

MELTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PROPERTIES, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 12 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Councillor Bampton (Chair), Councillor Buchanan, Councillor Keighley and Councillor White.

PUBLIC SESSION: There were no members of the public present.

20/18 NOTICE OF MEETING

Public Notice of the meeting was taken as read.

20/19 ADMISSION TO THE PUBLIC

As printed agenda.

20/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Haigh and Councillor Millward .

20/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

20/22 BUDGET MONITORING /INTERNAL CONTROLS

Councillors considered the budget monitoring report for the second quarter of the financial year. The Clerk pointed out that the commentary provided explained in detail the position at Quarter 2. The Clerk reported that some budget heads were significantly underspent as a result of the impact of Covid but there were some increased costs as well.

Councillors agreed to recommend to Council a virement of £200.00 from the 'Postage and Petty Cash' budget head into 'IT costs' to cover the costs of Zoom. The Clerk reported this would require a resolution of the full council.

Councillors agreed to recommend to Council a virement of £10,000 from the 'Ask Meltham' budget head into 'Park Reserves' assuming there was to be no spend this financial year. The Clerk reported this would require a resolution of the full Council.

RESOLVED: That the Properties Administration and Finance Committee recommend to Council the following:

- A virement of £200.00 from the 'Postage and Petty Cash' budget head into 'IT costs' to cover the costs of Zoom
- A virement of £10,000 from the 'Ask Meltham' budget head into 'Park Reserves' assuming there was to be no spend this financial year

Councillors considered the Schedule of receipts and payments for September 2020 circulated with the agenda and

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Payments for September 2020 in the sum of £13079.76 (net) be approved.

Councillors noted that in the absence of face to face meetings the schedules of payments, monthly bank reconciliations and the corresponding current account bank statements are being scanned and sent to the Mayor and Chair of Finance for checking and everything had been found to be in order.

20/22 BUDGET PLANNING / PRECEPT 2021/22

The Clerk had circulated a report setting out the projected year end position for this financial year and a suggested draft budget for 21/22 with an explanatory commentary, together with an indicative precept calculation and comparison with previous years.

The Clerk reported that the report attempted to project what the year-end spend position will be which could obviously change. The Clerk reported that in particular spend in some areas is significantly down due to the restrictions created by Covid 19, but this could alter significantly depending on what happens in the remaining 2 quarters of the financial year.

The Clerk reported that the budget is split into 4 sections and that for 'Compliance Communications and Administration' the spend was on track. In relation to the 'Park' the Clerk reported that there was a projected underspend of less than £1k and that for 'Services' there was a £3k predicted underspend (assuming there was an in year virement of the 'Ask Meltham' funds of £10k to park reserves - if not the underspend could be £13K). The Clerk clarified that a virement from one budget head to another would require a Council resolution. The Clerk reported that in relation to 'Income' there will be a small under achievement due to the allotment rent holiday that was granted.

The Clerk clarified that there is no capacity to carry forward underspends to the next financial year. The Clerk also reported that the figures assumed that the Council did not wish to raise additional funds for specific projects this year.

A discussion took place about possible savings relating to terminating the telephone/ broadband and copier lease (and associated print costs) in relation to the Council offices as the Clerk was working from home. The Clerk agreed to make further enquiries including clarifying any penalty clauses. The suggested budget report was based on no costs savings in these areas.

The Committee suggested the Clerk purchase pay as you go mobile phone in order to be able to receive calls from the public who did not have access to email.

A discussion took place about reverting to Royal Mail for the delivery of the newsletter. It was noted the delivery costs would be considerably more expensive. It was agreed to review this following the scheduled delivery in November but if a decision were taken to revert to Royal Mail the extra delivery costs would need to be factored into the 2021/22 budget.

A discussion took place regarding the need for an increase in the budget for professional fees for 21/22 or the creation of a separate budget to reflect the increased costs of more regular tree surveys.

Committee agreed that the revenue grants budget should be reduced back to £2500.00 having been temporarily increased for 20/21 for the intended VE day celebrations.

The Clerk reported that based on the suggested budget reported the precept for 2021/22 would be virtually the same as this year.

The Clerk agreed to do some further work with regard to the areas suggested and to bring a revised report back to the next meeting of the Committee so that the Committee's recommendations to Council on the budget and precept could be finalised.