

GOOLE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on 23rd April, 2020 (under Delegated Authority) commencing at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Flynn (In the Chair), Walker and Whitehead.

OFFICERS: Mr. B Robertson (Town Clerk)
Ms. Stacey Norfolk (Responsible Finance Officer)
Mrs C. Brophy (Admin Assistant)

PR1938 **APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies.

PR1939 **TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND THEIR NATURE**

The Town Clerk declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 8. He is Company Secretary of the Green Team CIC.

PR1940 **MINUTES**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Policy and Resources meeting held on 19th March, 2020 approved under the scheme of delegation on 9th April, 2020 be signed as a true record by the Chair (Councillor Flynn).

This was **PROPOSED** by Councillor Walker and **SECONDED** by The Town Clerk.

PR1941 **REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER**

Members were in receipt of the following reports.

(a) Monthly Payments – March, 2020

The RFO informed Members that she has received a query from Councillor Raspin prior to the meeting, regarding payments made to Sammy Rowan. The RFO explained that £570 was spent on fencing around the skip at West Park.

The Town Clerk informed Members that following a visit from Peninsula, this was a Health and Safety Requirement. The RFO stated that the other amount paid to Sammy Rowan was for a new bay at the Cemetery.

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the schedule of payments for March, 2020.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the schedule of payments for March, 2020 totaling £116,849.33.

(b) Monthly bank reconciliation & Bank statement - March, 2020.

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation for March, 2020.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation for March, 2020.



(c) Monthly Income & Expenditure – March, 2020

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Members **NOTE** the report for the period ending 31st March, 2020.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report for the period ending 31st March, 2020.

(d) Year-end transfers to and from reserves

The RFO informed Members that she and the ALM have relooked at figures due to the current crisis and have put £32,000 to reserves to cover losses by the Arts department for the first quarter, due to the COVID-19 outbreak, she stated that if any business rates refunds are received they will be paid into this fund.

The RFO explained that she had made a bad debt provision due to the current Debtors situation.

The RFO informed Members that £14074,00 is released yearly to pay for the CCTV contract arrears to Fisher Security. This contract runs until 2022.

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the transfers to reserves of £171,663 and from reserves £15,772.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members **APPROVE** the transfers to reserves of £171,663 and from reserves £15,772.

PR1942 **REPORT OF THE ARTS & LEISURE MANAGER – BONFIRE NIGHT EVENT- 2020**

Members were in receipt of the above report.

The ALM has requested Members to adopt one of three options for this year's bonfire night event prior to any planning which would normally commence in May/June.

Councillor Flynn informed Members that the majority of Councillors have commented prior to the meeting and are in favour of cancelling/postponing the event due to the current ongoing circumstances and to have a party/celebration later in the year when things are back to normal.

Councillor Whitehead agreed that the consensus is to cancel/postpone the event. She added that it is good to know that at this stage there is no funding commitment.

Councillor Walker stated that it appears to be a unanimous decision to cancel/postpone the event this year. He suggested that a press release be made as soon as possible to keep members of the public informed.

The Town Clerk agreed to contact the Marketing Officer the next day to arrange a press release.

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Members adopt option 1 of the ALM's report, not to organize an event in 2020.

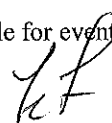
This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members adopt option 1, not to organize an event in 2020.

PR1943 **REPORT OF THE ARTS & LEISURE MANAGER – SUCCESSION PLANNING FOR ALM**

Members were in receipt of the above report.

Councillor Flynn discussed the ALM's report which suggests a timetable for events for succession planning.



He also mentioned the email from The Arts Council who wish to be fully involved in the interview process. The Town Clerk informed Members that The ALM, Arts Council and Members of the Council will be involved in the interviews.

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Members adopt the Succession Plan **PROPOSED** by The ALM and adopt the plan from The Arts Council to be involved.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members adopt the Succession Plan **PROPOSED** by The ALM and adopt the plan from The Arts Council to be involved.

PR1944 **REPORT OF THE TOWN CLERK – CANCELLATION/POSTPONEMENT OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Members were in receipt of the above report.

Councillor Flynn informed Members that most Councillors have commented prior to the meeting on this issue.

Councillor Walker stated that he has seen comments from six Councillors suggesting cancelling or postponing the AGM until later in the year.

Councillor Whitehead informed Members that she believes postponing the AGM gives all Councillors the opportunity to decide whether they are happy with Officers staying in their positions. She is however, happy with things remaining as they are and for the AGM to be cancelled until May 2021

Councillor Walker asked The Town Clerk whether The Scheme of Delegation can be amended in order for all Councillors to attend meetings. He said that the longer this situation goes on; he feels that we need to resume full attendance for Councillors.

The Town Clerk stated that this can be done however it can become quite unmanageable with too many people. He pointed out that all members would need the technology to participate. He said that all Councillors receive an Agenda prior to the meeting which enables them to raise any questions.

Councillor Whitehead said that she believes Members will have the technology required. She also agrees that all Councillors should be invited to attend meetings as things often develop during the meetings.

The Town Clerk said that it is up to Councillors to decide to suspend Delegated powers. He agreed to email all Councillors about the issue and said that it can be placed on the next Full Council Agenda to seek viewpoints.

The Town Clerk informed Members that legally powers have been brought in which state that an AGM does not have to be held. Should nine or more Councillors sign a proposal to hold an AGM then it can be held.

Councillor Flynn stated that postponing the AGM until May 2021 would give more certainty.

Councillor Whitehead agreed saying that the Council has currently got more to focus on than the AGM.

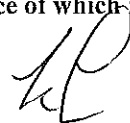
Councillor Walker would have preferred to postpone the AGM until later in the year.

Councillor Whitehead **PROPOSED** that the Annual General Meeting be held in May 2021.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Flynn.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Annual General meeting be held in May 2021.

It was RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded for the following item under the public bodies (admission to meetings act) 1960 in that it contains commercial or personal information as defined under the local government act 1972 schedule act 12a the divulgence of which may be detrimental to the council



PR1945 MONTHLY DEBTORS – MARCH, 2020

Members were in receipt of the above report.
Councillor Flynn informed Members that the main concern is Debtor A/D.

The RFO informed Members that the combined debt is £7,538.03. She said that because of this debt she has had to make provision in the budget under Bad Debt Provision in the event that this debt has to be written off. The RFO told Members that previously the CEO had given a report stating why things had got to this stage, but debts were accruing from summer.

The Town Clerk explained that Debtor A currently has no income streams due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation. He has contacted Debtor A, copying in Beryl Taylor, to arrange a meeting. He told Members that it is not that they are unwilling to pay, there's an incapacity to pay and are trading insolvent. The RFO said all staff members with the exception of one have been furloughed and they are operating a limited service.

The Town Clerk explained that Debtor A has relocated the office to the West Park which will save money. He has time as they can't physically get hold of the plans as they are still in the Courtyard. This means that planning has been put on hold until access to the plans.

Councillor Walker expressed concern at the amount of the debt. He asked whether Debtor A can access any level of funding and what action can GTC take.

Councillor Flynn asked whether they qualify for Government Relief as a Charity.

The Town Clerk informed Members that Debtor A has applied for several bids to external funding agencies and also to the Business Interruption Loan Scheme. He does not believe that they will qualify for charities funding.

The RFO stated that she doesn't believe that they will pass the criteria for the Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

Councillor Whitehead agreed with the RFO saying that money will not be given to a Company which is in a negative position financially.

The RFO informed Members that she needed a decision from Councillors how to progress as the Auditor is going to need some answers. She said that the debt rises when a utility bill comes in and also because we administer the payment of their wages this is another cost and as we are sorting furlough for them this will rise again. These figures are up to the end of March; this will rise again in April.

The Town Clerk agreed to contact Debtor A to arrange an urgent meeting to set up a payment plan. He said that a meeting could be arranged for Wednesday. Debtor A, Beryl Taylor, The Town Clerk, The RFO, Councillor Flynn and possibly one other Councillor will attend.

Councillor Walker asked the RFO for an update on Debtor B.

The RFO explained that Debtor B entered into an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA) in 2018, this debt is not part of the IVA and we will pursue the debt. She told Members that Courts are on hold due to the current situation.

Councillor Walker **PROPOSED** that Members **NOTE** the report.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Whitehead.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the Officer's Report.

Meeting concluded 8:12

