

## HOUGHTON REGIS TOWN COUNCIL

### Corporate Services Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on  
11<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: D Jones Chairman  
J Carroll  
E Costello  
W Henderson  
M Herber  
C Slough

Officers: Debbie Marsh Corporate Services Manager  
Amanda Samuels Administrative Officer

Public: 0

Apologies: Councillor: C Rollins

#### 12529 APOLOGIES & SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Cllr Rollins.

#### 12530 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

None.

#### 12531 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

#### 12532 MINUTES

To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**Resolved: To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and for these to be signed by the Chairman.**

#### 12533 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE FOLLOWING MEETINGS AND CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED THEREIN

Personnel Sub-Committee: 24th April 2023.



Members noted that the resolution made under minute number PE267 (*To receive the list of the Salary Point number for all staff along with overtime rates, additional payments, mileage rates and employer and employee pension contribution rates and to recommend to Corporate Services that these be noted and signed by the Chair*), had not been included on the agenda. Therefore, members requested this information be placed on the next Corporate Services agenda for the meeting to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023.

**Resolved: To receive the Minutes detailed above.**

#### **12534 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT**

Members received, for information, the income and expenditure report, highlighting significant variances, for Corporate Services Committee to date.

Members queried under budget heading 190-4025 Insurance, why there was no sum against the actual year to date as the town council insurance premium was due for renewal on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023. The Head of Corporate Services assured members that this premium had been paid and the town council was insured. Payment had been made after the income and expenditure report had been produced.

Members requested that research be undertaken in understanding the difference of rates being charged at various premises in regard to the percentage of increase and decrease.

Members received this report for information.

#### **12535 BANK AND CASH RECONCILIATION STATEMENTS**

Members received the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for April, May and June 2023.

Members highlighted that the balances on the bank and cash reconciliation for June 2023 did not reconcile. Members requested this discrepancy be addressed and that the report be re-presented at the next Corporate Services committee for its approval and signing.

**Resolved:**

- 1. To approve the monthly bank and cash reconciliation statements for April and May 2023;**
- 2. For these along with the original bank statements to be signed by the Chair of Corporate Services Committee and the Council's RFO.**

#### **12536 LIST OF CHEQUE PAYMENTS**

Members were presented with a list of payments for the period April, May and June 2023 (inclusive).

This report was provided for information



**12537 INVESTMENT REPORT**

In accordance with Committee Functions, Financial Regulation 8 and Banking Arrangements, Investment Strategy & Investment Arrangements. The Corporate Services Committee were required to oversee and manage the financial obligations of the Council, including: To receive quarterly reports on investments containing a forecast of capital expenditure, investment opportunities and a recommendation for further investment including: where, length and amount.

At the Corporate Services meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> May 2023 members agreed, minute number 12459, to nominate Cllr Jones and Cllr Herber to engage in a review of the council's approach to risk and investment and for their findings to be reported back to Corporate Services Committee for further consideration. Cllr Jones confirmed that a meeting had been scheduled to take place on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and the outcome from this meeting would be reported back to this committee at the next meeting.

**Resolved: To note the report**

**12538 INSURANCE CLAIMS**

Members were advised that there have been no insurance claims since the last meeting of this committee.

This report was provided for information.

**12539 NEW OFFICE PROVISION EMR**

Members were reminded that at the Town Council meeting held on the 19th June 2023 it was suggested that the use of funds from the EMR for New Office Provision be considered (minute number 12497). Members were provided with a report in order to support the use of funds from EMR Office Provision to allow the modelling of the Town Council offices. The recommendations were:

- 1) To recommend to Town Council the approval, retrospectively, of a sum of £1,125 for the purchase of new chairs and desks for new members of staff and for this sum to be taken from the EMR Office Provision.
- 2) To recommend to Town Council that a further sum of up to £10,000 to be used for works to upgrade the IT cabling and electrical works and for this sum to be taken from the EMR Office Provision.
- 3) To agree to a costings exercise in order to enable reconfiguration of the lobby area in order to allow for more office space.
- 4) To recommend to Town Council that the committee responsible for the EMR Office Provision be amended to the Corporate Services Committee.

A discussion followed regarding these recommendations, most notably item 1. It was felt that as the New Office Sub-Committee fell under the responsibility of Town Council, it was therefore a matter for Council to decide the allocation of earmarked reserves and not this committee.

Members supported the information contained within the report but requested the report as received should be presented, in its entirety, at the Town Council meeting to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023.

**Resolved: To present this report to Town Council at the meeting to be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2023.**

#### 12540 VAT ON SPORTING FEES

Members were requested to consider and determine whether the Town Council would stop charging VAT on sports services. A report and correspondence were presented to Members.

Members discussed this item at length. Members agreed to stop charging VAT on sports services as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 and to refund those groups that had paid. However, members did not make a decision on whether to reclaim VAT paid in the last four years as they required more information. Members felt that the sum to be reclaimed might not be significant enough to outweigh the costs of professional advice and guidance in submitting a claim to HMRC. Therefore, members agreed to amend the recommendation as stated on the agenda to reflect the discussions.

**Resolved:**

- 1) **To stop charging VAT on sports services as soon as possible and certainly from 1st April 2023.**
- 2) **To establish the amount of VAT on sporting fees in the last four years before considering a reclaim.**

#### 12541 PETITIONS POLICY

At the Town Council meeting held on the 19th June 2023 members were requested to note that a petition had been submitted to the Town Council on the 15th May 2023, at the Annual Town's meeting. Members were advised that there was no legislation nor local policy directing how the council was to respond. Therefore, members suggested a policy for petitions be produced (minute number 12498). Members were provided with a report and draft petitions policy.

There was some discussion as to the threshold of numbers and what would be regarded as a reasonable number for a town council. A petition of 500 or more would ensure the item would appear on an agenda; however, for a number below this it would be the responsibility of the Mayor, the Clerk and the Chair of the relevant committee whether the item would appear on the relevant committee.

**Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Petitions Policy.**



**12542 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

Members were provided with the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy which had been slightly amended to show the change of job titles and names of new Head of Service.

The policy was considered fit for purpose.

**Resolved: To recommend to Town Council the adoption of the Town Councils Health & Safety at Work Policy.**

**12543 INTERNAL AUDIT PLANNING, REPORTING & REVIEW POLICY AND INTERNAL AUDIT SPECIFICATION**

At the Corporate Services meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022, it was agreed that although, historically, this document had been presented annually at a full Council meeting, moving forward, it was thought that this policy should be added to the Policy Review list in order that the Committee had sight of it for comment, before being presented to Council.

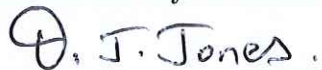
Members received a copy of the approved document. There had been no change in legislation; therefore, it was suggested that it remained suitable and fit for purpose.

Members of the Committee were asked to consider the attached Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy and Internal Audit Specification and make a recommendation to Town Council for approval.

**Resolved: To recommend to Town Council that the Internal Audit Planning, Reporting & Review Policy and Internal Audit Specification be approved.**

**The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 08.15pm**

**Dated this 4th day of December 2023**



**Chairman**

