

**MINUTES of the ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE meeting held ONLINE on
Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr S Harkin (Chairman) Cllr G Newman
Cllr N Barber (Vice Chairman) Cllr M Richardson
Cllr D Aitchison Cllr D Savage
Cllr M Morris Cllr A Smith

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)
Mrs D Frost (Deputy Town Clerk)
Mr S Congi (Financial Admin Assistant)

345. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

346. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from **Cllr K Williams**.

347. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Member(s)	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Cllr G Newman	All	Local Non-Pecuniary (as a Member of Suffolk County Council)

348. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Assets & Services Committee Meeting held on 23 September 2020 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

349. ASSETS & SERVICES BUDGET REPORT

The Committee considered the summary and detailed report showing income and expenditure against budget to 18 November 2020.

It was RESOLVED that the Budget Report to 18 November 2020 be received and noted, with no other action required at this time.

350. TOWN HALL UPDATE REPORT

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that there had been 14 weddings from 18 July to 1 November when the recent lockdown has now forbidden weddings for 4 weeks. During the months of September and October one regular hirer returned to the Town Hall. A QR code has been established to abide by new COVID-19 legal requirements. Once the second Lockdown started all members of staff are

now working from home with the Town Hall being used only for essential work, that cannot be carried out at home.

Committee considered the information gathered so far on renovating the Town Hall windows. They noted the report from the Conservation Officer at East Suffolk and the Deputy Town Clerk updated members on a specialist who had visited the day before who had also commented that the windows were in good condition, however, further investigations were to be made to ensure that the units would be suitable to keep using new double glazed sealed units inside. As the windows are quite large the sash windows may not take the weight so further calculations were to be made. Members agreed that compromise should be sought between keeping the building's historical aspect and being more environmentally friendly. Further detailed quotes will be sought and testimonies and samples will be brought to the next meeting in February.

Missing tiles on the rear of the Town Hall roof were reported, and quotes will be sought from contractors. The roof is not leaking and this work is not expected to be expensive. It is hoped that it will be able to be funded using the Repairs and Maintenance budget.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Town Hall update report be noted; and,**
- ii. further quotes, testimonies and samples for the windows be brought to Assets & Services committee in February.**

351. WALTON COMMUNITY HALL UPDATE

Committee received the report on Walton Community Hall and noted that the four hirers that had returned to hire the hall in September and October all provided Covid risk assessments and had strict guidance on how to follow the government guidance.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that 270mm of insulation had now been fitted in the attic space above the hall. During this process two small leaks were noted, a quote was being obtained and this repair can be funded using the Repairs and Maintenance budget. Committee also noted that emergency bars have been installed on all three emergency exits at Walton Community Hall.

Members viewed a photograph taken of the rear emergency exit which showed a wide gulley. Committee suggested that a grill to cover the gulley be further researched and the dustbins could then be moved onto the grill to enable a wide flat exit that could be used by wheelchairs. The Deputy Town Clerk will report back to committee on possible solutions.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Walton Community Hall update report be noted; and.**

- ii. **options for the gulley by the emergency exit be brought to Committee.**

352. BROADWAY HOUSE UPDATE

Committee received the Broadway House update report. The building is still currently not in use, due to Government Covid guidance. The kitchen and bathroom refurbishment is almost complete, and FOPWA are pleased with the design and quality of workmanship. All work is complete except redecoration which will be carried out inhouse and the repair of 3 windows. The soap dispensers in the four bathrooms are rusted and may also be considered for replacement. A final figure will be brought to committee but it is expected that the total for the renovations will be under £7,000.

Committee was informed that the fire alarm panel which is 15 years old is serviced annually and the previous week the engineer servicing it found a fault that requires the replacement of the panel, at a cost of £387.33 +VAT. This cost would cause an overspend on the Repairs and Maintenance budget, but due to the urgency of the work required Committee agreed that the work should be carried out and it be recommended to Council that this cost should come from the Broadway House Earmarked Reserves.

Members noted that the furniture left at the rear of Broadway House have now been removed, and the satellite dish has been relocated. Cigarettes are currently being dropped from the tenants living above and have caused some cigarette burns on the windows, Orwell Housing are investigating with the tenants and the situation will be monitored.

It was RESOLVED that the Broadway House update report be noted and it be recommended to Council that expenditure of £387.33 be approved via the Broadway House Earmarked Reserve to replace a faulty fire alarm panel.

353. CEMETERY UPDATE REPORT

Committee noted the Cemetery update report. Cemetery work is continuing as normal, with one member of staff absent for the second lockdown due to Government Covid guidance. Photographs of the new insulated suspended ceiling and new insulation were shown to Council. There is a delay on electrical power tools trial day due to Covid.

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Contractor B had requoted to match the specification of Company A at a cost of £1,995 to repair the sinking road and this work would be carried out as soon as possible.

Accidental damage to two headstones was reported to committee. The first repair had been agreed with the owner that we would cover 50% of the cost as it was unknown how the damage was caused. A BRAAM qualified stonemason had confirmed it was unlikely to have been caused by a digger, however, the

neighbouring grave had recently been dug. The cost which will be funded from the Repairs and Maintenance budget will be £225 +VAT.

Three quotes had been obtained for the damage to the York stone kerbs and headstone of a separate gravestone which had been caused by the digger digging a nearby grave. Council's Insurance Company had been contacted but as the headstone was not owned by Council a claim could not be made. Members requested that an enquiry be made with Council's insurers as whether a claim could be made via public liability insurance. If this is not possible then the cost of £985 should be spent on repairs and be funded by the Repairs and Maintenance budget.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Cemetery Update Report be noted;**
- ii. investigations be made with Council's insurers as to whether a claim can be made on Public liability Insurance for the accidental damage caused to a gravestone.**

354. ALLOTMENTS UPDATE REPORT

Committee received a report on the allotments noting that they are as popular as ever. With the majority of allotment holders making payments in October, Committee received a report displaying their methods of payment, comparing this year's receipts with October the previous year. This year no cash was accepted due to COVID-safety, and allotment holders were encouraged to make BACS payments where possible. Not only did this facilitate payment, it also helped reduced costs from banking fees as all BACS payments received are free of charge whereas credit card transactions and bank charges for cheques/cash banked incur a cost. Members agreed that payment methods on allotments should be as accessible as possible as many of the older generation do not use online banking, however that payment by BACS should continue to be preferred.

It was RESOLVED that the Allotments update be noted.

355. COMMUNITY PUBLIC ACCESS DEFIBRILLATORS

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that two of the mild steel cabinets purchased in 2015 for the community access defibrillators were rusted, these cabinets have only a 2 year guarantee. Last year one of these cabinets at Sea Road had been replaced by a Polycarbonate cabinet, however, it was reported that this one had seemed to have suffered from some vandalism, despite its reputation for durability. Members considered Polycarbonate, stainless steel alternatives and also replacing the mild steel door and refurbishment quotes. Members agreed that when each Defibrillator cabinet requires replacing that they should be replaced with polycarbonate cabinets which have a 10 year guarantee. Members also suggested enquiring as to what cabinets other coastal locations use.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. damage to the Community Public Access Defibrillators cabinet be noted;**
- ii. steel cabinets which should be replaced with Polycarbonate cabinets as and when they become rusted beyond serviceable use; and,**
- iii. the Deputy Town Clerk to investigate the type of cabinets used successfully in other coastal locations.**

356. ACCESSIBLE BEACH HUT PROJECT

Committee received a report on a proposed Accessible Beach Hut Project by East Suffolk Council, which had requested feedback from Felixstowe Town Council as to whether it would like any involvement in the proposed scheme. The new Accessible Beach Hut area will be sited on the existing trim trail site, with the trim trail being moved to an enhanced “active seafront area.” The new accessible beach hut could potentially be operated and/or maintained by the Town Hall through our caretaking staff. This would involve caretaking on a per-booking basis to make sure it is clean and tidy for the next user. In this event, a potential 50/50 split in income could be received between East Suffolk Council and ourselves.

A Member reported that the Disability Forum had also reviewed the plans and welcomed the accessibility of the site and the addition of Changing Places toilet facilities.

Committee welcomed the project but queried the accessibility of the site during winter months should the flood gate be closed and were interested to learn more about plans to ensure that the huts get rented to the people who really need them as a priority over other users.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. East Suffolk Council be advised that, subject to further consideration and Council approval, the Town Council would be interested in working in partnership to provide caretaking services for the Accessible Beach Huts on completion of the project, for a trial period of up to 18 months on the basis of a split of the income; and,**
- ii. Further updates on the project and queries raised by Committee to be brought to committee as the project moves forward.**

357. DRAFT BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

Committee considered first draft proposals for its element of the Council’s 2021-2022 budget and reviewed the accompanying notes to estimates in the report. It was noted that several figures were based on the previous year 2019/20 outturn, as Covid had potentially skewed figures in many areas. Members noted that a new budget cost centre code had been created called ‘Parks and Recreation’ with funds allocated for Repairs and Maintenance, Street Furniture and Play

Equipment for the two new park areas that the Town Council were currently considering taking on. The Town Clerk reported that Personnel Committee had considered salary recommendations and plans were in place to recruit two new apprentices.

Members considered the budget amount for play equipment but also recommended that money should be set aside into Play Equipment Earmarked Reserve to support the capital repair and replacement of such equipment as may be needed in future they arose. It was agreed that this should be included in the budget estimates to be reviewed by the Finance & Governance Committee.

It was RESOLVED that the draft proposals for the Assets & Services element of the Council's 2021-22 budget be recommended as presented to Council's Finance & General Purposes for further consideration; with a further provision being for funding being put aside in a Play Equipment Earmarked Reserve.

358. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.21pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____