

F & GP Committee held Monday 14th September 2020

Northallerton Town Council Held 7.00 p.m. remotely via MS Teams

Present: Chairman: Councillor Richardson, Councillor C Hutson, Councillor J Hutson, Councillor Young and Councillor Cornfoot
Officers: Sophie Garside, Deputy Clerk

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| FGP/1368 | To receive apologies for absence |
| Resolved: | None to receive |
| FGP/1369 | To receive declarations of interest from Councillors on agenda items: |
| Resolved: | Declarations received from Cllr J Hutson and Cllr C Hutson if any items associated with Northallerton BID was discussed. All in favour |
| FGP/1370 | To grant dispensation as appropriate: |
| Resolved: | None to receive |
| FGP/1371 | To receive and approve F & GP minutes 13th July, 2020. |
| Resolved: | The minutes were received. All in favour. |
| FGP/1372 | To discuss and agree Town Council vehicle replacement Councillors C & J Hutson temporarily left the meeting due to technical difficulties. Cllr Richardson explained the background of the van situation over the last few months and urged the need to get approval on this due to the length of time this has taken. He continued to explain how the leasing option is the best option as everything is included bar fuel. Discussion around the quotes obtained was reviewed with one agreement coming out on top. Cllr Eames highlighted checking the insurance for the old vehicle and also the potential new lease vehicle. Cllr Richardson aired his feelings towards the idea of a second van which has been raised previously, explaining he would like a strong justification for this rather than just a want or desire. Cllr J Hutson informed the committee of the budget figure covering motor vehicles this year. |
| Resolved: | To sign for leasing agreement with Northgate on a 3-year basis. All in favour |
| FGP/1373 | To discuss and agree AGAR documents as agreed at 17th August 2020 Town Council meeting |
| Resolved: | To move to private session. All in favour |
| FGP/1374 | To receive update from Town Hall Improvement Group |
| Resolved: | To move to private session. All in favour |
| FGP/1375 | To receive update from Town Improvement Working Group |
| Resolved: | To move to private session. All in favour |

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| FGP/1376 | <p>To receive an e-banking update</p> <p>The Deputy Clerk gave a brief update regarding the struggles surrounding arranging the type of bank account required and the service the bank has been offering especially since COVID-19 had happened. She continued to inform the committee that with the help of Cllr C Hutson a telephone appointment has been made for the coming weeks however due to this being a local authority account this has faced difficulties with the current bank due to complex needs in the past. Cllr Richardson explained he felt there was three separate issues, the first being due to Cllr's having a lot of dealings with the bank of recent months it has demonstrated that this account is the wrong type of account where direct debits etc. are not possible. The second is the service being poor specifically behind the bank mandate process. The third is the difficulties faced when organising online banking. Cllr C Hutson explained how all banks are suffering with their service provisions due to the pandemic and the Council bank account have decided to take their business managers out of the branch to</p> |
| | work from home which has delayed progress. He reiterated how the telephone appointment due in the coming weeks will allow us to review our account and the amount of accounts open. |
| Resolved: | To explore alternative banking providers and review in the next F&GP meeting. All in favour |
| FGP/1377 | To receive YLCA health check |
| Resolved: | To defer to private session. All in favour |
| FGP/1378 | Due to confidential nature of the business to be transacted and under the Public Bodies (Admissions to meetings) Act 1960 and LGA 1972, ss 100A to 100K: and ACA 19998, items 6, 7, 8, 10 (deferred) and 12 to be held in private session |
| Resolved: | All in favour |
| FGP/1379 | <p>To discuss and agree AGAR documents as agreed at 17th August 2020 Town Council meeting (deferred item)</p> <p>Cllr Richardson explained the background as to why this has been deferred to F&GP and how he did not feel comfortable completing the checklist when the criteria hadn't been met despite the checklist just being ticked in previous years. Cllr C Hutson and Cllr J Hutson confirmed they had been looking into these documents behind the scenes and working on them. They continued to go down the checklist explaining the reasoning for each answer in alignment with the internal auditor report. Cllr C Hutson informed members how this has been a difficult process for them in terms of legal processes but with their limited knowledge on this nothing appears to have been completed illegally. Several items of the criteria had been asked of the RFO however these had not materialised or been adequate meaning some questions had to be ticked 'no'. Cllr J Hutson informed the committee there is an awful lot of work to be done to ensure the internal controls and governance are in place. Cllr Richardson explained he would be comfortable completing the checklist with the following detail as discussed;</p> <p>1 NO, 2 NO, 3 YES, 4 YES, 5 NO - (No Risk assessment), 6 YES, 7 NO, 8 YES, 9 N/A</p> <p>The checklist needs to reflect reality and be factually correct and representative of the findings of the Internal Auditors report.</p> <p>Cllr J Hutson stated that it looks like 19/20 had been a bad year but she suggested it be of a similar nature for previous years except the committee has been more thorough with the checklist.</p> |

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| Resolved: | To prepare Section 1 19/20 governance statement, Section 2 document alongside internal auditor report with accompanying covering letter and take to Town Council meeting. All in favour |
| FGP/1380 | <p>To receive update from Town Hall Improvement Group</p> <p>Cllr Cornfoot began update by explaining the name has been changed to Town Hall Refurbishment working group due to the confusion. He continued to inform the committee that along with Cllr Eames they have gone through the Align Property document and what is priority works to be done. He read through the list provided by the contractor with costings for the benefit of the members. He recommended that Align be appointed as contract manager on the basis that: a.The work is classed as specialist services, as defined in paragraph 12.1 (ii) of the Council's Financial Regulations.</p> <p>a.. Align Property Partners are currently term contractors for North Yorkshire County Council and Hambleton District Council and, as such, have been through a local government procurement route. c. The company is locally based.</p> <p>d. The Company undertook the original Town Hall surveys and, as such, are familiar with the Town Hall. Cllr Cornfoot stated money needs to be allocated each year to make progress with these specified works.</p> <p>Cllr J Hutson explained this is important as the building isn't safe. Cllr Richardson thanked both Cllr Cornfoot and Eames for their work on this. He stressed how</p> |

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| | correcting the wrongs within the building is key moving forward. Cllr C Hutson stated this is no surprise due to the little money being spent on the building in the past. Priorities to make the building safe were discussed to include 1. Electrical work, concluding heating repairs to boiler and a new header tank. 2. Leaking roof to upper hall. 3. Broken windows |
| Resolved: | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To accept the Town Hall Condition Survey undertaken by Align Property Partners. All in favour 2. To approve the scope of work identified in the Align Property Partners Report (Appendix B of report). All in favour 3. To appoint Align Property Partners (TC/357 20-07-2020) to act as Contract Manager for the identified works and that, in this instance, three quotes are not required. All in favour 4. To approve the professional fees detailed in the report. 5. Once appointed, to agree that Align Property Partners obtain 3 quotes for all works required. All in favour |
| FGP/1381 | <p>To receive update from Town Improvement Group</p> <p>The update is presented by Cllr Cornfoot and he stressed the need to work more closely with stakeholders and how it needs to be up and running and discussed with people such as HDC and BID. Being actively involved in the neighbourhood plan is something we need to progress. Cllr C Hutson asked if there is a financial incentive. Cllr Cornfoot confirmed not only could we receive more CIL money but also section 106 money. Cllr Cornfoot asked if any other councillors wish to be involved as the original proposal was up to 4 councillors. Cllr Young volunteered to be a member. He continued to state this can be flexible as and when. Cllr Young updated the members on her meetings with Streetscape as residents have contacted her regarding upgrading the Applegarth.</p> |
| Resolved: | <p>Committee to schedule a day before winter comes to go around all the areas with Les. All in favour</p> <p>The update was received. All in favour</p> |
| FGP/1382 | <p>To receive YLCA health check</p> |
| Resolved: | <p>Due to the length of document this was deferred to the next F&GP meeting for further consideration. All in favour</p> <p>Action plan required to address shortfalls, action on the Clerk to write action plan and present to full Council. All in favour</p> |
| FGP/1383 | <p>To discuss and agree legal matter</p> <p>The Deputy Clerk was requested to leave the meeting due to the sensitive content of the item. The Deputy Clerk left at 20:45pm and Cllr Eames took the minutes. The receipt of a complaint was discussed. The Committee agreed that the defamatory accusations made in the letter can be considered to be directed at the whole Council and therefore a response on behalf of all Councillors is appropriate.</p> |
| Resolved: | <p>That legal advice is obtained from an appropriately qualified solicitor on what response should be made on behalf of the Council to the letter of complaint sent to Councillor Richardson on 22nd August and subsequently to all Councillors on 12th September, in order to protect the reputations of Councillors past and present, up to a spending limit of £5,000. All in favour</p> |

The meeting closed at 20:53pm