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CHARITY COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2020

Councillors O'Callaghan (Chair), Batsford (Vice-Chair), Rogers. James Cook (The Protector), Andrew Colquhoun (GAP Chair), Christine Barkshire-Jones, Kevin Boorman, Kirsty Cameron, Kit Wheeler, Peter Grace, Victoria Conheady

70. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

72. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS CHARITY COMMITTEE

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Charity Committee meeting held on 16th March 2020 be approved as a true record.

73. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS

None

74. FORESHORE TRUST SMALL & EVENTS GRANTS ROUND 3 2020-21 (RESPONDING TO COVID 19 PANDEMIC CRISIS)

Victoria Conheady, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, presented the recommendations of the Grant Advisory Panel (GAP) in respect of applications for the Small and Events Grants Round 3 2020-21 (responding to COVID-19 pandemic crisis).

Following the pandemic impacts from 23rd March, the Charity Committee decided to re-focus this round in response. Urgency provisions were utilised for this report and it was agreed earlier due to the requirement to notify approved grant applicants as soon as possible and to enable projects to start in late June/early July. Thanks were extended to GAP for being very responsive, working electronically and attending two Microsoft Teams meetings over two nights, which took over two hours each.

Andrew Colquhoun, Chair of GAP, explained that positive and negative feedback had been received from successful and unsuccessful applicants.

James Cook, The Protector, asked if the committee is satisfied that these activities should be funded by the Foreshore Trust, and not by the local authority. It was explained that the successful applications are things which, in the current circumstances, the local authority would not be expected to fund.

The report had already been approved using urgency provisions on 22nd June and was noted by the meeting.

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75. APPOINTMENT OF GRANTS ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS

Christine Barkshire-Jones, Chief Legal Officer, explained that there are two recommendations in the report that require approval: 1) To appoint Terrence Fawthrop to the Grants Advisory Panel for a period of three years with immediate effect and 3) To give delegated authority to her to embark on a further recruitment drive for more volunteers to be considered for the Grants Advisory Panel. As colleagues are aware, a recruitment drive is carried out every year and appointments are made from that pool, which is now empty.

It was also noted that urgency powers were used on 22nd June to formally appoint Susan McNally to the Grants Advisory Panel for a period of three years from that date.

Councillor Rogers proposed approval of recommendations 1 and 3, seconded by Councillor Batsford, who also welcomed Susan and Terrence to the Grants Advisory Panel. He also thanked officers for their work on this process.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the meeting agrees:

1. To appoint Terrence Fawthrop to the Grants Advisory Panel for a period of three years with immediate effect

3. To give delegated authority to the Council's Chief Legal Officer to embark on a further recruitment drive for more volunteers to be considered for the Grants Advisory Panel

Reasons:

The Grants Advisory Panel must be able to have enough members to assess and evaluate grant applications under the Scheme dated 13 January 2011

76. FORESHORE TRUST BUSINESS PLAN 2019/20 – 2024/25

Victoria Conheady, Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture, presented the report. As previously advised in March, a review of the business plan was going to be delayed to June and reported to this meeting. This would enable engagement with the Coastal Users' Group, after the recommendation was approved at the March committee meeting for an additional member of staff. However, due to COVID-19 impact since the end of March, this work has had to be postponed further for a number of reasons: 1) We are still currently unsure of the total financial impact the pandemic will have on reserves and income of the Trust, 2) Full engagement with the Coastal Users' Group still cannot be carried out due to current COVID-19 restrictions, and 3) Members of staff who would be working on this had been realigned to work on COVID-19 and are only just now returning to their normal work.

With regards to the impact COVID-19 has on the council and the town, the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture updated that some of the suspended services are

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back now beginning to be operated, in COVID-19 compliant ways: the West Hill Cliff Railway opened on 4th July, operation of the car parks has returned to normal and the Trust funded playgrounds and multi-use games areas have now re-opened. The cycle and deckchair hire services, however, is still being reviewed, due to health and safety requirements and looking at whether this is financially viable. The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) lifeguard service is now operating, with one station open since 20th June and the possibility of opening a second is being looked into.

In terms of the Large Grants Scheme as mentioned in paragraph 22 of the report, the Assistant Director, Regeneration and Culture explained that it was intended to launch the scheme in June. This however, has been delayed further due to the measures previously advised. It is still intended to launch the scheme, although a date is still to be determined.

In addition, Peter Grace, Chief Finance Officer, explained that the £25,000 as mentioned in paragraph 15b of the report is constantly moving and is still uncertain going forward, with the council parking income down by £257,000 in the three months up to the end of June. Currently, the July income is down £8,500 compared to this time last year. Although people are returning to the town, there will be impacts across all the Trust's activities, and more so if there is a second wave of the virus later in the year.

The Protector asked if projects and plans scheduled up to the end of March were completed. The Chief Finance Officer explained that some projects are yet to be completed and it is anticipated that some of the less important ones will be postponed until next year. The council and the Foreshore Trust need time to catch up on the repairs and maintenance programmes which it has not been able to progress and will concentrate on those that have additional cost, or health and safety implications if action is not taken. The council's surveyors are reviewing and revising the programme of work, and this will be presented to the next Charity Committee meeting.

With regards to the cycle hire service, Councillor Rogers asked if it would be possible to make the cycles available for council staff to use as they come back to the office if the service does not progress. She was advised that there are issues around cash handling which are currently being explored and that other options for the service will also be looked at. There may also be VAT implications that need to be considered following last week's announcement by the Chancellor.

Kevin Boorman, Marketing and Major Projects Manager updated that a lot of pressure has been put on RNLI to open the St. Leonards site and in the last hour news has been received that this will happen within the next two weeks.

In response to questions from Councillor Batsford on the car parks, he was advised that these were generally full at the weekends and there was some capacity during week days – that could, if there is a good summer, help the Trust to catch up financially. In addition, confirmation of additional financial support from government is yet to be received following recent announcements – for which the Trust may or may not be eligible.

In addition, the Coastal Users' Group raised concerns about operating hours of the toilets, which are now currently open until 6pm. Officers were exploring how much it

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would cost to have these open for longer in the evening and will inform committee members – making arrangements to extend the hours if costs were reasonable.

Councillor Batsford proposed approval of the recommendations, seconded by Councillor Rogers. Officers were also thanked for their hard work during recent months.

RESOLVED (unanimously):

That the meeting agrees:

- 1. That the report on 2019/2020 Business Plan as appended to this report be noted.**
- 2. That the Committee delegate authority for any minor modifications to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Culture in consultation with the Chair of the Charity Committee.**
- 3. That it is agreed that the activity projected in the 2019/20-2024/2025, as agreed in March 2019 for this financial year be followed (except for exceptions noted in paragraphs 18-23.**
- 4. That a business plan for the 5-year period commencing 2021/2022 be presented in March 2021, once COVID-19 impact on the Foreshore Trust assets are understood, and full engagement with the coastal users' group is allowed under covid social rules.**

Reasons:

1. The Charity Committee requires a business plan to support its decision-making on the use of Foreshore Trust assets and surpluses.
2. It was agreed at the Charity Committee in March 2020 that this year's business plan be presented at the June 2020 meeting to enable full consultation and engagement with the Coastal Users Group after the appointment of a 'Foreshore Trust Liaison officer'
3. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the development of a business plan has not occurred

77. MINUTES OF COASTAL USERS GROUP - 7TH JULY 2020

The minutes of the Coastal Users' Group meeting held on 7th July were submitted for the Committee to note.

The Marketing and Major Projects Manager emphasised that points to note are around CCTV monitoring and the request for evening opening hours of some of the toilets, particularly at The Stade and Pelham Place. In addition, it was particularly noted that unanimous thanks were received and extended to the council for their work during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially the Foreshore team and to the Finance team for their swift handling of the discretionary grants.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Coastal Users Group meeting held on 7th July 2020 be received and noted.

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78. URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 6:27pm)

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