

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the VIRTUAL **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** meeting held on Thursday 17 September 2020 at 7.00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Francis (Chairman), Blackwell, Clay, Harris, Hill, Munn and Poile

OFFICERS PRESENT: Tracy Kelly (Town Clerk) Paul Gosling (Finance Officer)

1. **APOLOGIES AND REASON FOR ABSENCE** – Councillor Backhouse (access issues)
2. **DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS** – None declared.
3. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION** – No members of the public were present. No Press were present.
4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS** - The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 July 2020 were approved by Full Council at its meeting on 30 July 2020.

Councillor Clay entered the meeting at 7.20pm

5. ACCOUNTS

- a) **Outstanding cheques** – Members **NOTED** the previously signed cheque lists.
- b) **Financial Statements** – Members **NOTED** the income and expenditure from 1 July to 31 August 2020.
- c) **Financial Summary** – Members **NOTED** the summary from 1 April 2020 to 31 August 2020

6. FINANCIAL MATTERS

- a) **Salary Increases** – Members **NOTED** the staff salaries increase in line with the pay increases recently approved by the National Joint Council, payable from 1 April 2020.
- b) **Internet provision** – Members **AGREED** to upgrade all Members emails to Office 365 Business Basic with the option for those Members who required additional word capabilities Office 365 Business Standard. The Town Clerk to contact all Members to ascertain their requirements.
- c) **Provision of PC tablets or Laptops** - Members noted the report and it was recommended that this Council provide Councillors the correct tools to carry out their duties.

A recorded vote was requested for the recommendation to Full Council to provide laptops for Councillors to conduct their role as Councillors.

For the provision Cllrs Francis (Chairman), Blackwell, and Clay (Deputy Chairman).

Against the provision Cllr Harris.

Abstentions: Cllrs Hill, Munn and Poile.

7. **COMMUNITY CENTRE CRUNDWELL ROAD** - Members **NOTED** the new risk assessment and **AGREED** to the updated hire regulations.

8. **SOUTHBOROUGH HUB WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Harris (Chairman of the Southborough Hub Working Group) updated Members with the following report:

The Southborough Hub Operations Working Group has met only once since the last report in July.

You will all have received the minutes of that useful meeting with Mark Johnson-Brown, Manager, Mycenae Centre, Blackheath, I'll summarise the key points he made.

The Mycenae Centre is set up as a charity on a peppercorn Tenant's Internal Repairing Lease with a board of trustees selected for the relevant skills rather than user representatives. They need to generate earnings of £400k p.a. to get by and Needed to be entrepreneurial. They say their café can act as meet & greet but they do not prepare any food like sandwiches on site, involves too much expense & management. Only sell pre-packaged items.

Storage: Top Tip – loads needed! They have one room devoted just to cupboards and recommends written agreements concerning storage. This is clearly an issue for STC. Does not recommend lots of technical equipment as it dates quickly and needs support. They have very limited stock

Staffing: They have two House supervisors – essential skill is – putting out tables and chairs! Must be strong and active, no bad backs! Must know how to find a power extension, plug in, find a cable adaptor, turn off fire alarm, know fire exit processes. Do NOT get them involved with handling money. Mycenae House has 18 FTEs: 5 House Supervisors, 5 Part Time & 8 sessional for the café. Their supervisors' shift pattern – 8.30 a.m. – 3.30 p.m.; 3.30p.m. – 10.30p.m. Only open till 12.30 p.m. on Saturdays.

Security: In general, they prefer to have two house supervisors on duty rather than one plus a bouncer. Better to have someone on hand who knows the building intimately.

Pricing Structure: 3 tier structure:

- Affiliated groups – cheapest per hour – voluntary, community groups only with open membership, e.g. senior citizens
- Private Member groups – charged a discounted annual fee
- Commercial hires – weddings, conferences, antique valuation events etc – full rate

As a matter of policy, they do not offer rent free spaces – even to CAB – if room occupied for 3 hrs, compromises viability of business model. BUT – rent as low as £3 p. hr for smallest room for a community benefit purpose.

They do NOT rent to church groups on Sundays, not found to be financially viable although others locally did. Regular bookers had grown from 49 to 125.

They achieve around 70% occupancy across the year – I think brilliant!

Promotion: Twitter – more useful to address particular interest groups, such as young mothers.

Website –important to be useable from a mobile phone.

Upkeep of all these could turn into a full-time job!

They build mailing lists using MailChimp for various interest groups.

They issue a 40-page brochure twice yearly in paper format.

Music: Centre sometimes acts as promoter, sometimes with the promoter. Put on 4 gigs per month, Friday nights. Sometimes take money on door but try to avoid and encourage online booking. Could we do this?

Other events: Limited because of licences – cannot advertise if commercial cinema within 10-mile radius. Must be a club, get round it by having an expensive raffle.

Southborough Hub: How is it expected to be used – especially the large hall – which needs to be fully used for activities, 6 days out of 7, otherwise wasted space? Mark suggested receptions, weddings, martial arts, choirs, dance groups. Rental for rehearsal space possible.

NEEDS TO REFLECT THE PLACE IT SERVES!

Members discussed various points and **NOTED** these matters.

9. **CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS** - It was proposed that during the consideration of the following items, the public and press shall be temporarily excluded (Standing Order 3 (c)): -

These items are considered confidential for the following reason(s)
Information relating to the financial and personnel affairs of the Council.

- a) **Staff Wages** - Members **NOTED** the staff salaries for July and August 2020
- b) **Office Administrator (Maternity Cover)** – The Town Clerk verbally updated Members following the appointment of a new member of staff to cover the maternity leave period of the current Office Administrator.

The Chairman called for an extension of 30 minutes to the meeting.

- c) **Southborough Hub Operations** – Members discussed the ongoing Hub Operations, concerns, and recent Hub Visit. Members **NOTED** that these matters would be further reported to Full Council.
- d) **Southborough Hub Finances** – Members discussed the financial concerns and requests for further information. Members **NOTED** these matters and **AGREED** that these matters be further discussed including the service charge provision at the upcoming Full Council.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN