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FORESHORE CHARITABLE TRUST (FORESHORE TRUST)
ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

28 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present: Councillors Hodges (Chair), Forward and Cartwright. Also in attendance Mr May, the Protector.

17. TRUSTEE ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR 2014/15

The Assistant Director - Financial Services and Revenues presented a report which sought approval of the 2014/15 Annual Report and Financial Accounts.

A surplus of £251,000 had been achieved in 2014/15, which was in line with projections. The report identified key areas of income and expenditure for the Trust over the previous financial year. The main programme reserve was £688,172.

The council had received an unqualified opinion on the accounts from its external auditors. The Charity Committee, on behalf of the council as Trustee, was required to approve the annual report and financial accounts by 30 September 2015.

18. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (30 MINUTES)

A notice had been placed in the local newspaper inviting written questions, however none had been received. The Chair invited questions from the public gallery on matters relating to the Trust.

12 written questions had been submitted by Mr Dick Edwards. The questions were circulated and considered at the meeting.

Five of the questions were answered orally at the meeting. Mr Edwards was advised that the remaining questions would be answered by the relevant officers in writing. The questions and written replies are listed below, nos. 1 to 12.

Annual Report and Financial Statements Trustees Report:

1. *Page 3 - Coastal Users Group: adequate notice to member organisations: Business Plan – omission of request for additional playspace for older children (could be included in lease extension discussions with leaseholder).*

The Coastal User Group meetings are arranged a year in advance and have to be phased between the planning and formal meetings of the Charity Committee. We do try to send the agenda and any supporting documents at least a week in advance where we are able to do so.

Council officers have met with HOTRA members over the past 12 months to look at potential sites and discuss ideas. The 2014-19 Play Strategy does not flag up any particular need for additional play facilities on the seafront in the Old Town.

2. *Page 4 - Training for Trustees and Officers – who, when and what?*

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As advised by the Chief Legal Officer during the meeting: Historically an external lawyer had provided training in Charity law. Training was focused specifically on the Trust and the Council's Constitution. During the last two years however, the Chief Legal Officer has delivered training for officers and members. They have also been provided with a comprehensive training pack. Training is held every year and, in the meantime, if Members or officers have questions they are directed to the Chief Legal Officer.

3. *Page 5 - Stade Hall and Open space – details of usage levels, charges, amounts paid by Hastings Council. How much was paid by HBC for usage in 2014/15?*

The Council paid £539 in booking fees for use of the Stade Hall last year.

S.O.F.A

4. *Page 7 - FLAG projects – FT contribution of £149k to Winch Road and Winch sheds – yet reported underspend of FLAG budget of £30k – 50k undesirable.*

The £149K is in respect of projected 2015/16 spend and is expected to be fully utilised.

5. *Page 8 - Business Plan – Cyclical Repairs – Rock a Nore surfacing upgrade – when? Trustee Expenses – Chairs Special responsibility allowance £6k – what basis?*

As advised during the meeting: There is a plan for cyclical repairs, however there will always be unexpected costs.

6. *Page 8 - Reserves Policy – Risk assessment – a) + b) acceptable but on page 9 c) uncertainty over future income – 6 months or £.5m is very high, especially at this point in the economic cycle. Both parking and rents have grown. Tourism is significantly improved. Perhaps should be referred to CUG.*

A high level of reserve needs to be maintained, and the reserve policy is regularly reviewed.

7. *Page 19 - Foreshore Management – rise of about 30% from £356k to £489k – why?*

The increase was due partly to amounts spent on the partly Flag funded Stade Classroom/Kitchen and Eco-Stade which did not meet capitalisation criteria. The other costs include increased depreciation on Foreshore assets which have been capitalised, and increased costs of repairs on assets which come within the Foreshore management heading.

8. *Page 20 - Plant & equipment - £170k spent – on what?*

The spend was on items that could be capitalised on partly FLAG funded projects - £63K on Stade Classroom/ Kitchen, £22k on the Fishermen's fuel

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tanks and £84K on equipment related to the Eco-Stade project (including a digital information board).

The following queries relate to a report which was considered by the Charity Committee during its September meeting – held prior to the Annual General Meeting.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

9. *Page 54, para 4 - Please note – only meeting of the Management advisory Committee held 23/7 considered the way forward.*

Noted.

10. *Page 55, para 7 - Hire fees - need to look at breakdown by user types etc. What is the booking picture of the next 6 months? Urgent need to consider issues.*

The usage levels and associated fees will be subject to review in the forthcoming months.

11. *Page 55, para 13 - Why is there no fee income anticipated?*

There are no fixed bookings in the current financial year for which a fee is payable. Future fee income options will be included in the review that will be carried out in the forthcoming months.

12. *Page 57, para 20 - Essential that there is clear commitment to consult with key groups before deciding an acceptable approach. Not happy with contracting out to a new body.*

Under the Scheme established on 22 March 2006 by the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, the Trustee has to consult with the Coastal Users Group on the maintenance and management of the assets of the Foreshore Trust, and has to have regard to the recommendations of the Coastal Users Group when reaching its decisions.

In addition to this, the Charity Committee resolved on that the Management Advisory Group be re-established to work with Council officers to explore future options for the Stade Facilities.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at. 7.30 pm)

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