

## **WIGTON TOWN COUNCIL**

### **A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WAS**

**HELD ON TUESDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7:00PM**

#### **PRESENT**

Councillors Lynch, Jackson, Scott, Robbins and Ferriby and Hodson.

Clerk: Emma Ireton

#### **FIN/22/2022 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES & RECORD REASONS FOR ABSENCE**

#### **FIN/23/2022 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/DISPENSATIONS**

None

#### **FIN/24/2022 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

None

#### **FIN/25/2022 BUDGETS**

Cllr Ferriby opened the meeting by thanking the clerk's office for spending time resolving problems regarding budgets and finances, specifically the issues around the lack of online banking and the need for several trips to the bank to access required information essential for budget setting.

Cllr Ferriby explained that the first job in terms of budgeting for the 23/24 financial year was to work on the current financial year and provide updates on actual vs budgeted figures for 22/23.

The clerk confirmed that there have been issues around banking, in terms of understanding the current situation as there has been limited access to all the TC bank accounts due to the time it has taken to gain access. Bank statements have been analysed and this has been compared to Scribe the accounting system. Some anomalies have been found such as payments that had not been made in August and September.

Cllr Scott asked why there were still issues with the banking as this had gone on for a significant period of time and suggested it was time to raise concerns with the Cumberland Building Society. Cllr Lynch asked if the delays were because of the DBS as it had not yet been returned. The clerk provided an update on banking and told the committee that the delay was due to the Wigton branch not returning the signed documents that had been dropped off. The Cumberland had said the issues would be resolved within a week and this would include the bank card being delivered.

The clerk provided the committee with an updated budget for 22/23 with a breakdown of the actual income and expenditure up to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022 with projected figures up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. The budget was annotated green where the budget line was within budget and red if it was estimated the budget would be

exceeded by the end of March 2023. The main causes of concern included Barton Laws running costs, admin and audit, room hire and rent and festivals. **ACTION – Clerk to establish ways of reducing costs and remove public loan board from Barton Laws. Also look to see if timing of lights can be changed.**

Cllr Ferriby went to explain that the budget for 22/23 was never finalised and therefore the budget had cost lines missing. They included the precept and external contract amounts within the budgeted income. **ACTION – The clerk to fill in the missing budget lines for 22/23 and provide a copy to the committee.**

Cllr Lynch and Hodson asked why we were still looking at the budget for 22/23 as the 23/24 should be being looked at now. Cllr Ferriby explained that we have not moved onto the new budget as there were still gaps in the previous budget and these gaps needed to be filled before looking at the new financial year of 23/24.

Councillors then discussed the contracts around Innovia as it had not been renewed, just extended. **ACTION – Clerk to establish what Innovia are paying and get in touch with Innovia and other organisations we have external contracts with to discuss renewing contracts.**

It was then agreed that once all the missing information was input into the budget, the new 23/24 budget needs to be created. **ACTION – Clerk to use previous budget to estimate what 23/24 costs will be.**

Cllr Robbins raised the point that if SF had negotiated any contracts with external organisations, they should have been returned to finance to review.

The clerk also reviewed the cemetery income and expenditure and shared this with the committee. It was reported there was in excess of £40000 in the cemetery bank accounts. Cllr Lynch asked if the cemetery could pay back the loan in full. It was asked what the agreement was regarding the loan, Cllr Robbins explained that it would be twice yearly over five years with the first repayment made in 2021. Cllr Lynch raised that the cemetery surplus at the end of the 22/23 financial year would be the same as the full council. The suggestion was that the town council continue with the £9000 precept and the cemetery pay the £11144 remaining loan in full in this financial year to Wigton, Woodside and Waverton.

Cllr Robbins raised her concerns over this recommendation as the cemetery income is not guaranteed and explained that money in the accounts was to pay for projects in relation to the house. Cllr Robbins also pointed out that one of the reasons for making a profit was down to volunteers who were not being paid.

Cllr Hodson thought it would be better to pay the amount back in full now as future years may be unpredictable.

It was asked if the loan should be paid back in full this financial year or next, which there was no definitive answer too. It was then suggested half being paid back in 22/23 and the second half in 23/24 once finances were more accurately understood.

Cllr Robbins mentions that this has only gone to the finance committee, being told to repay the loan in full without consulting the rest of the burial committee or the other two parishes.

Cllr Ferriby suggest that Cllr Robbins raises this with the burial committee at their next meeting.

### **FIN/26/2022 Website and Equipment**

The clerk provided the committee a quote for a new website and providing Gov.uk emails. Only two quotes had returned, one for £2000 and the second for £7000. Cllr Lynch recommends waiting two weeks to have a third quote returned and send out to councillors before making a decision.

Two quotes had also been returned for two new PCs, two monitors and transferring all the data from the old PCs. Cllr Lynch recommended that the office can go ahead with purchasing new equipment once three quotes had been received. Cllr Hodson recommends asking Glendinning Computers. **ACTION – get a further quote and send to finance for approval.**

### **FIN/27/2022 Payroll**

The clerk provided the committee with two quotes to outsource payroll. Saint and Co was £485 plus VAT and Bensons was £80 a month plus VAT. It was **AGREED** to go with Saint and Co.

### **FIN/28/2022 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022

Meeting Closed at 20:15