

# CHARITY COMMITTEE

11 DECEMBER 2023

Present: Councillors Cannan (Chair), Rogers (Vice-Chair), Batsford and Roark (as a substitute for Councillor Rogers on minute 35a). James Cook, The Protector.

In attendance: Victoria Conheady (Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Place), and Mary Kilner (Chief Legal Officer). In attendance remotely: Kit Wheeler (Chief Finance Officer), and Aaron Woods (Resort Manager).

## 28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

## 29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor	Item	Interest
Rogers	35a. Changes to the FST grant schemes for the year 24/25	Prejudicial – Member of the Bonfire Society. Member of Old Town Carnival Committee. Member of Hastings Week Committee. Marshall for Jack in the Green.

## 30. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CHARITY COMMITTEE

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 be approved as a true record.

## 31. MINUTES OF COASTAL USERS GROUP (06.12.23)

The Resort Manager informed the Committee of the feedback from the recent Coastal Users' Group (CUG) meeting. The meeting was not quorate and proceeded informally. CUG members raised concerns about the way CUG operates its advisory function to the Foreshore Trust. An informal vote was taken, agreed unanimously, to withdraw from the advisory role unless significant changes are made. These include providing CUG with the audited accounts for the Trust; more time to review and consider committee papers so meaningful feedback can be provided; and that relevant officers from finance, legal and estates attend CUG meetings to respond to questions.

The Chair said that the input of CUG is valued by the Charity Committee and there needs to be an effort to answer their concerns. Councillors are also frustrated with the delay in the auditing of the accounts. Officers agreed to meet with the Chair of CUG in January to address the concerns.

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The Chief Finance Officer said he had discussions with the Foreshore Trust auditors, and it is hoped that the audited 2020/21 accounts can be brought to the next meeting in March.

### **32. PROPOSAL TO EXTEND THE RNLI CONTRACT FOR BEACH LIFEGUARD PROVISION FOR A FURTHER FIVE YEARS**

The Resort Manager presented a report to update on the performance of the RNLI (Royal National Lifeboat Institution) operated beach lifeguard services in Hastings and to recommend that a new contract is awarded for the next five years.

During the three-year period of the contract 140 incidents took place, with 152 people involved. The RNLI's actions saved 1 life, 12 people were rescued, 34 people were assisted, 19 people were given major first aid, and 52 people were given minor first aid. Over the three years almost 100,000 preventative actions took place to keep beach users safe.

It is proposed that lifeguard provision for 2024 is maintained at its current level during peak season: 3 lifeguards will operate at Pelham beach, 3 lifeguards will operate at Marina beach, and 2 lifeguards will operate at Hastings Pier.

Councillor Rogers proposed an amendment to the second recommendation, to add 'in conjunction with the Chair of Charity Committee'.

#### **RESOLVED (unanimously):**

- 1. That HBC, as trustee of the Foreshore Charitable Trust, enters into a new five-year contract with the RNLI for provision of a beach lifeguard service in Hastings for the 2024 – 2028 (inclusive) seasons**
- 2. That authority is delegated to the Director of Place, or her nominee, in conjunction with the Chair of the Charity Committee, to conclude the necessary legal agreements.**

Reasons:

Because the RNLI has a proven track record of being able to provide a better service, at better value, than we can provide ourselves.

### **33. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT TO PERIOD 7 2023/24**

The Chief Finance Officer presented a report to advise members of the Committee on the current year's financial position (2023/24).

Income is forecasting a positive variance of £109,000 for the year. This is predominately due to additional parking income. Investment income is forecast to be £12,000 over budget for the year. Expenditure is forecast to be underbudget and this is mostly due to a favourable variance on the new cleaning contract.

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### **RESOLVED (unanimously):**

#### **1. To agree the current financial position for 2023/24.**

Reasons:

The Council has the responsibility for the proper management of the financial affairs of the Trust. In doing so it complies with Accounting Codes of Practice and the high standards required for the accounting of public money.

The Trust is reporting a surplus for the 2023/24 financial year in respect of operating income and expenses of £376,000.

#### **34. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS**

Notification was given of an urgent report from the Deputy Chief Executive.

#### **35. URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)**

Having declared a prejudicial interest Councillor Rogers left the Chamber and was substituted by Councillor Roark for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **36. CHANGES TO THE FST GRANT SCHEMES FOR THE YEAR 24/25**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented an urgent report on changes to the Foreshore Trust grant schemes for the year 2024/25.

The report outlines the wish of the Charity Committee to look at how to support charitable activity which in turn supports tourism in the town. This will be a theme within the new business plan for 2024-29, and it is proposed that there is a two-year extension of the small and events grants to focus on existing large and established events. The purpose of the expansion is to foster the sustainability of key events which take part on Foreshore Trust land and drive income for the Trust and support Trust assets.

This will support large and existing events so that they can become more sustainable and their reliance on grant aid is reduced over the next two years. This expansion will be for two years with a proposed budget of approximately £20,000 per annum, although this will be finalised in March.

The proposed criteria will be discussed in detail with the Grants Advisory Panel (GAP). There are three existing events which have been ringfenced to be applicable to apply for this scheme, those being Jack in the Green; Hastings Old Town Carnival; and Hastings Week. It is estimated that total allocation to these three events will be £8,000 out of the total £20,000. This will be dependent on their applications.

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GAP will conduct a robust appraisal of the applications. Applications will be required to meet a certain standard and address the set criteria before a recommendation for funding is made.

### **RESOLVED** (unanimously):

- 1. That the charity committee delegate authority to the deputy chief executive, or her nominee, in consultation with the Chair of the Charity Committee and the protector to: - To temporarily expand the budget for the events and small grants by £20,000, from April 2024 - To expand the criteria/ add a separate section for established events to apply for funding to support the move towards reduction in grant aid - Undertake consultation with the Grant Advisory Panel (GAP) regarding the proposed criteria for this expansion**
- 2. That the charity committee ring fence part of this expanded funding for 3 established events deemed to be able to meet the criteria – subject to appropriate robust consideration of application forms by the GAP. The events being: Jack in the Green, Old town carnival week and Hastings week.**
- 3. That a further open call is made during the 24/25 FY to support other established events which meet the criteria.**

Reasons:

1. To enable swift development and delivery of this expanded section of the FST small and events grants.
2. To enable proper consultation with the Grant Advisory Panel on all relevant matters regarding this proposed expansion.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.45pm)