

Haverhill Town Council

Minutes of Haverhill Town Council's

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Tuesday 17th June at 7.00pm at Haverhill Arts Centre, High Street, Haverhill



HAVERHILL
TOWN COUNCIL

Present: Mayor Councillor R André (Chairman)
Deputy Mayor Councillor M Byrne (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor P Hanlon
Councillor B McLatchy
Councillor B Robbins
Councillor G Stroud
Councillor C Turner

Apologies: None

Absent: Councillor M Martin

In Attendance: Colin Poole (Responsible Financial Officer)
Colin Schraeder-Bidwell (Internal Accountant)

Three members of the public were present.

Welcome:

Councillor André welcomed everyone to the meeting.

F14 Election of Committee Chair

/001 Councillor, M Byrne Seconded by Councillor B McLatchy, proposed that Councillor R André be elected Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED that Councillor R André be Chair for the current Mayoral Year.

F14 Election of Vice-Chair of Committee

/002 Councillor P Hanlon, Seconded by Councillor C Turner, proposed that Councillor M Byrne be elected Vice-Chair.

RESOLVED that Councillor M Byrne be Vice-Chair for the current Mayoral Year.

F14 Apologies for Absence

/003 The meeting noted that the committee membership listed on the agenda and website had been wrong, so Councillor Martin may not have been correctly alerted to the meeting. It was the belief of

Action

Councillors present that Councillor B Robbins had been appointed to the Finance Committee at an earlier meeting of the Full Council, although the minute reference was not found. Therefore it was proposed by Councillor C Turner, seconded by Councillor B McLatchy, that for the avoidance of doubt Councillor B Robbins be co-opted onto the Committee.

RESOLVED that Councillor B Robbins be a member of the Committee.

F14 /004 Declaration of Pecuniary Interests and requests for Dispensations

No Councillor declared an interest in items on the agenda.

F14 /005 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th April 2014 were agreed as a true record.

F14 /006 Matters Arising

a) Christmas Lights Contract. The Chairman reported that no SLA was in place at this time, the contract was based on normal terms of business. The Town Clerk confirmed there had been an exchange of emails between Will Austin and Gala Lights agreeing details for 2014. He would be arranging a meeting in July to pick up the matter.

b) Annual Meeting & 25th Anniversary. Councillor M Byrne asked that the Council records its thanks to all those who made the event a success, from the excellent catering to the mugs given out. Councillor R André confirmed he had written to staff and speakers thanking them for their efforts. He agreed to write to former Mayors thanking them for their attendance.

RFO

Councillor R
André

F14 /007 Report from the Responsible Financial Officer

The RFO referred the meeting to his report, previously circulated.

7a iii) HTC Report. Councillor M Byrne reviewed the balances reported against the printed bank statements and confirmed they matched.

7a v) The meeting considered the recommendation from the RFO to purchase the Sales Module for the RBS Omega accounting system. This would enable the accounts system to link payments to customer accounts and produce a reliable debtors list. It was proposed by Councillor M Byrne, seconded by Councillor B McLatchy, that the Sales module be purchased.

RESOLVED that the sales module for the RBS Omega system be purchased at a price of £520.

Town Clerk

The meeting also considered the matter of historic debt. The

debtors list needs reviewing to identify debts recoverable and which debts should be written off.

Accountant

7a vi a) The RFO outlined the new process he had introduced for approving invoices for payment, to ensure practice was in line with Standing Orders. He outlined the importance of Councillors checking each invoice in turn against the recorded value on the payment sheet and cheque before signing the sheet to confirm the invoice was correct. In answer to a question, the RFO confirmed that the third signature required for payments over £2500 was of any member of the Finance Committee to countersign the form, not the cheque.

Councillor C Turner asked that the figure of £2500 be checked against the average cheque values.

Accountant

Post Meeting Note: We have written 180 cheques since 1st April for the Town Council of which 11 were valued over £2,500, these included 3 payroll cheques and one for rent payable to the Charity. We have not written any cheques over £2,500 for Hartseats or the Charity, for Harseats the only cheque over £2,500 would be for payroll to HTC and for the charity the only supplier who would invoice over £2,500 would be St.Edmundsbury B.C. for their maintenance contract.

7a vi b,c,d) Councillor R André proposed that the meeting accept the RFO's recommendation that a group of Councillors meet informally to draft an up to date set of financial regulations and that this group also oversees the matters of cheque signatories and debtors process being resolved. **Councillors M Byrne, B McLatchy, B Robbins and G Stroud agreed to form the group.**

F14 /008 7b) The Committee considered the RFO report in respect of Hartseats Ltd. The meeting noted the excellent work of officers in securing better terms from suppliers to reduce costs. The meeting agreed that a letter of thanks from the Finance Committee should be written to Mel & her staff.

RFO

F14 /009 7c) The Committee considered the RFO report in respect of Haverhill Arts Centre Charity.
7c v) The debtors list showed a significant debt owed to the charity by the Town Council. This was because the town council undertook to pay the charity the value of their expenditure each month. This figure was not known until month end, so always would generate a large debt. The Committee considered the RFO's request to agree whether the current process was better than making regular payments each month to avoid such a large debt being reported. The Committee concluded that it was a better system as it stood as the debt was internal and was administratively easier this way. It also facilitated better investment of funds on behalf of the taxpayer.
RESOLVED that the payment process between Haverhill Town Council and Haverhill Arts Centre remain unchanged.

The Committee also considered the debtors list for Leiston Community Centre. It noted with concern that some regular hirers were failing to pay their bills but still were permitted to use the facility. Following discussion, the Committee agreed the following:

AGREED that:

The debtors list be forwarded to ward Councillors on the Committee. Customers need to be up to date on payments before using the building again.

Councillor C Turner asked about the whereabouts of the defibrillator in the Arts Centre. It was confirmed that this was in the Clerk's office but that it might be decommissioned. The RFO was asked to report back to the next meeting with costs for an up-to-date defibrillator.

RFO

F14/ **Review of Internal Auditors**

010 The Committee considered the length of time that Heelis and Lodge had been internal auditors. It was agreed that whilst there were no grounds for criticism of their work, it was right and proper that the work was re-tendered for 2015.

RESOLVED that the role of Internal Auditor be re-tendered for 2015.

F14 **Closure**

/011 The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:54pm

F14 **Date of next Meeting:**

/015 The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on Tuesday 30th September 2014.

Signed
Chairman

Date.....