Minutes of Finance Committee meeting held on Thursday 23rd July 2020 at 7pm using the Zoom on-line facility commencing at 7pm.

Present:
Cllr Geoff Hainsworth, Cllr Debbie Brown and Cllr Guy James.
Finance Officer: Mrs D McBride

Chairman, Cllr Hainsworth welcomed everyone to the meeting.

07.00.20F Democratic 15 minutes Public Time
There were no members of public present.

07.01.20F Apologies for absence
There were apologies from Cllr Paul French.

07.02.20F Declaration of interests:
Disclosable Pecuniary Interests
Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate, whether or not the interest is entered in the register of member's interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.
There were no interests declared.

07.03.20F To confirm the Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on Monday 24th February 2020
The Minutes from the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 24th February 2020 were approved and signed.

07.04.20F Matters arising from the Minutes

- DM confirmed she, together with the Clerk and Cllr Smith had met with representatives of the Cricket Club regarding the use of the Playing Field. Match dates will be given for the Bookings Diary and hire payments have been clarified. A direct approach to request a similar on-site meeting will be made with Rugby Club representatives. The Finance Committee endorsed this approach as we have a responsibility as owners of the Playing Field to be fully aware of what activities are taking place.
- Cllr Brown confirmed the Food Bank (a joint project with St Mary's church, St Elizabeth's church, Compassionate Communities and the Town Council) is now based downstairs in the Market Hall. They have hired the small office at a token rent but this may need to increase to the full rent going forward. There is a proposal to set up the Food Bank as an independent charity now that it is established.
- There has been no further correspondence from Shropshire Council regarding the Library. A proposal for Cleobury Country to put together a piece for the Big Cleobury Survey No.2 has been deferred.
- As the Annual Parish Meeting was cancelled due to coronavirus the planned reports from all the Capital Receipt recipients will be expected at next year's Meeting instead. The Glassroom have deferred their final six sessions until such time as public events can go ahead.

07.05.20F To review the 2020/21 accounts year-to-date
As Cllr James is new to this Committee it was explained that this Committee was set up to take some of the work-load off full Council meetings. The Committee has time to go through all financial aspects of Council business and makes decisions but always sends reports to full Council to keep Council informed of its financial position.

- Receipts and Payments were reviewed; year-to-date against budget and the year-end forecast. As grants for the Play Area and CCTV were not received as expected in the last financial year, this will impact this year's figures. Neighbourhood Fund money, unknown when the budget was set, is higher than estimated. Grants and donations are higher than expected as we have been receiving money to support the Food Bank and have applied for several grants. Salaries may increase slightly due to the additional work carried out transferring cemetery records onto the computer. The Committee confirmed that proposals to revise staff contract hours, to be considered at the August Council meeting, are fully covered within the budget. The Committee approved the Receipts and Payments as presented and this was duly signed by the Chairman.

Initials……..

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME QUALITY GOLD

- The Bank Reconciliation was reviewed and signed.
- Ear-marked reserves were reviewed in detail. There has still been no positive response to our CIL request for the Play Area. The grant towards the latest purchase of CCTV cameras from the Police & Crime Commissioner has not been received yet. The project to replace the concrete street lights is almost complete but outstanding work by Western Power to disconnect armoured cable is required before the final post can be removed. Cllr Brown asked the Finance Committee to be mindful that there is currently no agreement that additional cemetery land will be provided through the Neighbourhood Plan. We have approximately 20 years capacity left but we need to ensure we have additional land secured in good time.
- Petty Cash was reviewed and confirmed as being correct.

07.06.20F To review progress of Projects

The Committee went through the Projects List. Updated copy of Projects List attached with these Minutes.

Town Council projects

The Love Lane Play Area is due to be re-opened on Monday 27th July and all requirements for the LEADER funding will then be satisfied. The LEADER claim form can then be finalised and must be submitted for payment by 31st July. Some projects such as obtaining quotes for lighting at the QEII Park, and at sites around town need moving on and evaluating. Cllr French has been chasing the contractor to undertake the agreed work at the Wells. DM has applied for a £5,000 grant to help with the refurbishment and creation of a site of historical interest for tourism to help boost the local economy. It has been difficult to obtain an accurate detailed inventory of our streetlights but Prysmian have provided a brief summary which has been forwarded to Western Power to update our unmetered supply of electricity. As the Town Council are not permitted to employ a Patrol Crossing Officer for the Primary School and Shropshire Council had quoted over £13,000 for this role, it was agreed that, as a minimum the Town Council would work with Highways to have improved signage around the school area. The issue of whether the highways mapping v.2 submitted by the Clerk has been confirmed as feasible was unknown. The Clerk will be asked for an update. Under the Neighbourhood Plan proposals, there was a lack of support from Shropshire Council to undertake a survey at the Tenbury Road junction to look at improvements. The proposed site is complicated due to having an electricity transformer, BT supply station and being partly privately owned. The Neighbourhood Plan Chairman will be asked if this has progressed and whether any quotes have been obtained.

Shropshire Council projects

The Vehicle Activated Sign at Newbridge has not still not been installed but is promised by the end of July. Maps of all the proposed improvements to the road have been circulated but no confirmation on when this work will be carried out.

The Parking Strategy was picked up by the Crime Group earlier this but there has been no progress. The disabled and loading bays on the High Street have still not been re-instated. Parking Enforcement is only carried out upon request and due to the poor road markings and signage quite often little enforcement can actually be imposed. The Town Clerk will be asked to put the Parking Strategy onto the August Council Agenda with a proposal to bring this back under Council management. The Talbot Car Park's pot holes were filled and parking spaces re-lined but the programmed re-surfacing has not been carried out. There has been little progress on any of the items raised at a meeting with Mark Barrow in January and no further information regarding the future of the Library. It was agreed that we do need to have the public's opinion on the impact to the Council Tax for funding the Library management costs but to leave this matter on hold until we are contacted again by Shropshire Council.

07.07.20F To receive Future Agenda items

There were no new items raised.

07.08.20F To set date of next Finance Committee meeting

The next Finance Committee meeting will be on Monday 28th September 2020 at 7pm. A Zoom meeting will be set up in case the meeting cannot take place in person.

Meeting closed at 8.16pm.

Signed Chairman: **Date:**

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