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24 October 2019

To: All Members of the Finance and Administration Committee – Councillors S Abbott, P Anstey, R Hopkinson, M Jackson, D Jones, J Maloney, S Moysey, G Sanders, R Taylor.

All other Members of the Council for information.

Dear Councillor

The next meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee will be held on Wednesday 30 October 2019 in the Town Hall at 7.30pm.

Yours sincerely

David J Martin
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Public Question Time and Petitions
3. Declarations of Interest

To receive any Declaration(s) of Interest under Corsham Town Council's Code of Conduct issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Finance and Administration Committee Meeting held on 28 August 2019 – *for information only*.
5. Grant Applications (Fourth Round) – The grants scheme for 2019/20 is being publicised and three new grant applications have been received for consideration at this meeting, along with one deferred from the June Committee meeting. Copies of the completed application forms are being sent to Committee members. The full applications, with supporting papers, can be viewed in the Town Hall during office hours and will also be available half-an-hour prior to the meeting.

The balances of the grants budgets for 2019/20 are as follows: Grants General/Section 137 (budget heading 102/1260 and 102/1262) £6,163; Methuen Hall (budget heading 102/1261) £3,995; Arts Centre (budget heading 102/1265) £2,000; Corsham Youth Zone (budget heading 102/1266) £1,750; Peacock Arts Trail (budget heading 102/1267) £0; Corsham Town Bowls Club (budget heading 102/1268) £0; Community/Village Halls (budget heading 102/1271) £1,000. There are also earmarked reserves: Grant Reserve Fund (budget heading EMR 347) £3,829, and Grant Tourism/CADT £2,500 (budget heading EMR 361).

There is a limit to how much the Council can spend where it has no specific power. This is known as Section 137 expenditure and must be recorded separately in the Town Council's accounts. The limit for 2019/20 is £8.12 per registered elector, which equates to over £78,000. The Council is highly unlikely to reach this figure in any given year and spent £604 on Section 137 expenditure in 2018/19. Where grant applications are for activities funded through Section 137, they are identified below.

Details of the grant applications are as follows:

| Awarded 2018/19 | Requested 2019/20 | Applicant & Purpose |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| General Applications | | |
| £500 | £500 | Corsham Town Football Club – Towards upgrading hand mower, spiker and strimmers for upkeep of the grounds. |
| £0 | £500 | Alzheimer's Support – Towards venue hire for the Music and Mind Group which is run in Corsham. |
| £5,000 | £500 | Corsham Bowls Club – Towards Phase 3 of Renovation/Replacement of the Green – Removal of hedge, and Replacement Fence. |

Section 137 Applications

Deferred from June 2019

| | | |
|----|------|---|
| £0 | £500 | Olive Branch Counselling – Towards funding an administrator to assist volunteer counsellors for the counselling service which covers North Wiltshire. A representative from Olive Branch will be in attendance to answer questions. |
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- *for consideration and decision.*

- Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts (including the Town Hall) – To consider the financial report – *for review.*

7. Internal Audit Report 2019/20 (First Interim) - A copy of the report from the interim visit is attached, along with a draft response. The internal auditor has made two recommendations. Recommendation 1 relates to the administration fee for the cemetery loan and Recommendation 2 relates to unclaimed VAT on a grounds maintenance invoice. Both of these matters have been addressed.

Recommendation

That the draft response to the Internal Audit Report 2019/20 (First Interim) be endorsed.

8. Appointment of Internal Auditors 2020/21 – Formal note of an appointment of internal auditors is required. Auditing Solutions Ltd has provided a satisfactory service since being appointed several years ago and are familiar with the Town Councils processes and procedures.

Recommendation

That Auditing Solutions Ltd be appointed as the Council's Internal Auditors for 2020/21.

9. Annual Insurance Review (*Minute F&A 24/18*) – The Chief Executive has completed the Annual Insurance Review and no issues or concerns have been identified. The insurance cover was re-tendered in 2016 and the cover is reviewed monthly to ensure that any significant new assets or risks are covered. As reported in the August Income and Expenditure Report, an insurance claim was settled in April regarding a Town Council vehicle which hit a parked vehicle in August 2018. This has not affected the current premium. Our insurers file connected to a tree on Neston Recreation Ground has been closed as the claim has not been pursued – *for information/comment*.

10. Draft Budget 2020/21 (*Minute SP 05/19*) – Further to the Strategic Planning Working Group meeting on 16 September, the attached income and expenditure report (*DRAFT for 2020/21 column*) shows the draft budget for next year. Wiltshire Council is due to issue draft Council Tax Base figures on 4 November. This will enable us to calculate the percentage difference per Band D Equivalent property, as it is different to the percentage increase in the Precept. The draft budget for 2020/21 currently indicates an increase in the precept of 19.36% but there is scope to refine the figures. The budget process is ongoing and will be presented in more detail at the December Committee meeting – *for information and comment*.

11. Local Government Finance Settlement 2020/21, Technical Consultation (MHCLG) – The Government is consulting on proposals for the local government finance settlement for 2020-21. (See attached or visit https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/836539/Local_Government_Finance_Settlement_2020-21_Technical_Consultation_.pdf). The Chief Executive has raised the following issues:

- Section 5.3 doesn't make any reference to the assets and services being transferred from principal councils, which is adding further pressure to town and parish council budgets.

- In response to paragraph 5.3.1, the use of reserves to reduce council tax increases is not financially sustainable.
- Regarding paragraph 5.3.2, the pressure on taxpayers is due to reductions in funding of principal councils, resulting in them transferring services and costs down the line, as opposed to town and parish councils not exercising constraint.

It is recommended that the Town Council responds to the consultation, highlighting the issues raised – *instructions requested*.