

## Finance & Governance Committee

**Present:** Cllrs Banks, Chapman, Goodman, Cooper-Marsh (Chair), Maslen, and Pitt

**Absent:** Cllrs Collins, Hitchin, Kumar

**In attendance:** Town Clerk, Responsible Finance Officer

**Minutes** of the meeting of the **Finance & Governance committee** held on **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2024** at **7.30pm** in the Priory Centre, Priory Lane, St Neots, PE19 2BH.

### Public Participation

There were three Members of the public present.

A Member of the public addressed the Council on agenda item 7 Farm and Craft Market Fees. The resident commented that the report provided for Members consideration stated that potential loss for not charging pitch fees would be £4,000, but that this was based on 21 stalls being present which the resident said has never being the case.

		<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>001</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were received from Cllr Collins.	Admin
<b>002</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b> Cllrs declared an interest in agenda item	
<b>003</b>	<b>Minutes</b> <b>RESOLVED</b> to approve the minutes of the 23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2024 as a true and accurate record subject to amending to state Cllr Cooper-Marsh chaired the meeting.	Admin
<b>004</b>	<b>Payments</b> Members received and noted payments for March 2024.	

Prior to the meeting the Town Clerk had received the following queries relating to payments;

- Purchase Ledger Payments page 5431 line 16226 - Election recharge, this seems high, which election does it refer to?

The Clerk had responded that £9,917.76 is correct and is for the Eaton Ford election held on October 2023.

- Purchase Ledger Payments page 5432 lines 16166 & 16229 - Emergency call out for the Eatons Centre, what do these relate to?

The Clerk had responded that these are call out charges for the alarm company who responds follow an alarm activation during closed hours. There had been no signs of a break in.

#### 005 **Bank Cash and Investment Reconciliations**

Members received and noted bank cash and investment reconciliations as at 31<sup>st</sup> March.

Members discussed transferring more funds from the Barclays Account to the CCLA fund which pays a higher rate of interest. It was agreed that the Town Clerk and RFO should look to transfer further funds. Officers would investigate this and report back to the Committee.

The Committee discussed the closure of the Barclays Bank in St Neots and the potential of changing banks to one of those which still maintains a physical branch in the town. Officers are to investigate further.

#### 006 **St Neots Skatepark Funding – Revamp the Ramp**

The Committee received and considered a report from the Town Clerk on the status of St Neots Skatepark enhancement project and funding the Council had resolved to contribute to the works. Members noted that a £15,000 funding application for the A428 fund had been unsuccessful and as such the project had a £15,000 shortfall.

The Committee consider the funding required and available council funds. Given the importance of the project for the community and the impact it can make Members felt the Council should look to provide further funds from its CIL reserves to move the project to completion.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that if the Town Council is minded to provide any further funding to meet the £15,000 shortfall in the Revamp the Ramp St Neots Skatepark enhancement project that funding is allocated from the Council's CIL reserves.

#### 007 **Farm and Craft Market Fees**

The Chairperson introduced a recommendation from the Promotion and Events Committee that the Council pause pitch fees for the Farm and Craft Market during the ongoing refurbishment works to the Market Square.

Members agreed that recognising the limitations and disruption to the market and its traders through the current refurbishment works was important and as such pausing pitch fees to help the market through the current turbulence and the impact it was having for traders was something the Council should do.

Members also commented that a successful market would be key to the new Market Square and that pausing fees would help ensure the continuation of traders so the Council was in a good position to develop and build on the market as the works ended.

Members discussed the duration of pausing pitch fees, noting that the signed off completion of the Market Square might be some time after it is actually open for use due to snagging issues that can delay sign offs. Therefore, an amendment was proposed that the pitch fees be paused until January 2024 when the situation would be reviewed.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that Farm and Craft Market pitch fees are paused until January 2024 when the matter of pitch fees and status of Market Square works will be reconsidered by the Finance and Governance Committee.

**008 Brickhills Play Park**

The Chairperson of the Operations and Amenities Committee presented a recommendation from that committee that the Council progress with the installation of an inclusive see-saw previously identified for inclusion as part of delivering an accessible play park at Brickhills. The see-saw was the top priority highlighted by the Play Park Working Group, along with the creation of a new park at Eaton Ford. The reserves held would not meet the cost of installing a new park but would allow for the Brickhills project to move to completion.

**RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** that the Council release £24,495.60 from £70,759 earmarked reserves for play park provision for the purchase and installation of an inclusive seesaw and supporting infrastructure and equipment at Brickhill's play area.

**009 Date of Next Meeting**

Members noted that the date of the next scheduled Finance and Governance Committee meeting would be 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024 at 7:15pm. This would follow a grants sub-committee meeting to be held at 6:15pm on the same night.

**COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON**