

# MINUTES OF A VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE ESTABLISHMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020 AT 7.00PM

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## Committee Members present:

B Collier, A Cooper (Chairman), Mrs M Cooper, S Hayes, Mrs J Hyde, B Saunders

## Also present:

Town Clerk – Mrs K Elliott-Turner

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### **25/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none. Councillor Mrs S Bundock was absent without apologies.

### **26/20 DISCLOSURE OF MEMBERS INTERESTS ON MATTERS CONTAINED IN THE AGENDA**

There were none. Members were reminded that if at any time during the meeting they feel they have an interest in an item being discussed, they should declare it at that point.

### **27/20 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – QUESTIONS, COMMENTS & RESPONSES**

There were none in attendance.

### **28/20 CLERK'S REPORT, CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED & MATTERS ARISING FOR INFORMATION**

Nothing to report.

### **29/20 GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Members considered each grant application in turn. Total grant budget available £8,900.

#### **Application 1 – The Need Project**

Amount requested: £1,000

Purpose of grant: towards rental of extra storage for donated items

**RECOMMENDED** that £1,000 is awarded to The Need Project for the purposes specified above.

#### **Application 2 – Conservative Club**

Amount requested: £1,500

Purpose of grant: provision of new children's play area to garden

**RECOMMENDED** that the application for grant to the Conservative Club is not awarded, as it is felt that this is a business-related operation and grant purpose

Councillor Saunders abstained from voting

#### **Application 3 – Poppy Appeal**

Amount requested: £150

Purpose of grant: donation towards Poppy Appeal

**RECOMMENDED** that £150 is awarded to the Poppy Appeal for the purposes specified above.

Members discussed an approach from a local franchise business who was struggling financially due to the coronavirus pandemic, and their request for financial help. This is not something that the Town Council can help with and they should seek help from the Government who may be able to provide some financial support to the self-employed.

### **30/20 GRANT FEEDBACK FORMS**

Members noted feedback forms received from previous awarded grants.

### **31/20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

The Chairman proposed that under section 3d of Standing Orders, the press and public are temporarily excluded whilst matters pertaining to staff are discussed and that they be instructed to withdraw from the meeting for the following agenda item only. **PASSED by members.**

### **32/20 ASSISTANT CLERK SALARY REVIEW**

A confidential report was previously circulated to committee members. Following the Assistant Clerk's appraisal, a salary review was undertaken, and a recommendation proposed by the Clerk.

**RESOLVED** that the recommended amendments to the Assistant Clerk's Job Description and increase in contract salary pay bracket is approved and implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

At the conclusion of this item, the press and public were permitted to return to the meeting.

### **33/20 PRECEPT FOR 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR**

Members considered a report from the Clerk, with her calculations for the required precept to be requested from Central Beds Council for the financial year 2021/2022, based on requested committee budgets, for recommendation to council.

The Band D property figure for the current year for Stotfold is 3316, increasing to 3413 for 2021/2022. The proposed precept increase of £24,886 from 2020/2021 is an increase of 4.9%, equating to a 1.9% increase on Band D figures, or an increase of £4.39 per Band D property over the year, which is £0.07 increase per week.

The Clerk advised that proposed actions have been taken to reduce the precept figure, as follows: reduction in staff salary figure by £12,000 as the S106 Agreement for the Greenacre Centre includes this sum per year for 9 years; the S106 Agreement also allows for £205 salary insurance (fidelity) for a period of 9 years, plus £1,114.64 for Greenacre Centre building insurance for a period of 20 years, giving a total reduction to the insurance budget requirement of £1,350. A further proposed reduction in the request from Cemetery earmarked reserves – Projects, and £5,000 reduction in Recreation Grounds, Public Lands & Lighting request for earmarked reserves – Rec Rolling Improvements.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Stotfold Town Council precept figure of £534,537 for 2021/2022 be submitted to Central Bedfordshire Council. This figure has taken into

account the proposed actions to reduce the figure, which was approved for recommendation.

**34/20 ITEMS FOR INFORMATION PURPOSES, RELEVANT TO THIS COMMITTEE ONLY**

With regard to the enquiry about support for the self-employed, the Government's website has information on small business grants 'Support for business and self-employed people during coronavirus'.

Members were advised that the Churches Together Coronavirus Support Group will officially be disbanding early next year, as the number of people being supported has fallen to one. They will therefore return the previously awarded Town Council grant of £1,500.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.36pm

**MINUTES APPROVED (date):**

**SIGNED BY CHAIRMAN:**