



## WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Shire Hall Market Hill Woodbridge Suffolk IP12 4LP

Locum Town Clerk: Mr G E Diaper

Tel: 01394 383599

Email: [townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk)



---

### TO MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Cllr Bale      | Cllr Sanders   |
| Cllr Gillard   | Cllr Sutton    |
| Cllr Holdcroft | Cllr Sylvester |
| Cllr O’Nolan   | Cllr Walsh     |

You are hereby summoned to attend the **MEETING** of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE** to be held virtually on: **TUESDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> FEBRUARY 2021 at 6PM**

Greg Diaper  
Locum Town Clerk  
17<sup>th</sup> February 2021

#### ***Public Attendance***

*Members of the public and press are welcome to join the Zoom meeting. Members of the public will be invited to give their views/questions the Town Council on issues on the agenda, or raise issues for consideration or inclusion at future meetings. This item will be limited to 15 minutes duration but may be extended at the discretion of the Mayor. The Zoom login details are provided below;*

#### **Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85925128634?pwd=RTNRUTNTa2g3Q0QrUS9hekN1RTJKdz09>

Meeting ID: 859 2512 8634

Passcode: 328440

#### **AGENDA**

- 1. APOLOGIES**  
To receive apologies for absence.
- 2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Local Non-Pecuniary Interests that they may have in relation to items on the Agenda and are also reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the

meeting if it becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.

**3. TO CONSIDER REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS**

Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest in an item on this Agenda, who wish to remain, speak and/or vote during consideration of that item, may apply for a dispensation in writing to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. Applications may also be considered at the meeting itself should the nature of the interest become apparent to a Councillor at the time of the meeting.

**4. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021**

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

For the public to ask questions of the Committee or raise issues for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

**6. TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INTERNAL AUDIT 2021/2022 – ATTACHED.**

**7. TO REVIEW THE GRANTS POLICY – ATTACHED.**

**8. TO NOTE THE EXISTENCE OF THE ELMHURST PARK AND KINGSTON FIELD CHARITIES AND AGREE A WAY FORWARD – ATTACHED.**

**9. CLOSURE**

## WOODBIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of an **on-line** meeting of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2021** at 7.30pm

### Councillors:

Present: S Bale, P Gillard, G Holdcroft, E O’Nolan, R Sanders, M Sutton

Apologies: C Walsh

Absent without  
Apologies: M Sylvester

In Attendance: Locum Town Clerk and Locum Deputy Town Clerk

*Action*

### 781. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Walsh.

### 782. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sutton declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 786 as a Director of Woodbridge Riverside Trust.

Councillor Holdcroft declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 786 as a Director of Choose Woodbridge and as Chair of the Regatta Committee.

Councillor Bale declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 786 as a Trustee of the Tide Mill Trust

Councillor Gillard declared a local non-pecuniary interest in item 786 as a Trustee of the Tide Mill Trust

No other Members had any interest in matters on the agenda.

### 783. TO CONSIDER REQUEST FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests from Councillors with a pecuniary interest in an item on this Agenda for a dispensation.

### 784. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2020

The Committee received and approved the signing of the minutes of the meeting 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 as a true record.

**785. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no members of the public present.

**786. TO CONSIDER FUTURE FINANCIAL DEMANDS ON THE COUNCIL AND THE IMPLICATIONS THEREOF AND THE SIXTH DRAFT BUDGET AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL**

The Committee agreed to recommend to Full Council that the net budget to be set for financial year 2021/2022 should be £343,101, and that the precept to be demanded from East Suffolk Council should be £343,101.

**787. CLOSURE**

The meeting was closed at 8.11pm.

Councillor Sutton  
Chair

## **ITEM 6**

### **TO REVIEW AND AGREE THE TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INTERNAL AUDIT 2021/2022**

The Council has previously appointed the Suffolk Association of Local Councils as its independent internal auditor, and they are undertaking, as agreed, three internal audits each year and reporting in accordance with the following terms of reference:-

#### ***Internal Audit Objectives and Responsibilities***

*The primary objective of Internal Audit is to review, appraise and report upon the adequacy of internal control systems operating throughout the council, and to achieve this will adopt a predominantly systems-based approach to audit.*

*The council's internal control system comprises the whole network of systems established within the council to provide reasonable assurance that the council's objectives will be achieved, with particular reference to:*

- *The effectiveness of operations*
- *The economic and efficient use of resources*
- *Compliance with applicable policies, procedures, laws, and regulations*
- *The safeguarding of assets and interests from losses of all kinds, including those arising from fraud, irregularity, and corruption.*
- *The integrity and reliability of information, accounts, and data*

*Accordingly, in the conduct of planned audits Internal Audit may:*

- *Carry out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls expected to be in operation during the financial year in order to be able to complete Section 4 (Annual internal audit report) of the Annual Return*
- *Review the reliability and integrity of financial information and the means used to identify, measure, classify and report such information*
- *Review the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verify the existence of such assets*
- *Appraise the economy and efficiency with which resources are employed, identify opportunities to improve performance and recommend solutions to problems*
- *Review the established systems to ensure compliance with those policies, procedures, laws and regulations which could have a significant impact on operations, and determine whether the council is in compliance*
- *Review the operations and activities to ascertain whether results are consistent with objectives and whether they are being carried out as planned*

#### ***The Scope of Internal Audit Activity***

*There are no limitations on Internal Audit's scope of activities. The scope of Internal Audit allows for unrestricted coverage of the council's activities, including both financial and non-financial systems of internal control.*

### **Independence**

*The main determinant of the effectiveness of Internal Audit is that it is seen to be independent in its planning and operation. To ensure this, Internal Audit will operate within a framework that allows:*

- *Unrestricted access to the officers of the council*
- *Reporting in its own name*
- *Segregation from the day to day operations of the council*

*Every effort will be made to preserve objectivity by ensuring that all Internal Auditors are free from any conflicts of interest and do not undertake any non-audit duties on behalf of the council.*

### **Rights of Access**

*There are no limitations on Internal Audit's access to records. Internal Auditors have the authority to:*

- *access council premises at reasonable times agreed in advance*
- *access all assets, records, documents, correspondence and control systems*
- *receive any information and explanation considered necessary concerning any matter under consideration*
- *require any employee to the council to account for cash, stores or any other council asset under his/her control*
- *access records belonging to third parties, such as contractors when required*

### **The Councils Responsibilities**

*The Responsible Financial Officer and Proper Officer have clearly defined responsibilities for Risk Management, Internal Control, Internal Audit and preventing Fraud and Corruption.*

*The existence of Internal Audit does not diminish the responsibility of the council to establish systems of internal control to ensure that activities are conducted in a secure and well-ordered manner.*

### **Reporting**

*The Internal Auditor will formally report the results of audits and the recommendations made to the council and will follow up at subsequent Internal Audits to make sure that corrective actions are taken.*

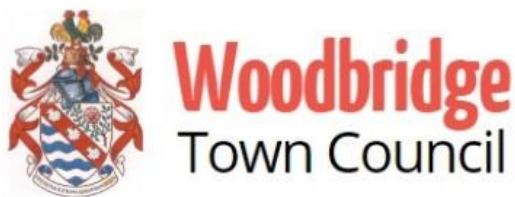
**Members are to review the above and determine if any changes are required prior to commissioning internal audit services for the year 2021/2022**

ITEM 7

TO REVIEW THE GRANTS POLICY

The Council's current Grants Policy is as shown overleaf:-

Members are to consider whether any changes are to be made to the policy ahead of the Grants Scheme being advertised for 2021/2022



## **Grants Policy**

### **Introduction**

Woodbridge Town Council recognises the immense value of voluntary and community activity and its contribution to residents' well-being, the local economy and the sustainability of a wide range of services which benefit visitors and people living and working in the town. The following policy and procedures are based on the principles of fairness, responsiveness to local need, generosity and accountability.

Woodbridge Town Council has the authority to make grants under the Local Government Act 1972, s 137, which allows a local authority to spend a limited amount on activities for which it has no specific power, but which the authority considers 'will bring direct benefit to the area, or any part of it or all of some of its inhabitants'. The Local Government and Housing Act 1989 added the requirement that the benefit obtained should be commensurate with the expenditure incurred. Whilst this Council gives grants under the General Power of Competence, it follows the rules for s137 as good practice.

Grant requests usually far exceed the funds the Council can earmark for this purpose when setting a budget for the year.

The aim of this policy is to enable the Council to make an informed and fair assessment of relative need and thereby seek to ensure that finite resources are distributed fairly and support the Council's priorities.

### **Principles**

Recipients of previous grants should not assume that they will be awarded a grant in future years. Grants will be awarded on the basis of the criteria and assessment process set out in this policy as amended from time to time.

Grants are awarded at the discretion of the Council.

### **Eligibility Criteria**

Grants will only be awarded to organisations or partnerships which demonstrate that they:

Grants Policy  
Approved: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020  
Review: May 2021

- a) Have a need for grant funding. Grants will not be given to any organisation with significant uncommitted funds
- b) Have, in the opinion of the Council, sound governance arrangements.
- c) Have, in the opinion of the Council, sound financial management.
- d) Represent good value for money.
- e) Have, in the opinion of the Council, sufficient ability to deliver the outcomes anticipated.
- f) Have clear policies on equality and inclusion covering service users, subject to recognised exemptions.

Applications from consortia and partnerships are accepted, when submitted by an organisation accepting lead responsibility for delivery. This organisation must be able to provide evidence and supporting documents confirming their eligibility.

Grants may only be awarded to branches of regional or national organisations which clearly demonstrate how the funding is to be used to specifically benefit the people of Woodbridge.

### **Application and Determination Process**

Information about grants is available on the Council Website.

Grant applications must be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> May to be determined at the July meeting of Full Council. In the event that not all funds are allocated in July a further call for Grant applications will be made in December.

Original applications are available on file for scrutiny by any Councillor. The Town Clerk will provide a summary of the applications for members prior to each approval meeting. Visits to applicants' organisations may be arranged via the Town Clerk.

All organisations in receipt of grants will be required to provide a short report by May of each year (or when the project has completed, if sooner) indicating how the grant was used and the benefits arising.

### **Supporting documentation required**

On the application form, confirmation will be required that the following items are available for inspection if required.

- a) Aims of the organisation /Constitution / Memoranda and Articles / Terms of Reference

- b) Equality and Diversity policies

The application itself must contain the following information:

- a) Names and addresses of key contact
- b) Names of Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer
- c) Location of activities
- d) Number of clients/members served (where relevant)
- e) Description of service/activity provided, project or event to be supported
- f) Reason for application with details of how the grant will be used
- g) How much funding being applied for
- h) How the grant will benefit the town and people of Woodbridge
- i) Details of any previous financial assistance from the Council in the last 3 years
- j) Other sources of funding for the same purpose, whether secured or unsecured
- k) Latest audited or certified accounts (must not be more than 18 months old)
- l) How Council support will be acknowledged/publicised

**The eligibility of applications will be assessed against the following criteria**

If the applicant has received funding in the previous year the Council must be satisfied that the applicant has delivered that project or service to a satisfactory level and returned a grant report in good time.

Applicants must answer all the questions on the application form

Applications must demonstrate direct benefit to the inhabitants of Woodbridge

The funding requested must be commensurate with the benefit obtained by the inhabitants of Woodbridge

A schedule of awarded grants will be published on the Council's website annually.

Feedback on individual grant applications may be given on request to the organisation concerned.

## **Multi-year funding agreements**

Organisations which are beneficiaries of Council grant funding may be invited to enter into three year funding agreements. This will assist the Council in the management of its grants budget and the organisation concerned in its forward planning.

- a) Service level Agreements may be offered in return for providing a service to the Council
- b) 3-year Discretionary Grants may be offered to enable long-term planning.

Such beneficiaries, in addition to completion of the annual report, may, at the discretion of the Council, be invited to make a presentation to the Council and /or take part in a question and answer session so that the Council is fully acquainted with their work.

The Council will not make any automatic allowance for inflation.

## **Conditions for giving grants**

Minor changes in how the grant is used may be allowed subject to the funding being used in line with the original application. Any such changes must be applied for to the Council and agreed in writing

Records must be kept showing how the grant has been spent.

Monitoring and management information must be provided to the Council at the end of 12 months, or each year for multi-year funding agreements, in the form of an Annual Report.

3-year funding payments will only be made when monitoring information has been provided in writing for the previous year and the latest available accounts have been submitted.

Any funds not utilised for the original purpose must be offered back to the Council

## ITEM 8

### **TO NOTE THE EXISTENCE OF THE ELMHURST PARK AND KINGSTON FIELD CHARITIES AND AGREE A WAY FORWARD**

During the process of the recent internal audit it came to light that the Council is the Custodian Trustee of two Charities – Elmhurst Park and Kingston Field – and that the annual returns to the Charity Commission for both charities had not been submitted since 2017.

By default it would also appear that neither Charity had ever held a meeting of the Trustee since formation, and that the financial sums shown in the returns prior to 2017 were not incurred or received by the Charity but were monies belonging to the Town Council and recorded as such in the Council's accounts.

Discussions are taking place with the Charity Commission, firstly to gain access to the online reporting mechanism (the Clerk prior to 2017 not having left any passwords for the new Clerk to use), and then with a view as to this Council's options going forward.

The will of Kingston Smith left Kingston Field to the former Urban District Council on terms which included the following words:-

**"... to the Urban District Council..... the following trusts.....that the said Council will maintain it at their own expense....."**

Elmhurst Park was conveyed to the Council in 1935 but the land has not been registered with the Land Registry. The only covenants on the land relate to the trees and to not holding political meetings.

Both Charity registration documents claim that the Charity owns land – if the Charities cannot be closed (by virtue of the original registration having been incorrectly made) then there will be major financial and other issues for the Council to address relating to VAT and licences/leases entered into by the Town Council.

**Members are recommended to agree to:-**

- a) **The Registration of Elmhurst Park with the Land Registry**
- b) **Holding meetings of the Trustees of the Charities to sign off the Annual Returns and Accounts from 2018 to date**
- c) **Entering into negotiations with the Charity Commission with a view to closing both Charities on the grounds that they were improperly established**