

208. QUARTERLY BANK RECONCILIATIONS

It was confirmed that Cllr D Savage, as the Council's nominated Quarterly Bank Reconciliation Signatory (*Min #12 2021/22 refers*), had signed the reconciliation between the bank statement and Scribe accounts to confirm the amounts agreed each month.

RESOLVED that it be noted that the reconciliations between the bank statement and accounts statements for the period 1 April – 30 September 2021 had been reviewed and signed by Cllr D Savage.

209. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

Council noted that the External Audit for the Financial Year 2020/21 had been completed on 11 September 2021, with no formal or any other matters being raised.

Members recorded a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and the Finance Admin Assistant for their work to support Council's continuing clear and unqualified audits.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Annual Governance and Accountability Return including Audit Certificate, be approved and accepted as presented; and,**
- ii. it be noted that, in accordance with the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 as defined by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, the Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been put on the Town Hall noticeboard from 14 September and is available to view on the Financial Page of the Town Council Website.**

210. INTERIM AUDIT REPORT: YEAR 2021/22

Committee considered the interim Internal Audit Report for 2021/22, which had been completed with no formal recommendations being made.

Members noted the comments of the internal auditor.

RESOLVED that the Interim Internal Audit Report for the period 1 April 2021 - 30 September 2021 be noted.

211. SCRIBE CEMETERY SOFTWARE PACAKGE

Committee considered a report on cemetery management software licence costs. It was noted that current provider, Clearskies, had increased the annual support fee for their BACAS software from £850 to £1,000 this year. It was noted that this programme was the only remaining software installed on the

Town Council's ageing file server, with all other software being hosted in the cloud, or web based. Clearskies was able to offer a cloud-hosted platform solution at a cost of around £5,000 per year.

As an alternative, a subscription fee for Scribe's web-based cemetery package costs £59 per month, an annual of total £708, with a one-off set-up fee of £497. All costs subject to VAT.

Town Council Officers had been trialling the software and working with Scribe – the Council's accounting management software provider – to introduce further innovations. Members congratulated the Deputy Town Clerk and Finance Administration Assistant for having been given a 'Top Contributor' award on behalf of the Town Council for at the recent Scribefest conference, which had been attended by over 300 Town and Parish Councils.

Members agreed that the Scribe package was a superior alternative to BACAS. The Clerk confirmed that ownership of the data would be retained by the Council in full compliance with GDPR.

In response to Members' queries, the Finance Administration Assistant would look in to whether genealogical searches by the public would be a possible feature of this software.

RESOLVED that the Council should subscribe to the Scribe Cemetery software package.

212. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Committee considered the report on the Community Infrastructure Levy and the CIL Annual Report for 2020/21.

It was noted that the CIL Annual Report would be published on the Council's website and sent to East Suffolk Council by the 31st December 2021 deadline.

The Clerk drew Members' attention to two recent CIL receipts which had increased the current CIL balance to £128,883.23. Committee noted that the Civic & Community had recommended to Council that CIL funding of £10,000 be put towards a replacement community hut for the Felixstowe Allotment Association.

Members then considered a recent approach from Felixstowe Rugby Club for funding towards floodlights and a clubhouse refurbishment. The total cost of this project was anticipated to cost around £200,000. The Rugby Club was seeking support from the Town Council from £12,000-30,000 towards this project.

Members noted that, whilst CIL funding given to FTC can only be spent in certain ways, which could include funding projects that are delivered by others, it was not essentially a 'grant fund' which the Council would expect to receive applications for. As such, it was agreed that the Clerk should advise the Rugby

Club that the Committee would not be recommending the use of CIL funding towards the project at this time, however Members were interested in finding out more about the project and there may be other avenues for funding from the Council which could be explored in due course.

Committee discussed how community groups may increasingly be seeking significant funding for capital projects and, as such, the Town Council could consider a formalised 'Capital Grants Fund' which would enable applications for more significant funding than the Occasional Grants fund to be considered. It was noted that the benefits of this, over the use of CIL for such purposes, would include being able to define the parameters, the eligibility criteria, limits, and timeframe, with funding being able to have a potentially broader scope than CIL. CIL funding would then be largely expected to be used for community infrastructure projects that the Town Council would be delivering directly, or in partnership.

It was RESOLVED that:

- i. the Community Infrastructure Levy Annual Report for 2021/21 be approved as presented and published on the Council's website before 31st December 2020 and sent to East Suffolk Council, and;**
- ii. the setting up of a Capital Grants Fund be investigated, with a draft proposal to be brought back to Committee for consideration in due course.**

213. PUBLIC WORK LOANS BOARD

Committee considered a report on the Council's PWLB loan. It was noted that the Finance Administration Assistant had been investigating whether there would be any cost saving, in terms of the interest due, should Council settle the loan early. However, there would be no significant reduction in cost as Council would be liable to repay the majority of the interest due over the whole term, even if settled early.

As the returns for investing the same amount in an interest bearing account would far exceed any small saving by paying of the loan, it was agreed that there would be no value in settling early.

RESOLVED that the Public Works Loan Board report be noted with no action deemed necessary at this time.

214. PCC CRIME AND POLICING PLAN CONSULATION

Committee considered the PCC's proposed new Police and Crime Plan which had been put to public consultation until Monday 22nd November 2021, before being presented to the Police and Crime Panel in January.

It was agreed that the Clerk should respond to the consultation as follows:

Felixstowe Town Council would like the Police and Crime Commissioner to provide additional visible policing resources, understanding that this will take time to deliver on an equitable basis to meet the competing demands of Suffolk towns.

Whilst we understand that the nature of crime and policing has changes over the past few years, a visible police presence provides much needed reassurance to the public, particularly following recent high-profile public incidents.

Felixstowe Town Council would also wish to see more information about recent trends, in both regional and national crime statistics that underpin the strategy.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk respond to the consultation on the PCC's proposed new Police and Crime Plan as agreed above.

215. CLOSURE

The meeting was closed at 9.12pm. The next meeting was noted as being scheduled for Wednesday 8 December 2021 at 7.30pm.

Date: _____

Chairman: _____