoring for month 11 (February 2021): The Committee considered the account records in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Council, as follows:

i. Members noted the Bank Reconciliations (where there has been activity). The other cashbook balances have not changed. These will be signed by the Vice-Chair.
ii. Members noted the Balance Sheet.
iii. Members noted the Detailed Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading.
iv. Members noted the Summary Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED the following for month 11 (February 2021):

i. Bank Reconciliations.
ii. Balance Sheet.
iii. Detailed Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading.
iv. Summary Income and Expenditure by Budget Heading.

F20/21.116 Deposits and investments: The Committee noted the current funds held by the Council at month 11 (February 2021) as follows. These include the two new bank accounts with United Trust and Hodge Bank. A third new account is still being investigated.

Financial Institution	Account Type	Maturity Date	Amount
Unity Trust	Current account	n/a	£146,451.67
Nationwide	95 Day Savings Account	95 days' notice	£54,107.44
Nationwide	2 Year Fixed Term Bond	11/02/2021	£33,614.78
Cambridge & Counties BS	3 Year Fixed Term Bond	10/05/2021	£51,716.82
Cambridge & Counties BS	3 Year Fixed Term Bond	14/11/2021	£36,559.10
United Trust Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	17/12/2021	£85,000.00
Hodge Bank	1 Year Fixed Term	13/01/2022	£85,000.00

As of 28 February 2021, a further £46,388.38 is held with the CCLA in shares.

The Committee noted that from 1 March 2021, the 95 Days Saving Account with Nationwide has been amalgamated with the 2 Year Fixed Term Bond Account with Nationwide. At the January Committee meeting it was confirmed the balance at Nationwide would be reduced to below £85,000 once the accounts were combined. Now this has happened, the combined balance is £88,095.09. It is therefore recommended that £4,000 is transferred, to reduce the balance below £85,000 allowing for interest during the year, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREES to transfer £4,000 from the newly amalgamated Nationwide Accounts to keep the balance at or below £85,000 and thereby protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.**

F20/21.117 Action Plan: The Committee considered the Action Plan Version 15, adopted by Council on 25 February 2021. The version control on the front page is to be updated by the Clerk, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED Version 15 of the Action Plan, as amended.**

F20/21.118 Review of the Coronavirus Cancellation Policy: The Committee reviewed the Coronavirus Cancellation policy agreed by the Council on 23 April 2020 (Minute C19/123: Coronavirus Cancellation Policy) and agreed to extend it to 30 June 2021. The Committee also agreed to review the policy at its June 2021 Committee meeting, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council on 25 March 2021, the extension of the Coronavirus Cancellation Policy to 30 June 2021 and that the Committee review the Policy again at its June 2021 meeting.**

F20/21.119 Reserves Policy: The Committee considered a financial Reserves Policy for recommendation to Council on 25 March 2021 for approval and adoption, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council on 25 March 2021, the approval and adoption of the Reserves Policy and specifically that the Council:**
>
> **(i) aims to maintain the general reserve at a minimum of 3 months net revenue expenditure and review this level at least annually as part of the budget setting process; and**
>
> **(ii) aims to maintain a level of earmarked reserves appropriate to the level of future planned expenditure projects and review these at least annually as part of the budget setting process.**

F20/21.120 IT Audit: The Committee considered a briefing note regarding the IT Audit completed by Joel Baker Computers for the Parish Council office in the Village Centre. The report included Wifi provision for the Village Centre and the Chair recommend increasing the number of data ports in the Conference Room from just 2 on one wall to 8 (2 on each wall) to allow flexibility for future hirers and the hybrid meeting equipment. The Committee noted the market testing of the new hardware and infrastructure to be purchased showed the expenditure involved was at cost price. Before letting the IT Audit report work to Joel Baker Computers, the comparisons made at the 21 January 2021 Committee meeting demonstrated that he proved to be the most cost-effective provider. Furthermore, his hourly rate was established as much less than the other companies who quoted. Minute F20/21.092 (ICT Audit & Support Package) had resolved that the Committee agreed to appoint Joel Baker Computers to undertake an IT infrastructure audit at a cost of £250 + VAT and consider any recommendations required following that audit. The need to proceed diligently to complete the work due to the security and data protection risks was noted.

Following a full debate, it was agreed to recommend the suspension of Financial Regulation 11.1(h) (Contracts) to Council on 25 March 2021, to allow for the prompt completion of the improvements to the IT infrastructure. It was further agreed to create an ear marked reserve to fund the works by transferring £11,000 from the 2020/2021 year-end underspend on the General Admin (101) Cost Centre, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council on 25 March 2021:

(i) Joel Baker Computers be appointed to deliver the solutions set out in the February 2021 IT Audit report at a cost of £8,228.76 for hardware costs and five days of his time to install and set up the new infrastructure and Office 365 (at a cost of £50 per hour) estimated at £2,250.

(ii) to suspend Financial Regulations 11.1(h) (Contracts) to allow for the prompt completion of the improvements to the IT infrastructure; and

(iii) to create an £11,000 Ear Marked Reserve from the 2020/2021 year-end underspend on the General Admin (101) Cost Centre to fund the works.

F20/21.121 Cemetery Chapel Repairs: The Committee considered transferring any unspent funds from the Cemetery Property Maintenance code 201-5400 at year end, to create an ear marked reserve for future Cemetery Repairs, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to create an Ear Marked Reserve transferring any unspent funds from the Cemetery Cost Centre (201) at year end, to create an ear marked reserve for future Cemetery Repairs.

F20/21.122 Court Bushes Community Hub Outside Decking: The Committee considered appointing VG Builders to complete the external decking at Court Bushes Community Hub, at a revised cost of £11,358 and to note the successful bid to Mid Sussex District Council for Section 106 funding of (£10,998) towards completing the work. It was noted that a second quote had been submitted as part of the bidding process but VG Builders had completed all the building refurbishment work and the first part of the decking that is in place. This meant it was a continuation of the existing works. Due to the value of the contract being over £10,000 the Committee agreed to recommend it to Council for approval on 25 March 2021, and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Committee AGREED to recommend to Council on 25 March 2021, that VG Builders be appointed to complete the external decking at Court Bushes Community Hub, at a revised cost of £11,358 funded from the successful bid to Mid Sussex District Council for Section 106 funding of (£10,998) towards completing the work and £360 from the Court Bushes Project budget 211-5720.

F20/21.123 Purchase of a Speed Indicator Device: The Committee considered a briefing note recommending the purchase of a dedicated Speed Indicator Device for use solely within the parish. The Committee noted the

prior agreement of Council to purchase a device at its meeting on 23 July 2021 should funding allow at the end of the financial year. The Committee agreed that a plan for use of the data captured from the device was essential and the Committee recognised that just the flashing up of the speed to motorists did have a positive effect on the speed of their driving. Cllr Jee recommend a second battery be purchased and it was essential to ensure the weight of the unit was not too heavy for the WSCC post, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: The Committee AGREED to purchase the Stocksigns Ltd (Message Makers) Speed Indicator Device, Battery, Mountings, Data collection, and computer software called 'Work Bench' which generates collected data into reports, at a Total Price of £2,350.00 + VAT, and in six months to review the requirement for a second battery.**

F20/21.124 WSALC: The Committee received a verbal update on the West Sussex Association of Local Councils. The WSALC Board had been replaced and the agreement to source services from Hampshire ALC had been reversed. Back office services will now be provided by Mulberry & Co and Trevor Leggo will be a two day a week County Officer for WSALC and 2 days a week for East Sussex ALC. The original subscription fees were advised as part of the budget setting process and since last October a change to the arrangements meant a 10% reduction had now been advised, and it was:

> **RESOLVED: That the Committee NOTED the latest position with the West Sussex Association of Local Councils and AGREED to pay the WSALC fees for 2021/2022.**

The Committee was asked to note any information items, correspondence received or requests:

There were no items.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.

Chairman

Protocol for filming and recording at public meetings: The Council has a protocol for public filming, recording and photography at its meetings, which is available on the Council's website or on request at the Parish Office.