

Gerrards Cross Town Council

South Lodge, East Common, Gerrards Cross SL9 7AD 01753 888018

Clerk to the Council - Mrs S Moffat clerk@gerrardscross.gov.uk

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Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held 7 pm on Monday 6th October 2020 at South Lodge

Present: Cllr J Chhokar (Chairman), Cllr N Barnett, Cllr C Brown, Cllr J O’Keeffe, Cllr H Orme, Cllr J Palmiero, Cllr E Surkovic (Virtually), Cllr A Wood and Cllr J Woolveridge.

In Attendance: Sue Moffat (Town Clerk).

1. *Declaration of interests are requested at the beginning of each item.*
2. **To accept apologies for absence** – Cllr I Bayliss.
3. **To Review Expenditure and Balances in 2020-21 Accounts.** The financial report from April to September 2020 was noted and the following comments raised:-
 - (i) Commons budget – Agreed amendments to Earmarked Reserves for 2020-21 due to surplus from Adult Gym (9150) and tree work (3945) to West Common footpath upgrade – 3695, Cut back vegetation along boundary of A40 – 2100, Cut back vegetation along West Common (opposite Miller Place) – 1000, Concrete around rhino posts West Common – 6300.
 - (ii) Highway Budget- Agreed amendments to Earmarked Reserves for 2020-21 due to surplus from Packhorse Rd (12,500), Station Rd car park (5000) and East Common Zebra crossing (11909) to Re-route footpath around tree at Marsham Way to assist pedestrian access -7750 and SPWP implementation – 21,659.
 - (iii) Communications- Agreed amendments to Earmarked Reserves for 2020-21 due to surplus from new Website (3000) to upgrade office IT equipment -3000.
 - (iv) Agreed to grant £2k from the reserves of the 2020-21 Grant budget to GX Covid Volunteer Group to cover insurance and leaflet printing and distribution costs.
4. **To consider the possibility of employing an additional part time employee as from 1st January 2021.** It was agreed in principle that an additional member of staff is required to cover additional work GXTC is undertaking. The Town Clerk will investigate the division of responsibilities and skill set required with the Assistant Town Clerk and report back.
5. **Resolved to note the completion of the External Auditor** – Noted.
6. **Resolved to renew the services of the Internal Auditor**, Beverly Simpson & Co Ltd and to agree the formal letter of engagement outlining roles, responsibilities and independence of the internal auditor as follows:-
 - (i) To invite Beverly Simpson & Co Ltd to continue the work of carrying out the Internal Audit for 2019-20.

- (ii) To confirm that Beverley Simpson & Co Ltd has no connection with the Council that would prevent the Company from acting as an independent auditor.
- (iii) To instruct Beverley Simpson & Co Ltd to carry out a quarterly inspection of the Council's finances which will include:-
 - (a) Check that the Cash Book balances exactly with the bank statements for the three months and reconciliation statement is correct.
 - (b) To check the list of monthly invoices has been authorised by Council.
 - (c) Verify the banks statements with suppliers' receipts.
 - (d) To check that all VAT entries are correct.
 - (e) To check salaries are paid according to the rate recommended by Council and that all HMRC payments and Pension payments are correct.
 - (f) Completion of Annual End of Year Accounts to include:-
 - (a) Assistance with the completion of the Annual Accounts.
 - (b) Check and verify the Account of Expenditure for the year and to provide a report in the standard format.

Cllr Brown declared an interest in the following grant application being a member of GXCA's Executive Committee.

- 7. To consider a request from GX Community Association (GXCA) for an additional grant for 2020-21** to meet part of the estimated deficit to 31st March 2021 of +/- £45,000. GXTC agreed not to give an additional grant this year whilst GXCA have reserves to cover any financial difficulties due to Covid-19 virus. However, if circumstances change and financial assistance is required between now and the end of March 2021, GXTC will reconsider the request.

- 8. Resolved to provide the grants for 2021-22 to the following applicants:-**

Cllr Brown declared an interest in the following grant application being a member of GXCA's Executive Committee.

- (i) GX Community Association – GXCA submitted a grant application for £25,000. Concern was raised that reserves should be used for these financially difficult times during Covid-19 virus rather than cosmetic projects such as the Garden Room refurbishment. Therefore it was agreed to invite the Chairman of the GXCA Executive Committee to the next Council meeting to give a short presentation on future expenditure before a decision is finally made.
- (ii) GX Guides – Did not require a grant.
- (iii) GX Fun Run – Fun Run postponed to 2022.
- (iv) Movers and Shakers – No grant required at this stage due to Covid-19 virus.
- (v) Leonard Cheshire Homes - GXTC agreed to award a grant of £1000.
- (vi) Padstone Housing/Connection Support for Padstone Housing- GXTC agreed to award a grant of £600.
- (vii) Chiltern Dial-a-Ride – Did not require a grant.
- (viii) South Bucks Citizens Advice Bureau - Did not require a grant.
- (ix) Bucks Vision -. GXTC agreed to award a grant of £250.

Cllr Wood and Cllr Palmiero declared an interest in the following grant application being a member of WeAreGx group.

- (x) WeAreGX – GXTC agreed a grant of £4752 but would hope to see self- funding in place, in the near future, once the Group has become established.
- (xi) GX and Fulmer Scouts - GXTC agreed to award a grant of £800.
- (xii) GX Scottish Dancing Club - GXTC agreed to award a grant of £500.
- (xiii) GX Cricket Club - GXTC agreed to award a grant of £3000.
- (xiv) GX Football Club - GXTC agreed to award a grant of £800.

Due to the late applications since the agenda was circulated, it was agreed to fund £4300 of the 2021-2022 grant budget as earmarked reserves from the 2020-21 budget.

- 9. Resolved the proposed budget for 2021/22 as circulated.** IB requested an additional £20k in the Highways budget for CCTV covering the triangle by Latchmore Pond. However, extending coverage to other areas in GX has not yet been agreed because establishing CCTV to cover the town centre is the current priority. Therefore the £20k has not been included in the proposed 2021-22 budget.

Resolved to propose a budget and precept for 2020-21 of £302,943 (as attached) which is a 2% increase from last year which was £297,026.

- 10. To Review Asset Register** – Noted and agreed.
11. Annual Review of Risk Assessment - Noted and agreed.
12. To Review Standing Orders – Noted and agreed.
13. To Review the Financial Regulations – Noted and agreed.
14. Resolved that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it is advisable in the public interest, that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw (Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 s1).
15. To Review Staffing remuneration
Staff salaries were reviewed and agreed.
16. Date of Next meeting – TBD

Meeting closed at 9.08pm

Signed.....

Date.....