

# Haverhill Town Council

## Minutes of Haverhill Town Council's

### FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 7.00pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, Haverhill



**HAVERHILL**  
TOWN COUNCIL

**Present:** Mayor Councillor D Roach (Chairman)  
Councillor J Burns (Vice Chairman)  
Councillor A Brown  
Councillor M Byrne  
Councillor A Bramwell  
Councillor P Hanlon  
Councillor I McLatchy  
Councillor B Robbins

**Apologies:** Councillor C Turner  
Martin Page (Finance Administrator)

**Absent:** None

**In Attendance:** Colin Poole (Responsible Financial Officer)

2 members of the public were present.

### Welcome:

Mayor Roach welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised members of the public attending that the meeting was being recorded.

- |                           |  | Action |
|---------------------------|--|--------|
| <b>F16</b><br><b>/040</b> | <b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b><br>The above apologies were noted.   |        |
| <b>F16</b><br><b>/041</b> | <b><u>Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and requests for Dispensations</u></b><br>No Councillor declared an interest in items on the agenda.  |        |
| <b>F16</b><br><b>/042</b> | <b><u>Minutes of the Last Meeting</u></b><br>It was proposed by Councillor J Burns, seconded by Councillor I McLatchy that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 <sup>th</sup> September 2016 be agreed as a true record.<br><b>RESOLVED</b> |        |
| <b>F16</b><br><b>/043</b> | <b><u>Matters Arising</u></b><br>F16/026b Customer Survey – Hartseats: This has not yet been   |        |

done. The newly-formed Arts & Leisure Review Group will be looking at the issue of the marketing of the café.

**F16** **Public Forum**  
**/044** See Appendix.

**F16** **Report from Responsible Financial Officer**

**/045** The RFO presented his report to the meeting (see separate document).

- a) Councillor M Byrne confirmed that the bank balances reported match the printed statements received from the banks.
- b) The meeting asked to see split costs between the bar staffing and the café staffing. The RFO agreed to explore how this might be done.
- c) The meeting asked that the column headings be consistent throughout the document.
- d) The meeting asked for 30/60/90 day splits on debtors now that the 60+ debts were under good control.
- e) The meeting asked that private hall bookings by individuals and one-off bookings by groups are paid for in advance along with a deposit for costs that can only be calculated after the event.

RFO

**F16** **2017/18 Budget First Draft**

**/046** The RFO took the meeting through the first draft budget for 2017/18, with a line-by-line comparison with the 2016/17 budget.

1. The meeting noted the increases in staff costs due to uplifts in the National Minimum Wage, National Living Wage, cost of living uplift and contractual progressions on the scale. Significant additional costs were attributed to the increase last year in Employers National Insurance and auto-enrolment. The meeting noted that all staff who had triggered auto-enrolment had opted to stay in.
2. The meeting noted that the budget was based on the “worst case scenario” that the government do introduce referendum principles and that HTC still decides to set a precept above capping levels. Therefore it includes £18,000 to pay for the referendum. If the government listens to the sector and defers their proposals, this element can be removed, which itself represents a 2% uplift.
3. The meeting noted that a significant element that needs resolving is the shortfall in the Hartseats figures. Improving this must be a priority for the Arts & Leisure Working Group.
4. The meeting agreed that booking fees should be introduced in respect of ticket sales. The RFO was asked to do more research as to how best to implement this. Also to look at Paypal facilities online.
5. Marketing the Arts Centre was identified by the committee as a priority. Specifically plans are needed for:
  - a. Sponsorship of events
  - b. Digital signage outside the Arts Centre
  - c. More events that attract a bigger bar taking
  - d. Roadside advertising signage for shows like the panto and Centre Stage could be put out – this is done by Audley End

House, Sturmer Hall, Kentwell Hall. The Parish Handyman can put out and collect in the signs.

6. The meeting noted that a decision over the future of Bevan House was needed. Selling it would provide a capital receipt. If plans for the Corn Exchange fall through, developing the site for flats would provide a rental income.
7. The meeting agreed that due to the complexity of calculating budgets without knowing about the government's intentions over the referendum principles, the only element required in respect of the potential purchase of the Corn Exchange was the loss of bank interest on the capital reserve.

As it stood, this "status quo" budget would require a 9.64% uplift on the precept. If no referendum principles are applied, this would reduce to 7.64%.

If the principles are applied and the Council took the view that a referendum would return a 'no' vote, then the budget would need a radical rethink to save £62,500. However, in either case a capped budget would need to be drawn up.

**F16**     **Date of next Meeting:**

**/047**     The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017.

**F16**     **Closure**

**/048**     The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 20:32

Signed .....  
**Chairman**

Date.....

**Appendix 1 - Public Forum**

Mr E Pinnock asked that when the Review Group look at the pricing structure for the Arts Centre that they look at this and make a qualitative decision to increase income. He said that the existing expertise within the Council should be able to resolve this without recourse to expensive consultants.

Mr G Savary reminded the Council that it should cut its cloth according to its means and seek savings before seeking increase in the precept.