

MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING held virtually on Monday 22 June 2020, 7pm

Present:

Cllr B J Martin	Cllr Saunders	Cllr Irwin
Deputy Mayor Cllr T Martin	Cllr Barker	Cllr Knights
The Mayor Cllr Reynolds	Cllr Hook	

In Attendance:

L Bareham (Town Clerk)

133.	<p><u>Apologies</u> None</p>	
134.	<p><u>Declarations of Pecuniary Interest</u> None</p>	
135.	<p><u>Minutes and Matters Arising</u> Cllr Barker noted the £10k should reference that the application was for business rates relief. It was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Hook and on being put to the meeting it was <i>RESOLVED to accept the Minutes of the Meeting dated 26th May 2020</i></p>	
136.	<p><u>Supporting the Renewal of the Town Offer</u> Cllr Saunders noted the two papers; a report on the way forward and a record of responses to the Town Clerk’s letter. The Rotary Club had also expressed an interest and were willing to hold any funds raised. An initial meeting of a focus group was recommended and draft terms of reference were presented. Cllr Saunders confirmed this campaign was to add value to what organisations were already doing. This was not about the regeneration of local businesses, although supportive, this group would leave that to others. He further suggested this would be a long term project over a couple of years, with the Mayor and one other councillor as representative, with the Town Council administering the group. Cllr Hook agreed that was valuable and to invite organisations to take part in discussions where value is added. He suggested where youth organisations were unable to open, young people could be redirected to volunteer therefore promoting different opportunities.</p>	

	<p>Cllrs Hook and T Martin both agreed that Item 4 of ToR, encouraging more use of local services and locally produced products and encouraging more visits to the town should be undertaken by the Traders' association and needed to be engaged early on as events may affect ability to trade.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Saunders, seconded by Cllr Knights and on being put to the meeting it was RESOLVED to accept the recommendations of the Protecting and Renewing Community Assets: Next Steps report.</p>	<p>JS/ LB</p>
137.	<p><u>Faversham Market</u></p> <p>Cllr Irwin noted the Faversham Market Proposal to provide support as part of the town centre recovery plan. Faversham Market is run by a co-operative. The FTC benchmarking report from 2017 found that footfall was double during market days. It was suggested that the provision of a desk space should be provided with a time limited sub-letting agreement and a peppercorn rent. The amendment was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Irwin and agreed.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Irwin, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was RESOLVED to offer a desk space to Faversham Market Co-operative with a sub-letting agreement and peppercorn rent.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Irwin, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was RESOLVED to investigate marketing support, accounting support and insurance further.</p>	<p>LB</p> <p>JI</p>
138.	<p><u>Town Marketing Group</u></p> <p>Cllr Knights noted the report following two Zoom meetings held with traders. The TMG had discussed at length the issues raised regarding disabled drivers and deliveries during road closures. Having considered using 12 Market Place for deliveries, the potential issues of staffing, health and safety, insurance and liability were too complicated.</p> <p>The TMG supports the current road closures and the additional closure of Preston Street to aid social distancing and provide additional seating areas for cafes and restaurants. Cllr Knights further noted that SBC were formulating a recovery plan and the Town Council was only a consultee. Helen Whately's letter was read out, but the general consensus was the Town Council was supporting the government guidelines.</p>	

Cllr B J Martin confirmed that all concerns had been given due consideration but the recommendations allowed other businesses in town to operate. He noted that the £134k funding was from the European Union and not the government and was to be used across the borough. Cllr B J Martin acknowledged a loud minority of traders were against, but a silent majority and the public were in support. The Town Council was currently in consultation with SBC to open up more disabled bays, however he noted that there were disabled bays in Central, Partridge and Institute car parks. He agreed the need to maintain the safety of people in the town with the maximum number of traders opening.

Cllr Saunders agreed, he noted the MP mentioned some complaints but no concrete issues. Having been in the town earlier that morning Cllr Saunders had seen plenty of deliveries being made before 10am and felt traders were beginning to make the change. He suggested that businesses meet the needs of their customers, perhaps by providing wheelchairs. However, he also acknowledged the community spirit and people would help each other. If a meeting was held with the MP then it should be about engaging in ways to make the road closures work rather than discussing exemptions.

Cllr T Martin acknowledged the need to make recommendations on road closures quickly to meet deadlines, despite any possible changes in government guidelines. He also noted that any towns with paid security at gates were all BIDs (Business Improvement Districts which are funded by the businesses and not tax payers). He was aware that the FTA was against BIDs.

Cllr Hook proposed an amendment to the recommendation to allow one or two traders to make a persuasive case to have a key, with the agreement of the highways authority. The trader would be responsible for opening the gate and the safety of the vehicle driving through the pedestrian area.

Cllr B J Martin raised concerns if the hospitality trade were utilising the outdoor space and felt that deliveries could be made on pallets, as the duty was on the company to deliver.

Cllr Saunders was against the amendment and agreed with Cllr B J Martin, there was no indication that businesses couldn't organise deliveries outside the road closures and it would be a mistake to move away from the original recommendation.

	<p>There was no seconder to the amendment, which fell.</p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Reynolds and on being put to the meeting it was RESOLVED that the Town Clerk wrote a letter of response to Helen Whately MP welcoming engagement with the town</p>	
139.	<p><u>Statement of Internal Control</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was RECOMMENDED to accept the Statement of Internal Control</p>	
140.	<p><u>Audit Report</u></p> <p>Thanks were noted for officers in receiving a good internal audit. It was proposed by Cllr Irwin, seconded by Cllr T Martin and on being put to the meeting it was RECOMMENDED to accept the Internal Audit Report</p>	
141.	<p><u>Standing Orders</u></p> <p>It was proposed by Cllr Barker, seconded by Cllr Irwin and on being put to the meeting it was RECOMMENDED to adopt the Standing Orders</p>	
142.	<p><u>Website Design</u></p> <p>As Faversham.org is closed, the FTC site will need to include community information. The current design is old fashioned and needs navigation on top and left. It was agreed that Cllrs Barker and Hook would work with the Town Clerk to devise a specification for tenders.</p>	
143.	<p><u>Town Jetty Update</u></p> <p>Cllr B J Martin expressed his thanks to Brian Pain for going above and beyond in repairing the full jetty. Cllr T Martin agreed and asked that the Town Clerk write to thank Mr Pain. It was agreed that an independent report would be required to confirm the safety of the jetty before boats could start to moor alongside.</p> <p>Works were due to be completed by the end of July.</p>	
144.	<p><u>The Guildhall Pest Control</u></p> <p>Two quotations were provided to renew the netting to the tower of the Guildhall. Bird mess was causing a health hazard to areas accessed by staff and the clock winder. A third quote required an attendance fee so was not acquired. It was proposed by Cllr T Martin, seconded by Cllr Reynolds and on being put to the meeting</p>	

	it was RESOLVED to accept the lower quotation	
145.	<p><u>Code of Conduct Consultation</u></p> <p>Cllr Saunders offered to work with the Town Clerk. Cllr T Martin suggested a small group consisting of Cllrs Saunders, Knights and Reynolds. Cllr Barker thought it was a good document but we needed to avoid any further groups. It was agreed to send comments direct to the Town Clerk and the Town Council's formal response should be copied to SBC's Monitoring Officer and sent direct to the LGA.</p>	
146.	<p><u>Items for Agenda</u></p> <p>Cllr Saunders asked about proposals for the Creek Bridge steering group. Cllr Hook thought numbers should not be restricted as it's a major financial and organisational project. As it is commercially sensitive it was agreed to have an item on the next Town Council agenda in private session.</p> <p>When should the Town Council start face to face meetings.</p>	
Meeting ended at 20.47		
Date of next meeting 27 th July 7pm		