

## Minutes of Finance Committee held on the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

In attendance: Councillors M. Harriman, M.J. Edwards, J. Holmes, K. Hobbley, J. Hobbley, J. Jones

Chair: Councillor M.J. Edwards

Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer: S Baxter

Apologies: Councillor M. Wilde, A. Merry

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1. This meeting took place remotely, using GoTo Meetings software, under The Local Authorities(Coronavirus)(Meetings)(Wales) Regulations 2020. which make provision for meetings to take place remotely.
  2. **Apologies:** Apologies were given and accepted. There were no members of the press and public present for the meeting.
  3. **Declarations of Interest:** Councillors were reminded of the need to declare an interest in the matters under discussion. Councillor Holmes declared an interest concerning the grant application of Gresford Trust , and the lease of Allington Park. Councillor Jones declared an interest on two items concerning the Library. The method of departing and re-joining the meeting was agreed.
  4. **Minutes of Finance Committee meeting held 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and matters arising:**  
The minutes were AGREED as an accurate record, and no matters were arising.
  5. **Report on Income and expenditure for Quarter 3 :** The Chair referred to the Financial report and all items of expenditure and income were considered, and AGREED ,as accurate. Reasons for expenditure had been explained at the previous meeting. The report will be presented to the next Full Council meeting.
  6. **Consideration of grants received :** The table outlining Grant applications was examined, and recommendations to be made to Full Council were AGREED, as follows:
    - Gresford Playground Ducks and Ducklings- £490 towards screens and furniture protection
    - Gresford Athletic junior Football Club- £500 towards winter training fees
    - IMAGE- £390 towards replacement planters and compost
    - Gresford WI - £100 towards Christmas gift items. - Councillor Holmes stated the WI had been very supportive to it's members throughout the pandemic.
    - All Saints Church Gresford.- Consideration was given to the legislation surrounding the historical issue of payments to the Church in Wales, and advice previously given. However, in this case it was considered that the value of the building itself to the village, in terms of its historical importance, attraction of visitors, and support to the local community, merited consideration of assistance, and on this basis the meeting voted unanimously in favour of recommending £500 towards the appeal to replace the stolen lead.
    - Gresford Trust- Councillor Holmes declared an interest and left the meeting. A discussion took place . Councillor Harriman suggested that the fence needed to be replaced in part due to the flooding problem which had caused the existing fencing to rot. It was suggested that the issue of drainage should be considered when under construction. An amount of £6100 was agreed to be recommended, as the maximum amount- if another quotation can be obtained for less cost the Community Council will meet that cost.
    - Gresford and District Library- Councillor Holmes re-joined the meeting. Councillor Jones declared an interest and left the meeting. The amount of £1200 towards the costs of an outdoor area was agreed to be recommended. Councillor Jones re-joined the meeting.

In terms of requests for donations, the following amounts were agreed to be recommended to Full Council: Children's Wales air ambulance- £100, Cerebral Palsy Cymru- £100, Family Friends £100, Hope house -£250, Tenovus Cancer care- £100. It was decided not to make an award to Eisteddfod yr Urdd. It was suggested that when writing to the organisations concerning the awards, to ask for information in future on how they are supporting families locally.

7. **Agreement with Gresford and District Library** : Councillor Jones declared an interest and left the meeting. A discussion took place on how best to record the agreement for the future. It was agreed that this should be shown alongside the grant awards and other payments made under S. 137. Action: Clerk to amend the table to reflect this. As this amount has previously been agreed and therefore does not form part of the annual grant awards. The Clerk advised that she had revised the agreement form as previously and this is now to be sent out. Councillor Jones re-joined the meeting.
8. **Renewal of lease of Allington Park**: The Clerk advised that a meeting has been set up with Gresford Trust representatives to start initial discussions. This will be reported back to the next meeting.
9. **Progress on Allotments application to Charity Commission**: The Clerk advised that she is in the process of corresponding with both Mr Kelly, to terminate current arrangements, and Mr Taylor, to commence the more specialist advice as agreed by Full Council.
10. **Update on progress regarding banking arrangements** :The Clerk advised that instructions have been issued to HSBC bank to amalgamate the two existing accounts. The account has been opened with Unity bank , and at the appropriate stage they will then make arrangements to transfer across the amounts currently held in HSBC account.
11. **New Audit arrangements** : The Clerk advised on the information that had been received from Wales Audit office concerning the new three-year, three staged approach to External Audit in the future. Gresford Community Council is in Group A ,and therefore the transaction-based auditing will take place this year, (2020-21) , which may create more work for the Clerk and the Cemetery assistant than usual. There may be a slightly raised fee for that year also. The transaction-based auditing would look at transactions and their origins and include bank reconciliation and minutes. Councillor Edwards as Chair asked for it to be recorded that he will perform, as usual , the secondary check of the reconciliation documents, and Cash book, and advised that he has to date checked all transactions made electronically through the bank in line with procedure, and all are in order. The Clerk advised that consideration needs to be given to the appointment of the internal Auditor for the forthcoming internal Audit. In the past JDH have been appointed. It was noted that the performance of JDH has been satisfactory in previous years, and the recommendation to appoint them for 2020-21 was AGREED.
12. **Members urgent matters for consideration.** Councillor Jones complimented the spreadsheets prepared by Councillor Edwards and by the Clerk. Councillor Edwards advised that the amount being charged to the taxpayer via the precept has risen by 7% over the last 5 years.
13. **Date of next meeting.** The next meeting of the Finance Committee will be **31<sup>st</sup> March 2021** at 6. pm : the meeting is likely to be held remotely.