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## CHARITY COMMITTEE

20 MARCH 2017

Present: Councillors Fitzgerald (Chair), Forward, Cartwright and Chris May (The ProtecCor)

### 77. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2016

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Charity Committee meeting held on 12 December 2016 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the meeting**

### 78. ACCESS AUDIT FOR HASTINGS SEAFRONT

The Resort Services Administration Officer presented the report of the Resort Services Manager on the findings of a recent audit of access provision for facilities and events on Hastings seafront and foreshore, which had been commissioned jointly by Hastings Borough Council and the Foreshore Trust.

The audit had been undertaken by Disability Inclusion CIC, with support from Hastings Access to Venues and Events (HAVE) and Hastings and Rother Disability Forum (HRDF). Theresa Hodge, Managing Director of Disability Inclusion CIC, gave an overview of the audit process. She explained that the audit had focused on beaches at Pelham in Hastings and Marina in St Leonards, as well as opportunities to encourage greater use of the other parts of the promenade and beach, including specific events and activities. The findings of the audit had been considered by the Coastal Users Group and no further comments had been made.

The audit acknowledged that improvements had been made in access to many areas of the seafront itself as well as information and facilities. Recommendations for further improvements had been made in respect of information, arrangements, facilities and events and placed in priority order. Further consultation will take place between the Foreshore Trust and the council regarding the implementation of the recommendations.

The committee thanked the Disability Inclusion CIC and all those who had contributed to the audit for their efforts.

Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendations to the Resort Services Manager's report, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that the recommendations are explored and costed to allow inclusion in the Foreshore Trust Business Plan where appropriate and subject to necessary funding**

The reason for this decision was:

To report the findings of the recently completed audit of access provision for facilities and events on Hastings seafront and foreshore.

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### 79. FORESHORE TRUST GRANT APPLICATION PROCESS

This item was moved up the agenda with the agreement of the Chair.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, submitted a report in response to recommendations by the Grant Advisory Panel (GAP) on suggested changes to the Foreshore Trust small grants and events grants process and the guidelines provided to applicants.

Andrew Colquhoun, the Chair of GAP, presented the panel's recommendations to the committee. Members of the Charity Committee and GAP had formed a working group to review the application process, forms and guidance for the two grant programmes. The changes proposed as a result of the review would be effective from the next round of small grant allocations in April / May 2017. The panel had requested that the Charity Committee extend the area for activities supported by the events grants programme to include venues and locations north of the A259 but facing the sea.

The panel also requested that the Charity Committee increase the funding available for the two grant programmes. The Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues, commented that the committee consider this request as part of their budget setting process.

Councillor Cartwright proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture's report, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

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

1. **The recommendations of the GAP as set out in Appendix 1 to the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture's report, be accepted,**
2. **The changes to the grant guidance to the Foreshore Trust small grants and events grants programme as set out in Appendix 2 and 3 of the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture's report, be accepted,**
3. **The changes to the grant application form as set out in Appendix 4 and 5 of the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture's report, be accepted, and;**
4. **To consider further if the amount of funding for the two programmes should be increased and if the boundary line for the Foreshore Trust grants should be extended.**

The reason for this decision was:

All the recommendations arise following a joint meeting between members of the Charity Committee and Grant Advisory Panel which took place on 3 January 2017.

### 80. FORESHORE TRUST EVENTS GRANT 2017-18

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This item was moved up the agenda with the agreement of the Chair.

The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, submitted a report setting out the recommendations of the Grant Advisory Panel in respect of the Foreshore Trust events grant programme 2017/18.

Andrew Colquhoun, the Chair of the Grant Advisory Panel, explained that the applications for funding had been assessed against the Foreshore Trust's priorities. The panel had also considered the applicants capacity to deliver their proposals, value for money and benefit to the local community. The panel recommended 11 projects for approval, and the total value of grants was £20,095.

The committee thanked the panel for their efforts assessing the applications for funding. Members commented that it was pleasing to note the diverse range of events supported by the programme.

Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture's report, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

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

- 1. The events grants recommendations of the GAP, as set out in Appendix A and B of the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture's report, be accepted, and;**
- 2. The Charity Committee approve an additional £95 spend from Foreshore Trust funds to support all the events recommended for approval (total £20,095).**

### The reason for this decision was:

The Grant Advisory Panel has appraised the merits of the applications received for events grant support and has made a number of recommendations for grant awards that can be funded from the 2017/18 budgets. These were assessed with detailed discussion on each application at two GAP meetings held during February 2017.

### **81. SEAFRONT CYCLE HIRE - SERVICE REVIEW**

The Facilities Development Officer presented the report of the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, to review the operation of the seaside cycle hire and recommend future arrangements for the service.

The seafront cycle hire service had been set up in 2014, and was managed by the council on behalf of the Foreshore Trust. The initial set-up costs had been covered in part by the FLAG funded Ecostade project. Further funding for the purchase of electric bikes had also been received from the Coastal Communities Fund.

The service currently operates seasonally May to October. However, the income received from the hire of bikes varied significantly depending on the time of year. In

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low season, the income received from the cycle hire was not sufficient to cover the staffing costs for operating the service.

The report recommended that the service should operate seasonally from mid-July until early September, while a sustainable business model for the service was developed. It was also proposed to increase the fees and charges for the service, in line with local market value. Additional funding was also requested from the Foreshore Trust Business Plan for 2017/18 for the purchase of replacement bikes and the repair of current stock.

The proposal had been submitted to the Coastal Users Group for consideration and no comments had been received. Under the terms of the earlier funding arrangements, the council would also be required to notify the Marina Management organisation (MMO) of any amendment to the future operation model.

Councillor Cartwright proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture's report, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

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

- 1. Alternative options are explored to provide a more sustainable business model. This would include discussion with existing and potential operators,**
- 2. Whilst other options are considered the current service operates seasonally for peak weeks only to coincide with the school summer holiday period, from mid-July to early September,**
- 3. £4.5k is committed from the 2017/18 Business Plan to fund the purchase of replacement bikes and repair of current stock where appropriate, and;**
- 4. Fees and charges are increased in line with local market value.**

The reason for this decision was:

The existing business model is not financially sustainable given staff costs in comparison with the income received. Across the three years of operation, staffing cost an average of £1,300 per month, whilst income averaged at just under £700 per month. Average income during August peak season is £1,300, with an all-time high of £1,650 taken in August 2015.

## **82. APPOINTMENT OF PROTECTOR**

Christopher May left the chamber during the debate on this item.

The Chief Legal Officer presented a report which requested the Charity Committee approve the re-appointment of Christopher May as the Protector of the Hastings and St Leonards Foreshore Charity Trust for a further 3 year period.

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Under the requirements of the scheme, the Charity Committee was required to appoint a Protector to oversee the activities of the Foreshore Trust. The post-holder must be a member of the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies.

The post had been advertised on the council's website for a three week period, Mr May was the only applicant.

Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendations to the Chief Legal Officer's report, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that Christopher May be reappointed as the Protector of Hastings and St Leonards Foreshore Charitable Trust for a period of three years**

The reason for this decision was:

On 13 January 2011, the Charity Commission for England and Wales approved Hastings Borough Council as trustee for the Hastings and St Leonards Foreshore Charitable Trust. The scheme required that the trustee must appoint a Protector of the charity "whose fiduciary duty will be to ensure the integrity of the administration of the charity, and who must report to the Charity Commission any matter which he has reasonable cause to believe is likely to be relevant for the purposes of the exercise by the Commission of any of its functions".

### **83. FORESHORE TRUST 2017/18 BUDGET AND FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues, presented a report which advised members of the committee of the current year's financial position (2016/17) and to determine the budget for 2017/18.

The committee were mindful that the draft budget would need to be amended to reflect the decisions made at this meeting in respect of the seafront cycle hire service review and the Foreshore Trust events grant 2017/18. Members were advised of delays of approximately 6 months in realising savings from the new cleaning services contract. The Charity Commission had also recently accepted a land swap arrangement for a small area of land at West Marina.

Members were advised that both income and expenditure in 2016/17 were above the projections set out in the budget. The projected year-end surplus had also increased by £10,000 to £241,000.

The Protector requested an update on projects to resurface the promenade and install new play equipment. The Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, confirmed that the resurfacing works had been completed, an additional update on the installation of new play equipment would be provided by email.

A draft budget for 2017/18 was appended to the report, this included proposed increases to off street pay and display parking charges. The draft budget for 2017/18 forecast a total operating surplus of £361,000. An associated business plan was

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currently under development, and this would be reported to the committee meeting in June. The development of the business plan would provide the committee with the opportunity of reviewing the funding allocated for grant awards, as requested by the Grant Advisory Panel.

Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues report, subject to amendments in respect of the seafront cycle hire and events grants programme, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

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

1. The current financial position for 2016/17 be agreed,
2. The allocation of general grants for 2017/18 be set at £50,000 and event grants £20,095,
3. The proposed expenditure funded from reserve – albeit further approval to proceed is required for a few schemes,
4. The budget for 2017/18, subject to the amendment regarding the seafront cycle hire and events grant programme, be approved,
5. Financial monitoring reports continue to be presented to each meeting of the Charity Committee, and;
6. The car park charges for 2017/18 (appendix iv to the Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues report) be approved.

The reason for this decision was:

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.

A surplus slightly above budget expectations is anticipated for 2016/17 in respect of ongoing operations. This enables the committee to establish a prudent level of grant allocation that can be distributed as part of the 2017/18 budget process.

The programmed use of reserves has been determined in accordance with the business plan.

### **84. HASTINGS OFF-STREET PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**

The Parking Enforcement Manager presented the report of the Assistant Director, Environment and Place, which requested funding for essential upgrades to off street car parking infrastructure located on Foreshore Trust land.

The report proposed the purchase of 22 new pay and display machines at a total cost of £56,364. Additional funding was also required to update the tariff boards in car parks. The works were necessary because many of the existing model of pay and display machines are no longer manufactured, which makes maintenance works more costly and time consuming. Upgrading the pay and display machines will also enable the use of cashless payment methods and further improvements to customer service.

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The Coastal Users Group had been consulted on the matter and were broadly supportive of the proposal. The council's Cabinet also approved the capital expenditure for this work at their meeting in March.

The Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues, commented that the cost of the project would be met from Foreshore Trust funds, rather than borrowing.

Councillor Cartwright proposed approval of the recommendations to the Assistant Director, Environment and Place's report, which was seconded by Councillor Forward.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that the request for funding be approved.**

The reason for this decision was:

The infrastructure improvements set out in this report are an essential element of the council's digital transformation and customer first programmes. They will facilitate even greater use of cashless payment options, which will help drive channel shift in line with the council's customer first and digital by design principles, as well as generating efficiency savings as we move from partly paper based parking administration systems to wholly digital systems.

The costs associated with them are amongst those which the council can offset against income generated from the off street parking service.

Improvement of the infrastructure located on Foreshore Trust land is essential and integral to the overall success of these improvements to the whole of the off street parking service operated by the council.

### **85. PROPOSAL TO WORK WITH THE RNLI (ROYAL NATIONAL LIFEBOAT INSTITUTION)**

The Marketing and Major Projects Manager presented a report which updated the Charity Committee on a proposal for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) to run the beach lifeguard service in Hastings for a trial summer season in 2017.

Hastings Borough Council and the Foreshore Trust currently operate an in-house seasonal lifeguard service. The service was scheduled to be reviewed at the end of 2017. However, following changes to the management of the team in early 2017, it was necessary for the council and Trust to make interim arrangements for the upcoming summer season.

The RNLI have already made similar arrangements with neighbouring authorities to provide beach lifeguard services. The service is subsidised by the RNLI and will also enable the Trust to benefit from cost savings, compared to the in-house service, whilst protecting the rate of pay for lifeguards. The Coastal Users Group had been briefed on the proposal and supported the new approach.

The findings of the review to be undertaken at the end of the 2017 season will be reported to the Charity Committee at a later meeting.

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Councillor Forward proposed approval of the recommendations to the Marketing and Major Projects Manager's report, which was seconded by Councillor Cartwright.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that the council and Foreshore Trust enter into a one season agreement with the RNLI for the RNLI to provide a beach lifeguard service at Hastings for the 2017 season, this operation to be reviewed at the end of the season**

The reason for this decision was:

Because the RNLI can offer a comparable beach lifeguard service to our in-house provision, directly managed by the RNLI, at a lower price.

### **86. MINUTES OF THE COASTAL USERS GROUP HELD ON 7 MARCH 2017**

The minutes of the Coastal Users Group meeting held on 7 March 2017 were submitted.

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Coastal Users Group meeting held on 7 March 2017 be received and agreed**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The committee thanked the Resort Services Manager, who would be leaving the council in March, for his efforts.

The Chief Legal Officer advised that a public consultation on the proposed Public Space Protection Orders would begin on 27 March 2017. Members of the charity Committee would have the opportunity to comment on the proposals, on behalf of the Foreshore Trust.

Councillor Fitzgerald advised that he would be taking on a new portfolio of Cabinet responsibilities after this meeting, and was therefore standing down as Chair of the Charity Committee. He thanked members of the committee and officers for their support during his time as Chair.

Members of the committee thanked Councillor Fitzgerald for his efforts during his time as Chair.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 6.38 pm)