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**BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Governance Committee** held **via ZOOM** on Tuesday 29 September 2020 at 2.00 pm

**Present:**

**Councillors:**  J R Potts (Chair), W Taylor (Vice-Chair), A Cartie, K Nisbet, J Reid, M Richardson, S Stanger, G Thompson, G Webb

**Officers:**

J Hughes, Town Clerk

M Wilkinson, Deputy Town Clerk

Maureen Hawthorne, Committee Clerk

**Other Attendees: - 0**

**Members of the Public – 0**

**Members observed a minutes silence in remembrance of Councillor Olga Potts.**

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| **Minute No** |  |
| **1** | **Apologies for Absence**  Councillors: A Parsons, L Rickerby |
| **2** | **Disclosure Interests and Grant of Dispensations**  None |
| **3** | **Minutes of the Governance Committee held on Tuesday 7 July 2020**  The minutes were noted as a true record. |
| **4** | Actions Arising from Previous MinutesMinute No 6.1 Co-option Policy – queries were all resolved and the Policy is now fit for purpose. **Blue Plaque – Blyth Battery** – awaiting additional information from Historic England. DTC is in ongoing discussions with Nigel Walsh. |
| **5** | Governance Committee:  1. **Budget Monitoring Report**   The Chair reminded members that it is an audit requirement for Governance Committee to review it’s own budget as well as the budgets of the other Committees. The following was noted: 0001 Governance **100 – Employee costs** - there is an item in the Information Report relating to the pay award. This is covered in **198 –** possible increase in pay. 200 Office Costs **213** (Insurance) – insurance is paid each December.  **216** Cleaning – only a small amount has been spent as Officers continue to work from home. 300 Fees & Charges **312** –Newsletter – the Office Manager is in the process of gathering articles for the newsletter.  **500 Civic Events**  **505** – Remembrance Day - £100 to be paid to St Mary’s and £50 to St Cuthbert’s. 0002 Environment Committee **600** Allotments – all rents have been collected, with the exception of two. In answer to a query, it was confirmed that the GSO is actively seeking new tenants for the vacant plots on the Beatrice Site. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the Council are now at the end of a five year plan to increase the allotment rents and reduce benefits to tenants. 700 Environmental Services **772 –** Environmental Enforcement Officer – The Deputy Town Clerk clarified the costs associated with this post.  **776/777 –** High Street & Bowes Street Scheme – in abeyance at the moment.  **705 –** NCC & BTC Partnership – members have responded to the Town Clerk’s request for feedback and the consensus is that no-one has concerns about how the partnership is working or the current monitoring arrangements carried out by Officers. 003 Community Development **1000** – Events – it was noted that all events are on hold at present. Officers are looking to see if it is possible to hold a Christmas event whilst maintaining social distancing.  **1060** - Blyth Live – expenditure relates to 50% of the fee for the headline act. The agency agreed to carry this forward into next year and if BTC use the same agency this amount will be credited to the artist. 1200 Community Grants **1201** – Members agreed unanimously that Councillor Olga Potts’ allowance should be transferred. Bank Reconciliation Members noted the information in the bank reconciliation document. |
| **6** | **Decision Report 1**   1. External Auditor Report (Appendix 1)   Committee noted the report which had no topics of concern and **RESOLVED** to recommend that the report is accepted by Full Council on 8 October 2020.   1. Internal Auditor Interim Report (Appendix 2)   The report details the areas the Internal Auditor has inspected together with comments.  It was noted that regular telephone contact has been maintained during the period Officers have been working from home and the Auditor has had sight of all documents he has requested. There are no recommendations to follow up.  Committee **RESOLVED** to recommend that the report is accepted by Full Council on 8 October 2020. |
| **7** | Decision Report 2 The Town Clerk said the reports demonstrate the plans Officers were putting in place to facilitate a return to work October/November on a phased, rota basis. Lots of work has been carried out to ensure the required safety measures are in place as well as a risk analysis. Due to changes in restrictions over the past week, the Town Clerk proposed that these plans are kept under review.  The Chair expressed his concern about the two new members of staff who have not had the opportunity to work alongside their colleagues. The Town Clerk reassured members that he and the Deputy Town Clerk are in regular contact with all Officers to offer support.  Members unanimously agreed that the plans for Officers to return to work should be kept under review. |
| **8** | **Delegated Actions**  There were no delegated actions to report. |
| **9** | **Information Report (not for discussion at Committee)**  Members noted the information contained in the report with regard to:   1. FOI’s 2. Investments 3. Pay Award 4. Website Accessibility Regulations 2018 |
| **10** | Any Other Business There was no other business to consider. |
| **11** | Date & Time of Next Meeting The next meeting of the Governance Committee on Tuesday 5 January 2021 at 2.00 pm. If current restrictions continue this will be an electronic meeting. |

**Members of the Governance Committee**

J R Potts (Chair) J Reid

W Taylor (Vice-Chair) M Richardson

A Cartie L Rickerby

K Nisbet S Stanger

A Parsons G Thompson

G Webb