**Crewe Town Council**

**Finance and Governance Committee**

1 Chantry Court

Forge Street

Crewe

CW1 2DL

 

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 2nd December 2019**

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| Present | Cllrs Buckley, Cosby, Dunlop, Messent, Jill Rhodes, John Rhodes, Roberts and Straine-Francis.In attendance: Rob MacKenzie (Deputy Town Clerk); Ms. J. Weaver ChALC (item 16) |
|  | **To receive apologies for absence**  |
|  | Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Flude. |
|  | **To note declarations of Members’ interests** |
|  | * Councillor Cosby declared interests in agenda item 6 (parks) as a Health Box employee; item 9 (plot holder at Hungerford Roads Allotments); and item 10 as member of the Railwaymen Supporters.
* Councillors Straine Francis and John Rhodes Agenda item 10 (season ticket holders at Crewe Alexandra FC).
* Councillor Buckley (item 5 outstanding invoices) as an employee of Bentley.
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|  | **To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 16th September 2019** |
|  | The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record and signed. |
|  | **Public Participation**A period not exceeding 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions or submit comments.No matters were raised. |
|  | **To review the year to date expenditure for the Committee and for Council as a whole and to review and consider debts to the Council – See agenda notes, income & expenditure tables for Council and Committee, debt summary and current status of ear marked reserves.** |
|  | Members noted the information presented. The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to provide confirmation of:* The funding position re Streetscene Improvement Officers
* Salary spend to date as a proportion of the overall budget
* Long -term outstanding debts
* The continuing need for the ear-marked reserve – elections
* Where New Homes Bonus money for Valley Park in held in the accounts
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|  | **To consider an update from the Leader in relation to strategic dialogue with Cheshire East.** |
|  | Cllr Jill Rhodes provided the following updates:* There was a meeting in October with the Leader of Cheshire East Council. Little progress had been made on items discussed at the previous meeting,
* There is closer working with Cheshire East Council on cultural and heritage work.

Councillor Cosby referred to the management of parks and noted that several resident groups were in discussion about managing their local parks. |
|  | **To receive and consider a report from Internal Member audit.** |
|  | The report was noted. All the recommendations were also picked up in the internal audit report from the Internal Auditor (item 8 below). It was agreed that in future an Member Internal Audit Plan should be drawn up. |
|  | **To receive and consider the interim audit report from the Internal Auditor including the draft responses to the recommendations**. |
|  | 1. The report was received and noted and a further report requested to the February meeting on progress with implementing the recommendations of the internal audit report.
2. Members requested that year-to-date financial reporting be made easier to interpret.
3. Members requested a Council meeting (as sole Trustee of the McBride Trust) to receive more information the Trustee’s role and responsibilities.
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|  | **To consider allocating funds to commission work at Hungerford Road Allotments to potentially address concerns in relation to aged trees and balsam[[1]](#footnote-1).** |
|  | Councillor Rhodes reported on discussions with representatives of Hungerford Road Allotments. A tree survey is required to establish the safety of trees on the site and expert advice is required on the eradication of Himalayan Balsam. Councillor Cosby also mentioned that there is a flooding problem. The Deputy Town Clerk was asked to obtain quotations for specialist advice on trees and Himalayan Balsam and report back to this committee. Members also requested that the allotment association be advised to contact the environment agency regarding the flooding.  |
|  | **To consider a request from the Railwaymen Supporters Society for the Town Council to subscribe to a share issue** |
|  | It was noted that the request was for the Council to invest in the Railwaymen Supporters Society Ltd. to enable them to buy shares in Crewe Alexandra Football Club. This investment was not-recoverable. It was not considered that this was an appropriate use of public money. It was **resolved** that the Council would not subscribe to the share issue. However the Supporters club may apply for a grant towards the cost of their activities. |
|  | **To consider the implications as part of the Strategic Review of the monies in the Marketing and Events Budget to support the Council’s marketing and social media infrastructure[[2]](#footnote-2).** |
|  | It was noted that marketing and social media is a priority for the Council given the extensive events programme, and it was **resolved** that the question of staffing resource should be included in the Strategic Review. |
|  | **To consider matters related to the future accommodation needs of the Town Council** |
|  | The Deputy Town Clerk updated members on inquiries about options for additional accommodation. It was resolved to review the accommodation requirements in the light of the establishment recommendations of the Strategic Review. |
|  | **To consider matters related to the Committee budget for 2020/21**  |
|  | It was resolved to defer this item for consideration at a meeting of the committee on 17 December. |
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|  | **It was resolved to suspend standing order 1(y) to enable the completion of the council agenda**.  |
|  | **It is recommended that Committee considers a resolution under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 to exclude the public and representatives of the press from the meeting during the consideration of Item 16 on the grounds that matters contain sensitive information and by reason of the confidential nature of the business being transacted.** |
|  | It was resolved to exclude the public and representatives of the press from the meeting during the consideration of Agenda Item 16 on the grounds that matters contain sensitive information and by reason of the confidential nature of the business being transacted. |
|  | **To consider interim management and staffing arrangements in the period until a new Town Clerk is in post**.  |
|  | It was resolved that ChALC be asked to produce detailed recommendations for interim arrangements for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee on December 17th 2019.  |
|  | **To consider the date of the next meeting (17th December)** |
|  | Member noted the date of the next meeting. |
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**Meeting Closed: 9:40**

1. Cllr John Rhodes raised the matter following a site visit in his capacity as lead member for allotments. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The Committee recognised the need for increased resource in this area, but is seeking guidance from F&G as to whether these funds should be used to commission external support or invest in an internal resource. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)