

**UNADOPTED
POLEGATE TOWN COUNCIL**



FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Friday 7th September 2018 Council Chambers 49, High Street, Polegate 10.00am

Present: Cllrs D Murray, D Watts, B Goodwin, S Shing, Mrs M Piper (7)

Not Present: - Cllrs Ms A Snell, M Falkner, D Dunbar (3)

No members of the public present.

Minute Number	Resolution
12470	Opportunity for Public Comment None
12471	Apologies for absence Cllrs Ms A Snell, M Falkner, D Dunbar
12472	Declarations of interest in any items on the agenda Cllr S Shing declared a non prejudicial interest in minute 12475 (Neighbourhood watch)
12473	Minutes of Finance & Policy committee 3rd August 2018 It was resolved to accept the minutes of the Finance & Policy meeting of 3rd August 2018 as an accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed. VOTE All in favour Cllrs D Murray, D Watts, B Goodwin, S Shing, Mrs M Piper
12474	Payments as presented for approval Council discussed the increasing amount being used for vandalism repairs. The clerk was asked once the report for the vandalism costs had been updated to let council know and potentially draft a letter of publicity on the costs to the council. It was discussed that the Mayor potentially records a video of the same so that people were aware how much this was costing both in parts, materials and staff time and that all tax payers would end up paying this in their council tax bills. It was agreed that a (solar) PIR light would be installed as part of general maintenance. It was resolved to accept the payments as present totaling £23,507.49 VOTE All in favour Cllrs D Murray, D Watts, B Goodwin, S Shing, Mrs M Piper
12475	Grant Requests a) Wealden Citizen's Advice Deferred b) Neighbourhood Watch It was resolved that the printing required would be carried out by the office for the few leaflets that needed printing. The clerk was also asked to inform the chairperson of Neighbourhood

watch that council had already agreed to waive charges to use the room and that she would need to reapply for any funding grant for the website on a new form if she wished to apply. VOTE All in favour Cllrs D Murray, D Watts, B Goodwin, S Shing, Mrs M Piper

The meeting closed at 10.28am

Signed by _____ Chair of Finance & Policy

Dated _____

Date: 04-10-2018

Polegate Town Council

Page 1

Time: 11:51 AM

Cashbook 1

User: BP

Current/Business Premium

Payments made between 01-10-2018 and 04-10-2018

Nominal Ledger Analysis

Date	Payee Name	Reference	£ Total Amnt	£ Creditors	£ VAT	A/c	Centre	£ Amount	Transaction Details
02-10-2018	Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	108676	61.80		10.30	4220	302	51.50	Flat seat fixings
02-10-2018	Wicksteed Leisure Ltd	108677	512.05		85.34	4220	302	426.71	Coil spring wannock
02-10-2018	Haven Security Ltd	108678	47.40		7.90	4140	201	39.50	New fob and new filters
02-10-2018	SSALC Ltd	108679	120.00		20.00	4016	101	100.00	Legal & Finance day JO
02-10-2018	SSALC Ltd	108680	120.00		20.00	4016	101	100.00	Legal & Finance day SG
03-10-2018	Tim Jordan grounds Maintenance	108681	278.53		46.42	4223	302	232.11	Grounds maint various
03-10-2018	Pyrotec	108682	125.94		20.99	4186	203	104.95	Service extinguishers
03-10-2018	Pyrotec	108683	251.80		41.97	4141	201	209.83	Service extinguishers
03-10-2018	Eastbourne Electrical LLP	108684	360.00		60.00	4220	302	300.00	2 Heaters toilets 49 High ST
03-10-2018	Eastbourne	108685	60.00			4501	205	60.00	Blocked urinal High St Toilet
03-10-2018	Eastbourne	108686	801.70			4014	101	801.70	Procedures research etc
						341		-801.70	Procedures research etc EM
						6000	101	801.70	Procedures research etc
03-10-2018	Ms A Snell	108687	40.00			4093	103	40.00	Tickets newhaven mayors event
03-10-2018	Kingdom Services Group Ltd	108688	1,250.02		208.34	4500	205	520.84	High St Toilets cleaning Sept
						4235	302	520.84	Wannock Toilets cleaning Sept
03-10-2018	PJ Skips	108689	252.00		42.00	4270	304	210.00	6 Yard skip cophall allotment
Total Payments:			4,281.24	0.00	563.26			3,717.98	Annual

Grass cutting contract issues and recommendations for 2019/20

Background

Following the decision by council to go to the lower priced contractor, and not to hand back to ESCC for 2018/19, there have been several issues with the grass cutting contract this year which have resulted in the office being inundated with complaints.

The complaints have been both about the standard of the work carried out and also that the cuttings are not picked up afterwards.

The problem was compounded at the start of the contract due to the cuts not being carried out because it was too wet, and then by the time the verges were cut, the grass had become very long so there were large piles of cuttings which looked unsightly.

A lot of residents have been unhappy about the cuttings not being picked up as it makes the verges look a mess (until they get blown away by the wind), and there were a couple of complaints about cars being covered by the cuttings.

In other large towns the cuts have been only two per year and although many of their residents were also unhappy the calls were generally fielded by East Sussex Highways.

We pay for 15 cuts and the specification is no different from the previous contractor who did an excellent job.

Frequency/timing of work

We have asked and continue to ask the contractors to let us know when they are on site. At first the grass verges were being cut every other Tuesday. After numerous issues, we have now been told Thursdays and Fridays but frequently the whole town is not completed in one session or even over two days.

They seem to have one person mowing and one person carrying out the strimming. Recently the grass verges were half cut and then left, and when we contacted them we were told there were staff issues.

Standard of work

The standard of the cuts was extremely poor at the beginning of the season. The contractors told us that they shouldn't have used the cylinder mowers, but should have done the first cut with the rotary mower as the grass was long. They had to stop as the cylinder mowers were ripping off tufts of grass and due to the softness of the mud, the vehicles were leaving grooves in the grass verges.

The standard of the work carried out has not been acceptable and the contractor had not been very co-operative.

Contract fulfilment

The contract has not fulfilled the 15 cuts and they have only been paid for 7 cuts so far. (We would normally have paid for 10 by now).

The cuts have been sporadic and difficult to keep track of. I have only paid them when I feel the cut was carried out correctly in the majority of areas. At one point, the contract terms were discussed with a view to potentially appointing an alternate external contractor to carry out the works, and recharging this to the current contractor due to their poor workmanship.

Contractor meeting

A meeting was held with the contractor to discuss all of the issues, and since this meeting there has been an improvement in performance. This included the contractor acknowledging that various parts of the contract had not been fulfilled previously, such as the requirement to cut and blow the grass. Credit notes for the unfulfilled parts of the contract will be issued in due course.

Update on ESCC offer

On 21st September 2018, ESCC contacted PTC requesting confirmation of PTC's intentions for 2019/20. ESCC offer the following options with regard to grass cutting for PTC:

- ESCC carry out two cuts per season at no cost to PTC
- ESCC carry out the two free cuts plus four additional cuts at a cost of £6,723 to PTC
- ESCC will pay a contribution of £3,362 to PTC, and PTC arrange their own contractor

Contractor options

To assist with the decision making of the council, indicative costs from two external contractors have been obtained. The current contractor is offering £1,025 per cut. A previously used excellent contractor is offering circa £2,000 per cut. As stated above, ESCC will no longer contract for cuts beyond their stated offer.

Summary and options/Decision required to notify East Sussex Highways

Council previously resolved to complete 15 cuts per season. The options available are outlined below:

1. If the council wish to continue with 15 cuts, the only option is to take the ESCC contribution of £3,362 and source an external contractor to complete the work. Depending on which contractor is chosen, this is likely to lead to **increasing the budget to around £27,000** (15 cuts @ circa £2,000 minus the ESCC contribution of £3,362).
2. Alternately, if council resolve to **reduce the number of cuts to 13**, the existing budget of £25,000 should be sufficient to cover the expenditure, allowing for the ESCC contribution.
3. PTC could also resolve to hand back grass cutting responsibility to ESCC, whereby any complaints would be directed to them in future. The options here would be to receive a) **2 cuts at no cost**, or b) **6 in total costing £6,723**.

Finance Meeting background Papers 12th October 2018

Item 7

Further to the personnel meeting and the maintenance person passing his probationary period

Motion to delegate to the clerk to arrange for a credit card for the maintenance person with appropriate authorities (to be signed by two councillors as required). Credit limit to be as per previous arrangements with former maintenance person – new card with name on being the only change. In accordance with financial regulations.

Item 8

Motion to delegate to the clerk to make virements between budget/EMR cost codes within the same costs centre.

(example - to use funds within the overtime budget and ear marked reserve to fund locum/consultancy work – budget spending already delegated to the clerk.) NB virements and spends are usually shown within the payments and the income and expenditure accounts presented to council each month. This is also normally notified to the chair of finance or in this case the chair of personnel committees prior to spend.