

**PREMISES COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**MONDAY, 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 AT 7:00PM**  
**ONLINE**

Present: Cllr J. Hart (Chair), Cllr P. Allen, Cllr B. Cutts, Cllr P. Conquest, Cllr R. Dallyn, Cllr J. Godwin, Cllr J. Lynch, Cllr I. Macaulay, Cllr D. Reynolds

Also present: Miss Elizabeth Cox (Town Clerk), Mrs Elizabeth Bucklow-Holt (Assistant)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr M. Johns and Cllr L. Samiotis.

2. Declarations of Interest

None

3. Open to the Public

No members of the public joined the meeting.

4. Town Hall Redecoration Works

a) To receive an update on the Town Hall Redecoration Works

The Clerk reported that the redecoration works in the Town Hall are nearly completed, with the woodwork on the stairwell/landing to Office 8 and a refresh of the panelling in the Main Hall still to finish. Cllr Godwin enquired whether any progress had been made by the TC Surveyor with respect to the proposed gantry to improve access to the Town Hall roof. The Clerk agreed to follow up on this item.

b) To consider the options for leasing the Town Council's refurbished storeroom to the tenants of Town Hall Office 8

The TC former storeroom, adjacent to Office 8, has been fully refurbished except for fitting a new floor covering. The work has been carried out at this time to provide additional space for the tenants of Office 8 who have expanded their workforce since moving to the Town Hall in 2016. The TC Solicitor has recommended that the tenants surrender their original lease and begin a new lease for the two offices combined; this will also be less expensive in terms of legal fees. In order to proceed, the Clerk will need to negotiate a new annual rent with the tenants.

Proposal

Cllr Allen proposed that the TC accepts its Solicitor's recommendation and allows the Chair of the Committee and Town Clerk to negotiate the terms for the new lease and annual rent with the tenants; seconded by Cllr Dallyn; all in favour.

5. Towcester Youth & Community Centre

To note the balance of the Towcester Youth & Community Centre Account at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020

The Clerk confirmed a balance of £82,610.75 in the Towcester Youth & Community Centre account as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020. NCC is continuing to meet the quarterly rent, in accordance with the terms of its lease agreement, although its employees are continuing to work from home. There has been no indication from NCC that it plans to close the Children's Centre.

6. The Sawpits Centre

To receive an update from the Clerk on all matters relating to The Sawpits Centre

The TC had been approached by SNC on behalf of the Community Larder, a project which distributes food parcels to vulnerable people in the community, requesting use of The Sawpits Centre for its volunteers. Via circulation of this request, the Clerk received approval, in principle, from committee members. The Community Larder has since secured short-term use of Towcester Football Supporters Club. Committee members agreed that the original request could still be considered, if necessary. Cllr Godwin asked whether the Towcester Youth & Community Centre (TYCC) would be more suitable for this use. The Clerk explained that the TYCC alarm system is overly sensitive and the Sawpits Centre would be easier to manage, being in close proximity to the TC offices.

7. Cheques Issued & Internet Payments Lists

To approve the Cheques Issued & Internet Payments Lists for the period 01.04.20 to 30.09.20

A copy of the Cheques Issued & Internet Payments List for the period 01.04.20 to 30.09.20 (TH transaction number 549 to 842 and SC transaction number 546 to 798) was circulated to all committee members prior to the meeting. Most items were ongoing; the following transactions were highlighted:-

TH Trans 799 / £260.00 to A. Clancy – Electrical works associated with the installation of a CCTV camera for SNC (since reimbursed by SNC).

TH Trans 801 / £375.00 to Arnold Thomson Solicitors – Settlement of 50% of fees associated with the cancelled tenancy renewal for Office 10.

SC Trans 680 / £3,625.69 to Towcester Town Football Club – As agreed by the Resources & Planning Committee, the balance of S106 Funding earmarked for the football club was paid over to offset income lost from cancellation of the annual tournament.

#### Proposal

Cllr Allen proposed that the Cheques Issued & Internet Payments Lists for the period 01.04.20 to 30.09.20 be signed by the Chair and R. F. O.; seconded by Cllr Godwin; all in favour.

#### 8. Draft Budgets for the 2021/22 Financial Year

To consider the Draft Budgets for the Town Hall and Sawpits Centre for the 2021/22 Financial Year

Copies of the Draft Budgets were forwarded to all committee members prior to the meeting.

#### The Town Hall

The Clerk gave a summary of the income and expenditure.

##### Income

No budget has been included for hire charges to the end of 2020/21 and for 2021/22 the budgeted income has been halved to £8,000.00.

No budget has been set for income from savings; the interest rate is currently so low it's negligible.

A transfer of £18,324.00 has been included from the TC contingency fund to offset the shortfall in the budget for 2020/21 from the loss of hire fees and office rents.

##### Expenditure

A 2% increase has been budgeted for salaries and ongoing expenditure, i.e. utilities.

A 5% increase has been budgeted for Non-Domestic Rates as the implications of the new West Northants Council on this are not yet known.

Contributions to funds being built up for future projects; i.e. the Town Hall heating fund and floor fund have been reduced.

A considerable amount of decorating works have been carried out 2020/21 and the Clerk has met the cost of these from the budget for General Maintenance to keep intact the fund being built up for redecoration of the Main Hall and communal areas.

#### Proposal

Cllr Godwin proposed that the Draft Budget for the Town Hall be approved and the precept of **£20,694.00** be recommended to the Resources & Planning Committee; seconded by Cllr Lynch; all in favour.

#### The Sawpits Centre

The Clerk gave a summary of the income and expenditure.

##### Income

No budget has been included for hire charges to the end of 2020/21 and for 2021/22 the budgeted income has been halved to £9,000.00.

A transfer of £14,220.00 has been included from the TC contingency fund to offset the shortfall in the budget for 2020/21 from the loss of hire fees.

##### Expenditure

A 2% increase has been budgeted for salaries and ongoing expenditure, i.e. utilities.

A 5% increase has been budgeted for Non-Domestic Rates as the implications of the new West Northants Council on this are not yet known.

Funding in the 2020/21 budget for equipment, i.e. window blinds/hearing loop has now been earmarked for 2021/22.

The contribution to the fund being built for Maintenance has been reduced to £1,000.00, bringing the total to £6,000.00 with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.

#### Proposal

Cllr Godwin proposed that the Draft Budget for the Sawpits Centre be approved and the precept of **£21,285.00** be recommended to the Resources & Planning Committee; seconded by Cllr Lynch; all in favour.