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9 am to 4 pm Mondays to Fridays



TOWN HALL
FELIXSTOWE
SUFFOLK
IP11 2AG

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr M Richardson (Chairman)
Cllr T Green (Vice Chairman)
Cllr S Bennett
Cllr S Bird
Cllr M Deacon

Cllr S Harkin
Cllr A Smith
Cllr S Wiles
Cllr K Williams

You are hereby summoned to attend the **FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** meeting of the **FELIXSTOWE TOWN COUNCIL** to be held **ONLINE** on **Wednesday 27 May 2020** at **7.30pm**.

Public Attendance

Online meetings of the Town Council and its Committees are open to the press and public who are welcome to attend via Zoom. Members of the public are invited to make representations or put questions to the Committee during the public session.

To join the meeting please follow this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83090518311>

Alternatively, you may join via the meeting ID 830 9051 8311 or over the telephone by calling 0131 460 1196.

Our online meeting guidance can be found here: <https://www.felixstowe.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Remote-Meeting-Guidelines.pdf>

Council has a duty to pay due regard to preventing crime and disorder and to conserve biodiversity in its decision-making and Members are reminded to consider the Council's commitment to climate action.

Ash Tadjrishi
Town Clerk
21 May 2020

For information (via email):

All Town Councillors
Local Press

A G E N D A

- 1. Public Question Time**
Up to 15 minutes is set aside to allow members of the public (up to one minute each) to make representations or put questions to the Committee on any relevant matters.
- 2. Apologies for Absence**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
To receive any declarations of interest and to consider requests for dispensations from Members for matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
- 4. Confirmation of Minutes**
To confirm the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee meeting held on 22 January 2020 as a true record. **(Pages 3-4)**
- 5. Internal Audit Report: Full Year 2019/20**
To receive an update on the Full Year Internal Audit for 2019/20. **(Verbal update)**
- 6. Review of Internal Audit Effectiveness**
To review the effectiveness of Council's appointed Internal Auditor and make any recommendations to Council. **(Pages 5-6)**
- 7. Budget Monitoring to 30 April 2020**
To receive budget monitoring report to 30 April 2020 and consider any actions deemed necessary. **(Pages 7-10 & Appendix A)**
- 8. Financial Impact of Coronavirus**
To consider a report on the potential impact of the Coronavirus on the Town Council's finances. **(Pages 11-13)**
- 9. Quarterly Bank Reconciliation**
To note that Cllr D Savage has confirmed reconciliation between actual bank statement and Omega accounts for the period 1 October – 31 March. **(Verbal confirmation)**
- 10. Statement of Internal Control 2020/21**
To review the Council's Statement of Internal Control and make any recommendations to Council. **(Page 14 & Appendix B)**
- 11. Cyber Risk Insurance**
To consider a quote from Council's insurers for Cyber Insurance **(Page 15 & Appendix C)**
- 12. IT Systems and Support**
To consider upgrading Council's IT hardware and support in response to increased need and mobile working arrangements. **(Pages 16-17)**
- 13. Closure**
To close proceedings and confirm the date of the next meeting scheduled for Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 7.30pm.

AGENDA ITEM 4: CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

MINUTES of the **FINANCE & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** meeting held at Felixstowe Town Hall on **Wednesday 22 January 2020** at **7.30pm**

PRESENT: Cllr M Richardson (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)
Cllr D Savage
Cllr A Smith

OFFICERS: Mr A Tadjrishi (Town Clerk)

415. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

416. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from **Cllr N Barber, Cllr S Bird, Cllr M Deacon, Cllr S Wiles, Cllr S Gallant** and **Cllr K Williams**.

417. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

418. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

It was RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee Meeting held on 11 December 2019 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

419. BUDGET MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2019

Committee received the budget monitoring report to 31 December 2019. A report of any variance to budget estimates for the period greater than 10% or £500 was considered.

RESOLVED that the budget monitoring report to 31 December 2019 be approved, with no other action required at this time.

420. EARMARKED RESERVES REPORT

Committee considered a report on Council's Earmarked Reserves over time.

It was RESOLVED that the report on Earmarked Reserves be noted as received.

421. INVESTMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY 2020-21

Committee considered the Council's Investment Policy & Strategy for 2020-21 as presented which had been updated to reflect current investments.

Following consideration of the Council's climate change agenda and the potential for ethical investment opportunities, Committee requested an additional paragraph be inserted (2.2) under the heading 'Investment Objectives' to state:

"In accordance with the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration, ethical investment opportunities which seek to contribute positively to the environment should be considered alongside yield, subject to such investment complying with the statutory guidance in this document."

It was RESOLVED that the Investment Policy & Strategy for 2020/21 be recommended to Council for adoption with as presented with the addition of para 2.2 above.

422. INSURANCE ADEQUACY REVIEW

Committee considered the report on the Council's insurance arrangements, noting that 2020/21 would be the second year of the three-year Long-Term agreement with Zurich.

Following a review of the insurance cover provided by Zurich, Committee agreed that the Council should be recommended to confirm the adequacy of its insurance arrangements for 2020-21.

It was RESOLVED that the arrangements for insurance cover in respect of all insured risks be recommended to Council and confirmed as adequate for 2020-21.

423. BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2024

Members considered the draft Business Plan 2020-2024 which had been circulated to all Councillors in advance of the meeting.

The Clerk confirmed that a final six-week public consultation would run from 23 January until 5 March 2020, prior to the final draft Business Plan going to Council on 11 March 2020 for approval.

It was RESOLVED that a first draft of the Business Plan 2020-2024 be recommended to Council for approval, following a second period of public consultation from 23 January – 5 March 2020.

424. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 8.00pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 25 March 2020 at 7.30pm.

AGENDA ITEM 6: REVIEW OF INTERNAL AUDIT EFFECTIVENESS

The purpose of internal audit is to review whether the systems of financial and other controls over a council's activities and operating procedures are effective.

Mr Colin Poole, as appointed by the Suffolk Association of Local Councils (SALC), has acted as the internal auditor to Felixstowe Town Council since October 2015. SALC have been providing internal audit services to the Town Council since December 2012. Mr Poole was unavailable to undertake the end of year internal audit in May, which will now be completed by MS Vicky Waples on 4 June 2020. Ms Waples has worked as an internal auditor for SALC for several years.

Local councils are required, at least once a year, to conduct, in accordance with proper practices, a review of the effectiveness of internal audit. The Council is required to sign the annual governance statement (on the annual return submitted to the external auditor) to evidence that this review has been undertaken.

Review of effectiveness of internal audit

Paragraph 4.22 of "Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioner's Guide (March 2019)" states that the "*review should be designed to assure the authority that it has maintained the standards of an adequate and effective internal audit of its risk management, control and governance processes. It should include, as a minimum, making an assessment of each of the following:*

- *the scope of internal audit;*
- *independence;*
- *competence;*
- *relationships with the clerk and the authority; and*
- *audit planning and reporting.*

The Council must also satisfy itself that the quality of delivery of the internal audit service provides reliable assurance about the Council's internal controls and its management of risk.

An assessment against the above criteria is provided, as follows, to assist Committee in reviewing the effectiveness of the Town Council's internal audit arrangements:

Scope of Internal Audit: *It is a matter for the authority to determine the necessary scope and extent of its internal audit. When securing an internal audit service, the authority should make sure that it is proportionate to the needs, size and the circumstances of the authority.*

The scope of the internal audit work carried out by Mr Poole follows that which was suggested in paras. 4.14-4.17 of the "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioner's Guide 2019."

Independence: *Independence requires the absence of any actual or perceived conflict of interest. It means that whoever carries out the internal audit role does not have any involvement in or responsibility for the financial decision making, management or control of the authority, or with the authority's financial controls and*

procedures.

Neither Mr Poole nor Ms Waples are involved in the Council's financial controls, procedures or decision making.

Relationships with the Clerk and the Authority:

Neither Mr Poole nor Ms Waples are related to, nor associated with, any Member of the Council, its staff or the Clerk. The internal auditor has direct access to the Council should they think this necessary.

Competence: *There are various ways for an authority to source an internal audit service, for example, appointing a local individual administered by a local association or branch of NALC, SLCC or ADA. An individual will need to demonstrate adequate independence and competence to meet the needs of the authority.*

Both Mr Poole and Ms Waples have extensive experience of carrying out audit work for parish councils across Suffolk on behalf of the Suffolk branch of the National Association of Local Councils.

Audit Planning and Reporting: *The minimum reporting requirement for internal audit to the smaller authority is met by completing the annual internal audit report on page 3 of the Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return.*

In addition to completing the annual internal audit report on the annual return, the SALC internal auditor prepares a report in their own name following completion of each internal audit. Each audit report is presented to the Council's Finance & Governance Committee and any recommendations are reviewed and considered at that time. Any actions taken prior to the meeting, such as may be appropriate under delegated authority or for matters of urgency, are reported to the Committee at this time. Any actions to be taken on the recommendations made are recorded in the minutes of the meeting and reported to Council for approval, if required.

An internal audit of Felixstowe Town Council was carried out twice during 2019/20 on a half-yearly basis.

Committee is requested to review the effectiveness of the internal audit and recommend appropriate arrangements to Council for 2020/21.

AGENDA ITEM 7: BUDGET MONITORING TO 30 APRIL 2020

A summary Income & Expenditure Report to 30 April 2020 is shown below with a detailed report provided at **Appendix A**.

04/05/2020	Felixstowe Town Council						Page 1
13:07	Summary Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/04/2020						
Month No: 1	Committee Report						
	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent
<u>Finance & Governance</u>							
Income	616,585	316,953	608,570	291,617			52.1%
Expenditure	276,388	28,880	279,610	250,730	0	250,730	10.3%
Net Income over Expenditure	340,198	288,073	328,960	40,887			
less Transfer to EMR	30,245	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	309,953	288,073					
<u>Assets & Services</u>							
Income	152,557	(1,004)	125,478	126,482			(0.8%)
Expenditure	262,821	18,554	274,144	255,590	0	255,590	6.8%
Net Income over Expenditure	(110,264)	(19,559)					
plus Transfer from EMR	0	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(110,264)	(19,559)					
<u>Civic & Community</u>							
Income	27,119	2,090	28,942	26,852			7.2%
Expenditure	164,891	6,936	180,876	173,940	0	173,940	3.8%
Net Income over Expenditure	(137,772)	(4,846)					
plus Transfer from EMR	1,513	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(136,260)	(4,846)					
Grand Totals:-							
Income	796,261	318,039	762,990	444,951			41.7%
Expenditure	704,100	54,371	734,630	680,259	0	680,259	7.4%
Net Income over Expenditure	92,161	263,669	28,360	(235,309)			
plus Transfer from EMR	1,513	0					
less Transfer to EMR	30,245	0					
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	63,429	263,669					

In accordance with Council's Financial Regulations, Committee is to receive explanations of Material Variances for expenditure in excess of the estimated budget of 10% or £500, whichever is the lesser. As the Council's budgets are not produced on a phased basis, the expectation is, being one month in to the year, for overall expenditure to be around 8.3%, with an explanation for any items overspent by £500

or 10% or over this level (i.e. 9.2%). Total expenditure for the first month stood at 7.4%. Explanatory notes and any recommended action for individual qualifying items in **Appendix A** are shown below.

Cost Centre 101 - Administration
<p>4460 Subscriptions (92.50%) Front loaded – three annual subscriptions paid to date. Recommendation: No action.</p>
<p>4464 Insurance (98.7%) Full year payment up front. Recommendation: No action.</p>
<p>1805 Bank Interest received (1.3%) Interest on one-year bond due in July 2020. Recommendation: No action.</p>
Cost Centre 201 - Town Hall
<p>4110 Rates (9.7%) Rates are paid over 10 months only. Recommendation: No action.</p>
<p>4180 Licences (100%) Paid in full for 2020-21. Recommendation: No action.</p>
<p>1000 Hirings (- 4.2%) The negative figure is for debtors 2019/20, once received will equal this figure out to zero. No hirings currently allowed due to Coronavirus (since 23/3/20). Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1001 Weddings (0%) All weddings currently postponed until further notice, £6,301 held in 'Receipts in Advance' for weddings awaiting new date or confirmation of going ahead in 20120/21. Recommendation: No further action</p>
Cost Centre 202 – Walton Community Hall
<p>4110 Rates (10.2%) Rates are paid over 10 months only. Recommendation: No further action</p>
<p>4122 Electricity (15.7%) 12 bills included 2019/20 – this represents March bill. Supplier changing 5th June 2020 on a rolling 30 day contract (100% renewable). Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1000 Hirings (- 5.5%) The negative figure is for debtors 2019/20, once received will equal this figure out to zero. No hirings currently allowed due to Coronavirus (since 23/3/20). Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>

Cost Centre 203 – Broadway House
<p>1030 Leases, Rents & Licences (0.0%) Annual receipt to be invoiced in July. Recommendation: No further action.</p>
Cost Centre 204 – Cemetery
<p>4110 Rates (9.9%) Rates are paid over 10 months only. Recommendation: No further action</p>
<p>4300 Vehicle Running Costs (19.8%) Some costs are front loaded e.g. Truck Tax & MOT paid for the year. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1032 Mobile Phone Mast (0.0%) Paid annually, invoiced in June. Recommendation: No further action</p>
<p>1100 Interment Fees (-0.4%) £1,176 (2.9%) invoiced, awaiting payment plus £3310 to be invoiced (8.3%). The negative figure is for debtors 2019/20, once received it will equal this figure out. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1120 Purchase of Graves (-6.2%) £3,448 (19.7%) invoiced, awaiting payment plus £3,057 to be invoiced (17%). The negative figure is for debtors 2019/20, income allowed for during 2019/20, once received will equal this figure out. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1130 Memorials (-16.7%) £262 (2%) invoiced, awaiting payment plus £200 to be invoiced (1.5%). £577 (4.4%) still outstanding for 2019/20 (£2,796 paid 18/5/20) when paid the negative figure for debtors 2019/20, will become zero. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1140 Upkeep of Grave Spaces (0.0%) Invoiced in July. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1160 Admin Fees (-4.1%) No invoices for 2020/21 yet. £94 (4.1%) invoiced, awaiting payment. The negative figure is for debtors 2019/20, , once received will equal this figure out. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
Cost Centre 205 – Allotments
<p>4115 Water and Sewerage (9.8%) This represents a refund of £342 due for year 2019/20, which will equal this figure to zero when received. So actual % spent is zero at end of month 1. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a monthly basis.</p>
<p>1080 Allotment Rents (-0.1%) The negative figure is for debtors 2019/20, once received will equal this figure out. Majority of Allotment rents are billed annually in September. Recommendation: No further action</p>

Cost Centre 301 – Civic & Community
<p>1800 Agency Income (0%) CCTV contribution from SCDC, invoice in July Recommendation: No further action</p>
<p>4675 Youth Forum (- 46.3%) Expenditure for 2019-20 allowed for awaiting invoices delayed due to Coronavirus, will equal this figure to zero when received. Recommendation: No further action</p>
Cost Centre 302 – Grants
<p>4655 Occasional Grants (32.4%) Coronavirus Grants are being considered on an ‘as received’ basis. Recommendation: Continue to monitor on a regular basis.</p>
Cost Centre 303 – Felixstowe in Flower
<p>1810 Donations & Sponsorship (0%) All sponsorship for baskets received in 2020/21 to be rolled over to next year. Funds being kept in ‘Receipts in Advance’ Recommendation: No further action.</p>
Cost Centre 305 – Community Fund Projects
<p>4625 Felixstowe Harwich Ferry (100.0%) Paid over at start of Financial Year. Recommendation: No further action.</p>
<p>4680 New Community Projects (- 4.1%) Represents £1,769 received from refund of PCSO March 2020. Recommendation: No further action.</p>

Committee is requested to consider the budget monitoring report to 30 April 2020 and decide on any action it deems necessary.

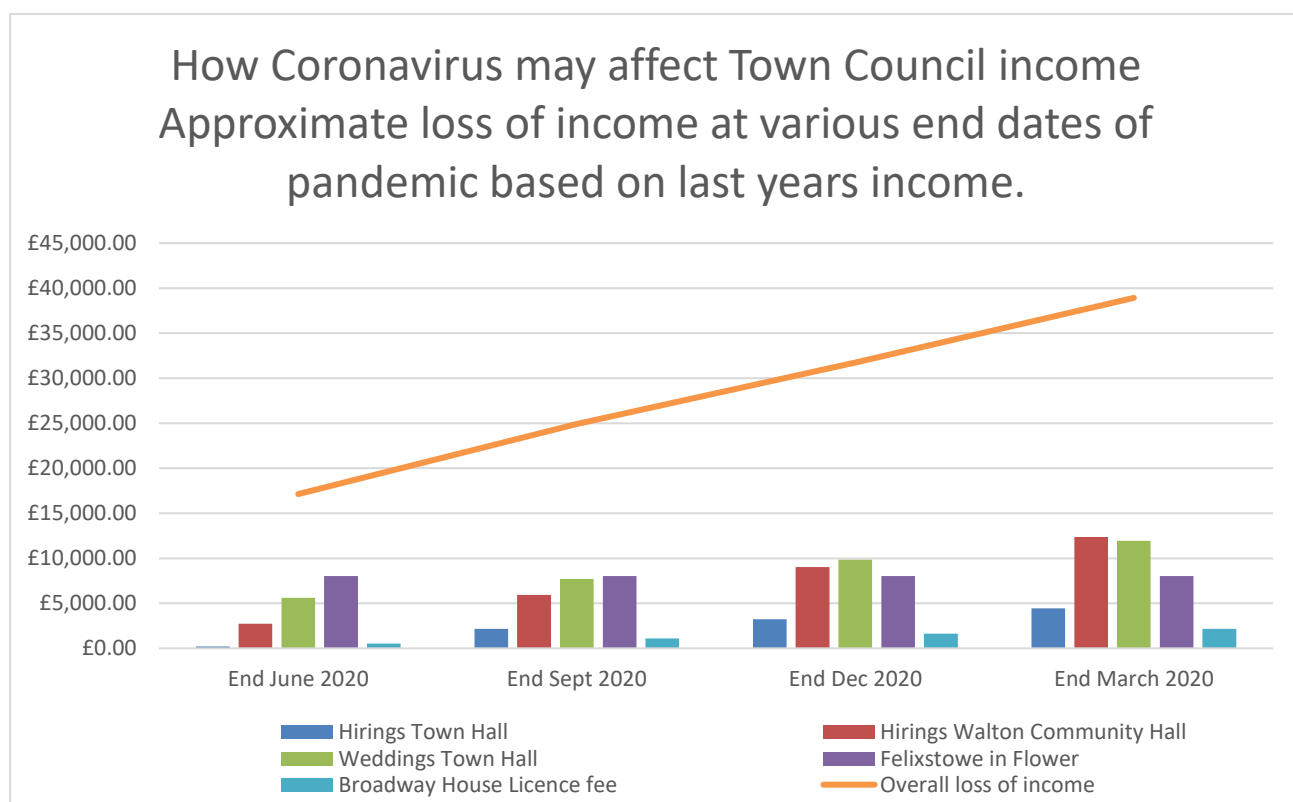
AGENDA ITEM 8: FINANCIAL IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS

As requested at the Council meeting on 6 May 2020, the following information will provide an insight to how the Coronavirus may affect the Town Council's financial accounts.

As most of the Town Council's income (78.7% of projected income in 2020/21) is derived from the precept, the impact on income will be limited. The precept for 2020/21 is £600,570, whereas initial estimates for other income budgeted for £162,420 to be received.

Below are some figures based on last year's income, to show the projected loss of income at quarterly time points i.e. how much Council is likely to lose if normality returns on 1 July, 1 Sept, 1 Jan or if the pandemic affects the full year.

This ranges from a decrease of 2.4% overall loss of income (or 11.4% of expected 'other income') if normality returns in July to a 5.1% overall loss of income (or 24% loss of 'other income') if the pandemic prevents gatherings for the full year.



	End June 2020	End Sept 2020	End Dec 2020	End March 2020
Hirings Town Hall	£220.00	£2,148.00	£3,236.00	£4,425.00
Hirings Walton Community Hall	£2,723.00	£5,940.00	£9,020.00	£12,377.00
Weddings Town Hall	£6,972.00	£9,953.00	£10,940.00	£11,927.00
Felixstowe in Flower	£8,021.00	£8,021.00	£8,021.00	£8,021.00
Broadway House Licence fee	£543.25	£1,086.50	£1,629.75	£2,173.00
Overall loss of income	£18,479.25	£27,148.50	£32,846.75	£38,923.00

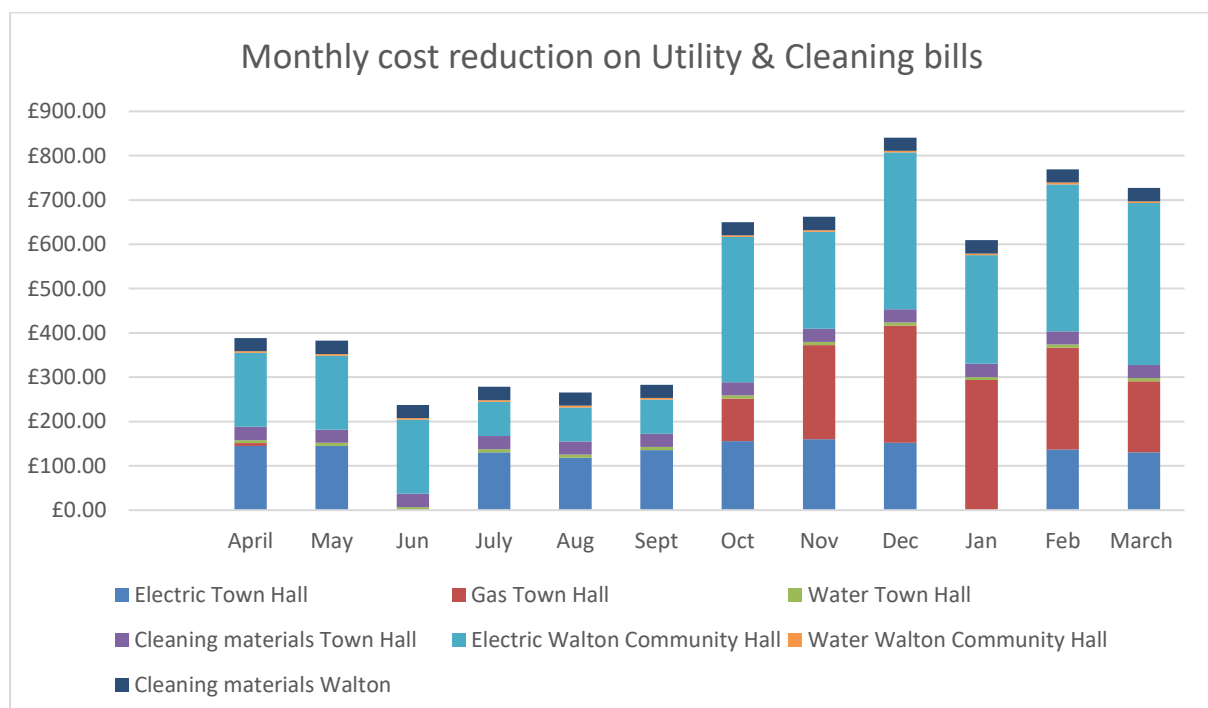
As agreed at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 24 March 2020 (minute #516 xiii 2019/20 refers), all sponsorship for Felixstowe in Flower will be carried forward to next year, so the loss, working from last year's figures will be around £8,000.

Weddings are mostly being postponed, so it is likely that there will be a commensurate increase in wedding bookings once restrictions are eased. £6,301 is currently the amount of payments we have received for weddings this year which are currently being held in a receipts in advance budget code awaiting confirmation that they can go ahead, with a further £4,998 invoiced awaiting payment. Should no further bookings or weddings be allowed to go ahead this year, the total income would therefore remain at £11,299. Most of the April/May/June booking have re-booked for the same date next year.

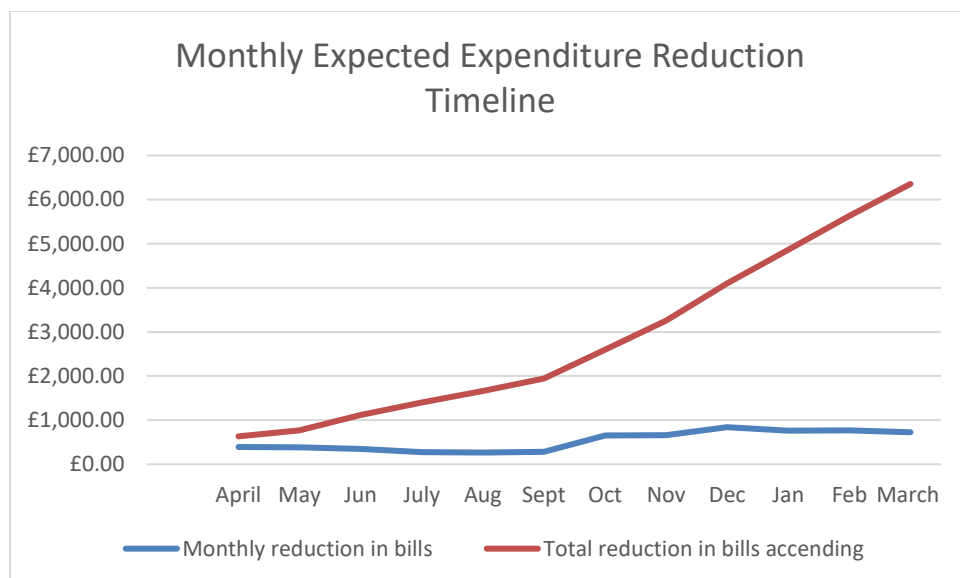
There has currently been no significant change to the total number of burials (April/May 2019 there were 2 Burials and 8 Urn burials and for the same period this year 6 Burials and 3 Urn burials). It is possible that families are delaying the interment of ashes until a time that a full complement of family members can attend funeral services, which would lead to an increase in cemetery income when compared to the figures above. We may also see an increase in memorial applications, but this will not be known for some time.

There is likely to be a decrease in bank interest, in particular the 1 year fixed bond with Close Brothers which ends in July, they are currently still offering 0.9% but this is likely to change when it is time for Council to renew.

There will be some savings in terms of expenditure for utilities and cleaning costs while the Town Hall and Walton Community Hall are empty. These range from a cost reduction of £265 in a Summer month to £850 in a Winter month. The following graph shows the monthly cost reductions :



Over the forthcoming year, the graph below gives an idea of the cost reductions over time, depending on when things may return to normal. E.g. if activities recommence on 1 July we would have saved approximately £1,120 in bills, 1 October £2,597, 1 January £4,859 and after one year £6,355.



In January, the budget showed an income budget overall of £762,990 and expenditure budget of £711,963 with £51,027 for General Reserves. Below are projected figures on the net loss of income.

	End June 2020	End Sept 2020	End Dec 2020	End March 2020
Loss of income	-£18,479	-£27,148	-£32,846	-£38,923
Reduction in expenditure	£1,120	£1,947	£4,100	£6,354
Net loss of income	-£17,359	-£25,201	-£28,746	-£32,569

Council has a responsibility to consider how any event such as the Coronavirus Pandemic may impact on its finances. As part of the Annual Governance Statement which will be signed the Mayor and Clerk, subject to Council approval in June, Council will need to confirm that it has considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.

Members may therefore wish to consider whether the 2020/21 budget needs to be revisited to take into account the loss of income or any change in expenditure and at what point this should be done. At the next meeting of Finance & Governance Committee on 17 July, the impact will be a little clearer than it is currently.

Committee is requested to consider the Coronavirus finance report and decide on any action it deems necessary.

AGENDA ITEM 10: STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 states that a Council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control which

- facilitates the effective exercise of its functions and the achievement of its aims and objectives;
- ensures that the financial and operational management of the authority is effective; and
- includes effective arrangements for the management of risk.

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.

The Council must operate an overall system of internal control appropriate to its expenditure and activity. As part of its system of internal control, the Council arranges for an internal audit where someone, other than the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and acting independently of the Council, scrutinises the Council's financial systems.

The system of internal control is designed to ensure that the Council's activities are carried out properly and as intended. Internal controls are set up by the RFO but it falls on the Council Members to ensure that they have a degree of control and understanding of those controls. Controls will include the checking of routine financial procedures; the examination of financial comparisons; the recording of assets and liabilities; the identification of risk and to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

Council's Statement of Internal Control for the year ending 31 March 2021 is presented in draft with tracked changes for consideration at **Appendix B**.

Committee is requested to review and recommend to Council, its Statement of Internal Control for the 2020/21 financial year as drafted for consideration at Appendix B.

AGENDA ITEM 11: CYBER RISK INSURANCE

Like many organisations across the public and voluntary sectors, Council collects, stores and processes quantities of personal data. Appropriate safeguards are put in place to protect this data and reduce the risk of it falling into the wrong hands. As requested by Members a quote for Cyber Insurance £308 has been obtained from the Council's insurers, Zurich, for £308 as shown at **Appendix C**

Cyber risks include:

- hackers
- malware / virus
- a 'denial of service' attack, when a hacker or virus stops you from accessing some or all of your computer systems
- inadequate security resulting in data breaches
- intrusion into the business through an employee's social networking account
- employees accessing company data through their own smartphones or tablets
- 'rogue' employees stealing data
- negligent employees sending incorrect data, losing hardware etc

A cyber attack results in both direct and indirect costs:

- loss / damage to computer network assets
- business interruption and extra expense
- reputation damage following loss of data or failure of service
- compensation, civil damages
- regulatory awards and fines, plus defence costs
- customer care

There is currently £72 remaining in the Insurance budget, the remaining cost could come out of the IT Maintenance & Software budget.

Committee is requested to consider the Cyber Insurance quotation from Council's current Insurers Zurich at a cost of £308.

AGENDA ITEM 12: IT SYSTEMS AND SUPPORT

Members have asked that the Committee consider improving the Council's IT capabilities.

Council's IT hardware at the Town Hall currently consists of six desktop PCs and a laptop, of varying ages.

As an urgent response to the coronavirus lockdown measures and to enable home working, the Council's six administrative staff are using a combination of four desktop PCs taken home from the Town Hall, a privately-owned tablet and a Council-owned laptop (which was used for P&E meetings). During the first week one of the desktop PCs suffered a terminal hard drive failure and a second desktop PC had to be transported from the Town Hall to the staff member's home.

Up to date business laptops would enable improvements to home and mobile working environments, allowing greater flexibility whether at the Town Hall or off-site and ensure that the team has the technical capacity required to meet the ever-increasing digital processes.

To give an indication of costs for upgrading Town Hall IT equipment to a good standard, the Clerk has made enquiries and the Town Council has been accepted on Dell's government framework, as used by East Suffolk Council.

Equipment	Cost (ex. VAT)
Latitude 7400 2in1 BTS Configuration With 3 Year ProSupport. ProSupport Includes: Hardware & Software Support, 24x7 availability and Next Business Day Onsite Service	£1,094.35
Dell Dock WD19 180W (To connect laptops to power source, pre-existing monitors and peripherals when working onsite)	£143.37
Total cost for 6 workstations:	£7,426.32

Over the long-term, investing in modern mobile hardware will enable the Town Council to transition to a leaner, more agile office environment.

In the meantime, the five desktop PCs that are currently still functional could be returned to the Town Hall and used until end-of-life.

IT support for Members

The introduction of online meetings has also required Councillors to rapidly increase their overall IT skills and has tested the limits of privately owned hardware.

It is accepted that some Members may be more experienced than others with IT hardware and software. However, enhancing the level of off-site support available to all Council Members and staff may be valuable.

Similarly, the Council may wish to consider the appropriateness of expecting its Members to use privately owned devices for Council business and the varying capabilities of home equipment to process intensive audio-visual applications, such as videoconferencing for Council meetings.

As such, Committee may wish to consider a recommendation to Council to provide appropriate funds to invest in business laptops for Members use during their Council career.

Councillors are currently provided a felixstowe.gov.uk email address via Microsoft Exchange Online (Plan 1) at a cost of £3.80 per Member per month. This is a basic plan which does not include Microsoft Office 365. If Members are to be provided with a laptop for Council business, this basic plan should be upgraded to Microsoft Office 365 Business Standard at £9.40 per Member per month. This would incur an additional total licence cost of £1,075.20 per year.

Council's IT Hardware Earmarked Reserve currently stands at £3,117. However, at yearend 31 March 20 the General Fund Reserve balance stood at £447,003, an increase of £61,402 since the previous year (£385,601). Council could approve a transfer from the General Fund Reserve to the IT Hardware Earmarked Reserve to enable a wholesale upgrade to its IT capabilities.

Committee is requested to consider the Council's IT capabilities and make any recommendation to Council it deems necessary.
