

## Snodland Town Council – Policy and Finance Minutes

13 June 2023

Committee Members in attendance:	Cllr V Lawrence (C), D Lettington (VC), S Bell and D King
Non Committee Members in attendance:	Cllr G Miners
Committee Members Absent with apologies:	Cllr A Bennison, P Hickmott, V Parker and W Mallard
Committee Members Absent without apologies:	
Council Staff Present:	Mrs K Sowten (CEO)
Members of the public:	

1.	<u>Apologies for absence</u> see above
2.	<u>Declaration of Interests</u> Cllr Lettington declared an interest in Item 11 as a member of the chess club. Cllr Miners declared an interest in Item 11, his brother runs the chess club.
3.	<u>Minutes - To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2023</u> The minutes of the meeting held on the 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 were agreed as a true record.
4.	<u>Questions from the Public</u> <i>Pursuant to Standing Order 3 e &amp; g Members of the public may make representation, answer questions and give evidence at a meeting which they are entitled to attend in respect of the business on the agenda. A member of the public shall not speak for more than 3 minutes</i>  There were no members of the public present
5.	<u>To review the Councillor Audit Trail</u>  As previously recommended by Council, an audit plan has been produced to assist Councillors with future audits. As a council it was felt the committee should be taking action to organise with the CEO a time to come into the office to carry out an audit trail, rather than the CEO having to ring round to find someone to carry out the task before a meeting. A rota has been produced with each member of the committee taking a turn to carry out an audit.  Cllr King suggested that the document should be an evolving document which could be added to when the need arises.  Cllr Bell asked how far in advance a councillor would need to book in and how long would the trail take. The CEO suggested that it would be beneficial to have the audit carried out before the agenda was sent out, but not essential as long as the councillor carrying out the audit had prepared a document to present at the meeting. Councillors may need guidance, and the plan can be built on with notes explaining what is required and what needs to be done. The CEO will send out the rota and audit plan to committee members with a suggested timeline for the meeting.

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6.	<p><u>Financial Review</u></p> <p>A copy of the financial review was sent out to members of the committee prior to the meeting, a copy is available on file.</p> <p>The CEO advised that it had been brought to her attention that there is a water leak on Sloughfields which is currently being looked into and will be fixed asap. There is a significantly high volume of water being used on Birling Lands which is currently being investigated. This will lead to a high water bill.</p> <p>Cllr King queried the percentage on income of 1869.8% on the administration budget. The CEO explained that this was due to a re-imburement of legal fees from a tenant and this would be spent in the future when the legal bill is received by the council. The reason it shows as a high percentage is because there is no income budget for the legal fees as this is a one off income and not something that the council was aware of when they set the budget.</p>
7.	<p><u>To receive a copy of the Internal Audit Report from KCC</u></p> <p>The Chairman and committee congratulated the CEO on the Internal Audit report received with no issues identified.</p> <p>The CEO advised the committee that although the council opened a CCLA investment account prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, funds had not been moved into the account and suggested that further advice was obtained regarding whether the account remains suitable following the recent fall in investment fund values. The CEO would also look into the £85,000 FSCS protection rules for Town Councils.</p> <p>Following discussions it was</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b> to bring some investment options to the next meeting for the committee to look over and agree which option to go with.</p>
8.	<p><u>Review of 10 year plan</u></p> <p>The plan needs to be looked at in more detail, amended and prepared in a revised format.</p> <p>Previously the plan was looked at by the Chair and Vice Chair of each committee, as they have a better insight into what has been put forward. Other council members felt that it was important that any councillor who wanted to be involved in the review process should be allowed to attend and take part. However the meeting would need to be structured.</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding the entrance and exits areas of Snodland. The CEO advised that some of the land belonged to TMBC and KCC.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b> – to move the concerns regarding the entrance and exit signs to the Amenities and Recreation Meeting. Cllr Lettington to draft an email to County Councillor Sarah Hohler regarding work on some of the areas and the street furniture.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b> – To set up a sub committee to review the 10 year Plan. The CEO to check the meeting calander and send out a date.</p>

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<p>9.</p> <p>1053</p> <p>1054</p> <p>1055</p> <p>1056</p> <p>1057</p>	<p><u>To receive an update and to approve quotations relating to Design and surveys at Paddlesworth Road Car Park.</u></p> <p>The Council previously agreed that it would be necessary to employ the services of an architect and structural engineer to carry out the required investigations. The CEO gave a report on the finding following a soakaway soil test.</p> <p>Following a meeting between the CEO and the structural engineer and architect they advised that soakaways could be introduced to the Northern section of the playing fields to connect the drainage required for the Car Park.</p> <p>Quotations have now been received from the civil engineer to carry out the car park design and S278 works. The cost of these works will be £3950 plus VAT. The Architect has also now confirmed details of his role in the project and felt it better to provide his services via an hourly rate of £95. Normally an architect will charge a percentage of the total construction costs. This is common for larger projects. The total cost can vary depending on a number of factors, but as a general rule of thumb, hiring an architect should make up around 5-20% of your overall project cost. Therefore it seems like a very competitive hourly rate in comparison to a percentage of the total job.</p> <p>Other quotations received, all necessary for the preliminary planning stages include an ecological appraisal at £580, a topographical survey at £1550 and a tree survey and arboricultural assessment report at £640.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b> to accept quotation from Civil Engineer to carry out the Paddlesworth Road car park design and S278 works at £3950.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept quotation for an ecological appraisal at £580 for Paddlesworth Road Car Park.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept quotation for a topographical survey at £1550 for Paddlesworth Road Car Park .</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept quotation for a tree survey and arboricultural assessment report at £640 for Paddlesworth Road Car Park .</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept quotation for Architect fees at £95.per hour for Paddlesworth Road Car Park.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> to accept one quote for Paddlesworth Road Car Park for each of the surveys required due to the technical requirements necessary and the difficulty in sourcing companies to investigate and carry out the preliminary findings. All of the companies come highly recommended.</p>
<p>10.</p>	<p><u>To consider quotations for replacement fencing at Potyns Sportsground</u></p> <p>Councillor questioned whether there was sufficient funds to carry out the work. The CEO advised that there was sufficient funds in the reserve accounts. Councillor questioned whether this would encourage more dog owners to use the sportsground.</p> <p>Councillor questioned whether there was any other companies that could be approached. The CEO advised that she had been unable to source any other companies and welcomed any further companies to be put forward.</p>

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	<p>Councillor questioned whether there was easy access for both cyclists and pedestrians to enter the sportsground and whether having two gates was sufficient for the number of users. It was agreed at a previous meeting that having two gates would be sufficient as the footfall would be at different times. Two quotes had been received.</p> <p>Quote A - £15376.68 Quote B - £16196.64</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b> to accept quote A. Location of the gates to be shown on a diagram and presented to full council.</p>
11.	<p><u>Correspondence</u> <u>11.1 To receive correspondence relating to the rent review for Snodland Chess Club.</u></p> <p>The chess club have written to request a meeting with the Chairman and CEO to discuss the proposed rent review.</p> <p>The committee discussed the existing rent, how long the chess club are in attendance, are they covering the costs associated with the hire.</p> <p><b>RECOMMENDED</b> to arrange a meeting with the Chess Club, Chairman and CEO to discuss the proposed rent review.</p> <p><u>11.2 To receive an email from TMBC relating to the appointment of a solicitor to work on the Lease for the Building in Rocfort Road Car Park</u></p> <p>An email has been received from TMBC requesting confirmation that we will be instructing a solicitor in relation to the lease for the building in Rocfort Road Car Park.</p>
1058	<p><b>RESOLVED</b> to instruct a solicitor in relation to the lease for the building in Rocfort Road Car Park.</p>
	<p><b>THE COMMITTEE HAS AGREED That in view of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be Temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw.</b></p>
12.	<p><u>To receive an update relating to Brooklands Café, to include the Signing and Sealing of the lease if available.</u></p> <p>The solicitors are currently dealing with the deed of surrender and the new lease. The lease is not yet available to sign and seal.</p>

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 20:33