



## Seaford Town Council

### To the Members of the Full Council

An Extraordinary Meeting of the **Full Council** will be held electronically via Zoom\* on **Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020** at 7.00pm, which you are summoned to attend.

Councillor Rodney Reed  
Mayor of Seaford  
3<sup>rd</sup> September 2020

**\*see overleaf for important information to join virtual meeting and accessing password**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING WILL BE VIDEO RECORDED**

### AGENDA

*(Please note that prior to the meeting beginning there will be a short reflection by the Mayor's Chaplain, Andy Machin, Minister of Seaford Baptist Church. This will commence at 6.55pm ahead of the meeting opening at 7pm but is not a part of the Council meeting itself. If you do not wish to be present for the reflection, please either join the meeting and mute/step away from your device during the reflection or inform the Host Officer who will be able to place you in the virtual waiting room and have you re-enter for the meeting starting.)*

#### 1. **Apologies for Absence**

To consider apologies for absence.

#### 2. **Disclosure of Interests**

To deal with any disclosure by Members of any disclosable pecuniary interests and interests other than pecuniary interests, as defined under the Seaford Town Council Code of Conduct and the Localism Act 2011, in relation to matters on the agenda.

#### 3. **Public Participation**

To deal with any questions, or brief representations, from members of the public in accordance with Seaford Town Council Policy and the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

#### 4. **[COVID-19 Update Report – September 2020](#)**

To consider report 51/20 updating Full Council on the decisions and actions taken since the previous report on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 regarding the COVID-19 crisis and associated measures put in place, for ratification by Full Council (pages 3 to 10).

#### 5. **[Financial Update Report – September 2020](#)**

To consider report 52/20 presenting Full Council with an update on the financial situation of the Town Council (pages 11 to 15).

## 6. [Establishing an Assets Working Group](#)

To consider report 53/20 regarding Full Council establishing a working group to assess the Council's assets (pages 16 to 17).

### **For further information about items appearing on this Agenda please contact:**

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Telephone: 01323 894 870 (*please note that due to working from home, this phone line is not currently manned, so please leave a voice message and this will be picked up and forwarded to the relevant member of staff to deal with*)

**Circulation:** All Councillors, Young Mayor, Deputy Young Mayor and registered email recipients.

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## **Zoom Meetings**

In line with the Coronavirus Act 2020 and subsequent regulations governing local authorities meetings, the Council will be holding this meeting via the online video conference facility, Zoom.

**To join the Zoom meeting follow this link:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82654835012>

**Meeting ID:** 826 5483 5012

**Password:** (to ensure online security it is recommended that meeting passwords are not publicised and are given directly to those intending to attend the meeting. Please therefore email [admin@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:admin@seafordtowncouncil.gov.uk) for the password at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting date)

**Telephone number to join by audio only:** 0203 481 5240 (you will be prompted to enter the meeting ID and password before joining the meeting)

**Zoom Joining Instructions** are available to download following the links below:

[Zoom Joining Instructions \(Word\)](#)

[Zoom Joining Instructions \(PDF\)](#)



## Seaford Town Council

## Report 51/20

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Full Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>COVID-19 Interim Update – September 2020</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk</b>
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	<b>To update Full Council on the decisions and actions taken since the previous report on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 regarding the COVID-19 crisis and associated measures put in place, for ratification by Full Council.</b>

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### Recommendations

#### You are recommended:

- 1. To note and ratify the decisions made and actions taken by Officers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis.**
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### 1. Information

- 1.1** Following the positive response to the COVID-19 Update Report presented to Full Council on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020, this has been updated with actions taken and decisions made by Officers, as the most effective and appropriate way of keeping the Town Council and public abreast with the activities of the Town Council.
- 1.2** For those that may not have read the previous update report (12/20), below is the introduction to the current situation:
  - (a)** Since the announcement by the Government of the enforced lockdown as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020, Council officers have had to make various decisions and take a number of associated actions in order to comply with the Government guidance and associated revisions to this guidance in the following weeks and months.
  - (b)** The Town Council's Central Management Team (CMT), formed of its senior managers and department heads, has been constantly monitoring the situation and the Town Council's responses accordingly since lockdown was announced. Where possible, discussion has been held with Committee Chairs ahead of actions being taken but quite often, the management team has had to decide and implement actions itself due to time constraints.
  - (c)** Since lockdown began, the Town Council has had a publicly available position statement that is kept up to date as best possible. Officers would now like to set out in greater details the decisions and actions made and taken to date and the associated measures that have been put in place.

- (d) The updates below are correct as of the time of writing 28<sup>th</sup> August 2020, but these are subject to change as the national position adjusts. Please note that as before, these are largely situational updates, not an evaluation of the Town Council's financial position; this is included elsewhere on the agenda.

### **The View**

- 1.3** The View reopened to the public from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020, operating reduced opening hours and menus.
- 1.4** The Golf & The View Committee met on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 to agree the opening arrangements and delegate to the General Manager and Responsible Financial Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Golf & The View Committee, to make changes to the opening arrangements as required. This delegation was important to allow the venue to remain flexible to demand and changing restrictions/guidance.
- 1.5** Since the decision of the Committee, The View has slightly increased its opening hours because of a clear demand from customers, now being open as follows:
- Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm (food until 3pm)
- Saturday & Sunday, 7am to 5pm (food until 4pm)
- 1.6** Mid-July, Government announced the Eat Out to Help Out scheme. The scheme allowed for registered restaurants to offer a 50% reduction (up to £10 per customer) on food and non-alcoholic drinks, Monday-Wednesday from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August. The View was registered with the scheme and the necessary arrangements put in place to discount relevant items and claim the eligible funding from Government.
- 1.7** Following the Government's reduction in Value Added Tax (VAT) from 20% to 5% from 1<sup>st</sup> August, CMT felt it best to reduce customer prices by 10% and retain 5% as a saving for The View, therefore splitting the benefit.
- 1.8** Sales have gradually increased week on week since reopening on 4<sup>th</sup> July. A full report on the performance at The View will have been presented at the Golf & The View Committee meeting being held on 8<sup>th</sup> September, ahead of the Full Council meeting.
- 1.9** Members are therefore recommended to view the General Manager's Update Report for a more in-depth analysis on The View's operations since reopening and the predictions for the coming months (although please note that these reports themselves are not being discussed).
- 1.10** Given the meeting of the Golf & The View Committee due to take place on 8<sup>th</sup> September, it may be pertinent to seek a verbal update on any relevant decisions or discussions from this meeting from the officer's present.
- 1.11** Following the departure of the Assistant Manager just prior to lockdown, the decision was taken not to recruit to fill the position at that point in time. With The View operating on reduced opening hours for the foreseeable future, there is still not a need to fill this vacancy; a decision which also represents a financial saving for the venue. CMT are monitoring this decision and if felt required, can reassess the need for an Assistant Manager.

- 1.12** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a) The View opening for an additional hour Monday to Friday, from 4pm-5pm.
  - (b) Coordinating the staff rota to ensure that there is adequate cover during opening hours, which therefore has an impact on the number of hours staff are furloughed for (and the amount of financial support the Town Council can claim through the furlough scheme).
  - (c) Not seeking to replace the vacant position of Assistant Manager at The View for the foreseeable future.
  - (d) To register for the Government's 'Eat Out to Help Out Scheme', allowing The View to offer a 50% discount (up to £10 per customer) from 3<sup>rd</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> August, Monday to Wednesday with certain conditions.
  - (e) To split the 15% reduction in VAT, with a 10% price reduction for customers and a 5% saving for The View.

### **Seaford Head Golf Course & Professional Shop**

- 1.13** As previously reported, Seaford Head Golf Course reopened on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May operating in line with guidance being issued by England Golf.
- 1.14** Upon opening, safety measures were put in place such as ensuring doors were kept open to reduce shared handle use, delay hiring buggies due to being unable to ensure cleaning between use etc. As part of assessing safety, it was decided that the voluntary wardens, who patrol the course and take green fee payments after golf pro shop hours, would be supplied with a remote payment system so that they would not be required to handle cash.
- 1.15** As above with The View, a full report on the Golf Course operations will have been presented to the Golf & The View Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> September and members are therefore recommended to read the Head Greenkeeper's and Golf Professional's update reports (although please note that these reports themselves are not being discussed). Again, officers presented can provide a verbal update on any relevant items from the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> September.
- 1.16** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a) To make easements to the restrictions on play in line with the advice of England Golf.
  - (b) To purchase a remote payment system to enable the voluntary Golf Course Wardens to take card payments from golfers using the course outside of usual hours (and therefore not having paid at the Pro Shop).
  - (c) To delay allowing hire buggies on the course until August due to the logistics of the cleaning requirements between use.
  - (d) To apply for grant funding from England Golf of up to £10,000 to assist with the plans for future-proofing golf as a sport, the facilities on offer and increasing membership and take up of golf. Officers are awaiting the outcome of the application.

### **Town Council Offices**

- 1.17** The Town Council offices remain closed to the public, with many staff still working from home. Some officers are visiting the offices occasionally but there is no anticipated date yet in which officers will return to working from the offices on a more permanent basis.

- 1.18** Staff have settled in to working from home and have the necessary equipment to do so. Flexibility is being shown with working hours, understanding that in the current situation it is not always possible to stick to usual working patterns and this is recognised and appreciated by those affected staff members.
- 1.19** The Tourist Information Centre, run by Lewes District Council, has reopened on its usual opening hours but with arrangements in place to allow for social distancing.
- 1.20** The Citizen's Advice Bureau are not yet offering a service from 37 Church Street; it is unknown when they will be able to reopen the centre in this building (largely due to the small size of the consultation rooms).
- 1.21** Any visitors to the Town Council offices will be required to wear a face covering (save for those individuals with an exemption) within the shared foyer at 37 Church Street – this includes those just passing through to get to the Town Council offices.
- 1.22** Officers are contesting the Town Council continuing to be charged full rent and utility bill/cleaning cost proportions by Sussex Police despite the Town Council offices not being open. Sussex Police has stated that as formal notice was not given of the offices being vacant, a reduction cannot be made. Formal notice has now been given (officers not previously being aware that this was a requirement) and officers are waiting for confirmation on what reduction can be offered. Regardless of the decision made, officers will continue to seek a reduction in the cleaning costs as with the offices being closed, a significantly reduced level of cleaning has provided.
- 1.23** It is not yet known when staff members will look to return to working from the Town Council offices on a more permanent or regular basis. There will be many considerations to be made if this happens when social distancing is still required, as this would mean staggering the number of people in each office at any given time. There are therefore no plans to look at reopening the offices in the immediate future.
- 1.24** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a)** To allow staff members to continue to work from home wherever possible.
  - (b)** Coordinating working hours of staff to allow the Town Council to continue to utilise the furlough scheme for relevant office staff members.
  - (c)** Formally giving notice to Sussex Police of the Town Council offices being vacant for most of the time and contesting the rent, cleaning and utility costs being charged by Sussex Police.
  - (d)** To put in place safety measures such as it being a requirement to wear face coverings when in shared locations at 37 Church Street.

## **Staff**

- 1.25** The Town Council has 26 permanent members of staff and eight casual workers, at the time of writing. Of these 34, 24 have been furloughed under the Government's Job Retention Scheme. The length of furlough has varied, with some staff being furloughed for just three weeks and some being furloughed (full time or flexibly) still to date, so for around six months.

- 1.26** From April to July 2020, around £59,500 has been received by the Town Council from the Government's Job Retention Scheme (across all its workforce). This equates to around 22% of the Town Council's salaries cost to the end of July, £264,355 (including employers National Insurance and pensions contributions).
- 1.27** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a) (as already highlighted in previous sections) to furlough some staff members under the Job Retention Scheme (a mixture of full time and flexible furlough) and, for permanent staff members, to 'top up' wages by the optional 20% to 100% of their normal wages.

### **Projects**

- 1.28** Following all projects being put temporarily on hold with immediate effect when lockdown was introduced in March, Full Council formalised this decision at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020 having received this as a recommendation from the Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- 1.29** To confirm, all future projects are now on hold for the remainder of this municipal year unless external funding (which includes Community Infrastructure Levy funds) can be sourced and received prior to work beginning.
- 1.30** This was seen with the agreement of Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> August for CIL funds being used for repair works at Splash Point (subject to supplementary funding from other local authorities) and for three water refill stations along the promenade.
- 1.31** Another project going ahead which was resolved pre-COVID is the Seaford Head Golf Course Pump House. This project has continued due to the urgency of the works required and potential risks which could occur if the pump house is not replaced this year.
- 1.32** No decisions have been made by officers under delegated powers since those reported on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

### **Concessions**

- 1.33** The report to the Community Services Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 provided an update on concessions, most of which have been able to reopen with restrictions in place.

### **Beach Huts**

- 1.34** With the Bönningstedt beach huts, officers have completed one sale in August and have another going through for early September. Interest and viewings have significantly gone up since restrictions were eased.

### **Public Toilets**

- 1.35** All public toilets were reopened from 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020 following Lewes District Council's stance.
- 1.36** As part of above and following guidance, the portable toilet that the Town Council provides to Bönningstedt Beach Hut owners was reinstalled.
- 1.37** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a) To reopen all Town Council-owned public toilets from 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020.

- (b) To reinstall the Bönningstedt Beach Hut portable toilet.

## **Car Parks – nothing new to report**

### **Seafront**

- 1.38** The seafront has been incredibly well-used during recent weeks. Whilst this is good for the town's economy and tourism, this does come with consequences such as increased litter, struggles to encourage adhering to social distancing, over-populated beaches at a time when there is no lifeguard cover and an increased number of dogs on parts of the beach with a dog ban in force during the summer months.
- 1.39** The new seafront safety signs were installed in June and contain a lot of useful information. Officers have still however had to ensure extra signage is used to encourage social distancing, taking litter home and respecting the area in general.
- 1.40** A competition was held, with Plastic Free Seaford, for school children to design "take litter home" posters. Winners have had their posters made into signs which are displayed along the seafront.
- 1.41** The Projects & Facilities Manager is meeting with colleagues from Lewes District Council, Eastbourne Borough Council and the Police to review how things went on the seafront this year and prepare for next year when the town is likely to again see a higher amount of visitors than usual.
- 1.42** A revised Seaford Beach Guide, produced by Lewes District Council in partnership with Seaford Town Council, was launched in early-August and is available digitally and in hard copy from the Tourist Information Centre and some seafront concession holders. The guide includes COVID-19 specific guidance and important information such as there being no lifeguard cover.

### **Other Open Spaces**

- 1.43** Officers are continuing to contest the Grounds Maintenance charges from Lewes District Council given that not all services were carried out for a period of weeks during early lockdown. This is ongoing.

### **Events**

- 1.44** A report was taken to the Community Services Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> July regarding the Seaford Christmas Magic event where the Committee decided on a significantly reduced event in line with Government social distancing and COVID-19 safety guidance.
- 1.45** Further to the cancellation of all physical events on Town Council land, the easing of restrictions has meant that planning has been underway for the return of some events.
- 1.46** Following the introduction of vigorous COVID-19 safety measures and risk assessments that satisfied the Town Council's officers, the first boot sale by Martello Rotary Club was held on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August and Bill Cole's Fun Fair will be returning to Martello Fields on 28<sup>th</sup> August-6<sup>th</sup> September.
- 1.47** Officers were contacted by the Seaford branch of the Royal British Legion, the body responsible for organising Remembrance Sunday for Seaford. They have been advised nationally that no physical event can be organised this year. Seaford Town Council would normally support the event by applying for the relevant road closure and have the Mayor and Councillors attend on the day.
- 1.48** In light of the above, officers have looked at a way of still marking the occasion whilst adhering to national guidance and not 'taking on' an event



which does not come under the Town Council's normal event calendar. A press release will be issued in October setting out the Town Council's plans, this will include a note to confirm that there will be no road closure and a gathering on the day at the war memorial is not encouraged.

- 1.49** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a) To allow the return of some events, following satisfactory risk assessments being submitted, and to reject those enquiries where officers had concerns about the event plans and/or risk assessments.
  - (b) To not apply for the Remembrance Sunday road closure, to not encourage a large gathering at the war memorial as per Government guidance.

### **Town Council Meetings**

- 1.50** Full Council and Committee meetings continue to take place remotely via the online meeting platform, Zoom. The Town Council Planning & Highways Committee has also begun to meet remotely (from 6<sup>th</sup> August).
- 1.51** Whilst there is guidance issued supporting those councils looking to hold physical or hybrid (part physical and part remote) meetings, due to the size of the Town Council and the number of individuals that would be required to be in one room, officers are not yet recommending that the Town Council look to hold physical or hybrid meetings.
- 1.52** The Town Council must be seen locally to be 'leading by example' and so long as it is not necessary to meet physically and business can take place effectively with remote meetings, it is the recommendation of officers that this continues.
- 1.53** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a) To bring the Planning & Highways Committee meetings in line with all other Town Council meetings by becoming digitally held via Zoom.
  - (b) To continue to use online meeting platform, Zoom, to hold virtual meetings.

### **Grant Scheme**

- 1.54** In March, the Town Council agreed to delay its annual discretionary financial grants scheme and delegated power to the Finance Manager and Chair of Finance & General Purposes to decide on the timescale for the scheme this year.
- 1.55** The scheme was subsequently opened for applications from 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, with these being considered by the Finance & General Purposes Committee at its meeting scheduled to take place on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (following a Grants Working Group meeting 1<sup>st</sup> September).
- 1.56** To clarify, the decisions made by officers under delegated powers since 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were:
- (a) (In consultation with the Chair of Finance & General Purposes) to open the Discretionary Grants Scheme in July.

### **Future Plans**

- 1.57** As previously reported, the revised Business Continuity Plan will be presented at a future Council meeting for adoption, once the current crisis has

passed and officers are able to properly assess all decisions, actions and measures taken and put in place.

- 1.58** The annual budget setting process is underway, with the finance team liaising with all necessary parties to create the draft budgets for 2021/2022. The RFO will be leading on this process and will be holding individual meetings with the relevant budget managers and Committee Chairs to discuss each budget line-by-line. These draft budgets will then be presented to the relevant committee during November and December for recommendation to Full Council at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

### **Public Correspondence**

- 1.59** As was expected, it has not been possible to please all people during the lockdown and with the actions that have been taken as a result. Officers from all teams have had to deal with an increased amount of complaints and queries, handling these swiftly and professionally. Officers are aware that these are issues that have been faced by local authorities nationwide, so are not localised to Seaford.
- 1.60** The Council has however also received a positive amount of support and understanding, in particular from partners it works with and on social media.

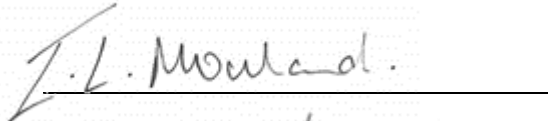
## **2. Financial Appraisal**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Elsewhere on the agenda is a report providing Full Council with an update on its financial situation.

## **3. Contact Officer**

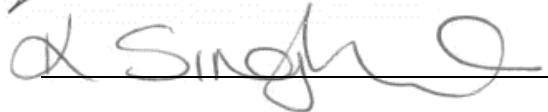
The Contact Officer for this report is Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk.

Assistant Town Clerk



I.L. Mouland.

Responsible Financial Officer



A. Singh



## Seaford Town Council

### Report 52/20

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Full Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Financial Update Report – September 2020</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Karen Singleton, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)</b>
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	<b>To inform Members of the Town Council’s current financial position.</b>

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#### Recommendations

#### The Council is recommended to:

##### 1. Note the contents of this report.

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#### 1. Information

- 1.1 The COVID-19 outbreak has had a significant effect on the Town Council’s finances, mainly through loss of income. This report aims to provide a further update on how this loss of income has affected the Town Council’s finances.
- 1.2 Members should note that the figures in this report are a snapshot in time and will change on a weekly basis as the situation changes.
- 1.3 The RFO and the Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee are meeting weekly to keep abreast of the situation.

#### 2. Financial Appraisal

##### 2.1 Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP)

- 2.1.1 F&GP’s budget is the least affected by COVID-19. Changes in budget are due to events not directly associated with COVID-19.

##### 2.2 Community Services Committee

- 2.2.1 It is estimated that approximately £80,000 will be lost in income due to COVID-19. This is offset by forecast savings in; Non-Contract & Building Maintenance (£6,000), Contract Maintenance - Summer Bedding (£7,000), Advertising & Publicity (£2,000), Seaford in Bloom (£2,000) and Events (£17,300), plus other small savings.

- 2.2.2 A pleasing result to report is the sale of three Bönningstedt Beach Huts (£106,583). As this is a Capital Receipt it has been transferred to an Earmarked Reserve (EMR) and therefore can only be spent on Capital expenditure, it cannot be spent to cover things like salaries or utilities. As approved by the Town Council on 20<sup>th</sup> August, all Capital expenditure this year will come from this EMR. To date this includes the pump house at the Golf Course, the capital element of any loan repayments and the replacement boilers at the Salts Café.
- 2.2.3 Another pleasing result is the demand for filming. This is going well with £17,965 already received and officers are in negotiations for potentially another £24,000 (against a budget of £15,000).
- 2.2.4 This Committee made the most significant savings (£194,000) by not doing projects; the requirement is now £270,527 less than budgeted.

### 2.3 Golf & The View Committee

#### 2.3.1 **Golf**

Golf Course income in quarter 1 was down by £85,000 compared to the same time last year. It is estimated that £102,845 will be lost in income due to COVID-19. This is not only due to the period of closure but also due the fact that buggies have only recently started to be used and societies restricted. The lack of societies has freed up green time and therefore green fees have risen significantly and are forecast to be higher than budget.

This is offset by the following savings on budget; Rates rebate (£21,018), Advertising & Publicity (£4,000), Equipment Purchase (£7,000), and Furlough Grant income (£2,704). This has resulted in the Golf Course requiring an additional £63,595 more than budgeted.

#### 2.3.2 **The View**

The View income in quarter 1 was down by £133,000 compared to the same time last year. This was offset by a reduction in expenditure of £75,000. It is estimated that a massive £346,500 will be lost in income due to COVID-19. The figure could be higher than this if functions cannot be held in the year.

This is offset by the following savings on budget; Salaries (£20,000), Rates rebate (£6,755), Utilities (£4,000), Bank Charges (£1,700), Events Expenditure (£1,000), Food (£63,000), Bar (£36,000), Card Top Up Scheme (£1,500), and Furlough Grant income (£61,000). This has resulted in The View requiring an additional £146,532 more than budgeted.

#### 2.3.3 **Capital Costs**

The pump house was originally budgeted to be paid for by a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan. It is not possible to get borrowing approval for such a small amount and therefore in March the Town Council approved for the pump house costs to be met from EMR. In August, it was approved that the costs would come from the Capital Receipts EMR.

- 2.3.4 The Golf & The View Committee as a whole requires an additional £208,608 more than budgeted. £39,000 of this to be met from EMR.

## 2.4 Mitigation of loss

2.4.1 To mitigate the loss of income the following actions have been taken:

- Cease all projects until further notice;
- Furlough staff that have reduced work;
- Consult with managers to ensure that all expenditure is essential and defer non-essential expenditure to be budgeted for in future years.

2.4.2 The RFO is in contact with the PWLB, with whom the Town Council has six loans, to defer payment of the current year's loans that are still outstanding (£95,375). PWLB have said they will only consider deferring payment until next year and no longer, but a decision has not yet been made.

2.4.3 The RFO has been in contact with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and Lewes District Council (LDC) to see if financial support would be available either by passing down government funding or by offering to loan Seaford Town Council up to £250,000. This would give the Town Council security against future lockdowns and losses and the real possibility of running out of money before the year-end. Both ESCC and LDC have said that there is no grant funding to pass down. Both are also struggling to balance budgets. ESCC has said that it cannot help and LDC say that a report will be considered at its next relevant meeting.

2.4.4 Members have also been lobbying councillors at ESCC and LDC and the local MP, to make them aware of Seaford Town Council's financial position.

2.4.5 The RFO has had a meeting with officers from National Association of Local Councils (NALC) & Sussex and Surrey Association of Local Councils (SSALC) and they have said that they will bring the Town Council's issues to the attention of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MCLG). They will also continue to lobby Government for funds to be handed down to towns and parishes as has been done in Cornwall.

## 3. **Conclusion**

3.1 The only way to protect the Town Council's finances against loss of income is to have a sufficient General Reserve or Earmarked Reserves as a buffer. The Internal Auditor has recommended that this should be at least 50% of the precept. This would be £436,000. The Town Council's expenditure is not just funded by precept but also by commercial income. When income at The View is lost, expenditure is also reduced, however this is not the case with the Golf Course, as it still needs to be maintained. The Town Council needs to have sufficient reserves to cover its expenses in times of a crisis, when commercial income is lost. It could therefore be argued that a General Reserve matching half of budgeted expenditure, not precept, would be more appropriate.

3.2 As at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, the Town Council's General Reserve was £184,069. Forecast figures have used assumptions that The View functions will be 25% of budget in the year and other income will be 75% of budget. This suggests a year-end General Reserve of just £17,000. It has been agreed that the EMR set aside for the pump house should be transferred back to the General Reserve and Capital receipts used instead. This will increase the General Reserve by £48,000 to £65,000.

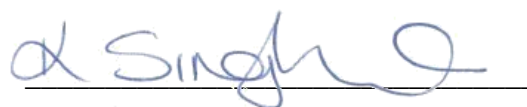
3.3 To create the recommended General Reserve of £436,000 this would equate to an addition £45.92 on top of the current £91.83 per annum Band D Council tax; a 50% increase in Band D.

- 3.4 The General Reserve can be increased by:
- Increasing the precept (can only be done annually each April following approval by Full Council at its January budget setting meeting)
  - Increasing income by
    - Finding new income streams without increasing costs.
    - Increasing profits at the Golf Course and The View – looking at different business models.
    - Increasing charges for rentals and leases.
  - Reducing costs
    - Only essential expenditure e.g. fundamental to the running of the Council, a Health & Safety requirement etc.
    - Renegotiate the existing commercial and utility contracts at cheaper rates.
    - Only do projects when funding is available e.g. grants or loans.
- 3.5 The Committee summaries can be found at Appendix 1. The predicted General Reserve is £65,000 taking into account transfers from EMR.
- 3.6 These figures of course do not take into account a future lockdown or unknown liabilities that may arise in the year. Factoring in a worst-case scenario with the Golf Course and The View having no functions or societies this year brings the General Reserve balance to a negative figure of -£85,000.
- 3.7 Increasing the precept would be a Full Council decision to be taken in January 2021. In the meantime, officers will continue to keep spending to a minimum.
- 3.8 Officers are currently looking at next year’s budgets and members will be provided with a ‘bare bones’ budget so that any surplus can be put in the General Reserve. In addition to this there will be a list of projects and ‘like to haves’ with how including these will affect the Band D council tax. To increase the General Reserve sufficiently projects may have to be funded through grants, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or loans.

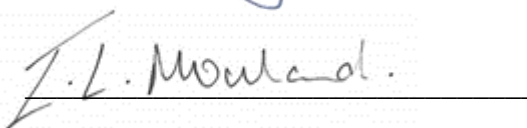
**4. Contact Officer**

The Contact Officer for this report is Karen Singleton, RFO.

RFO



Assistant Town Clerk



**Budget Forecast as at 01/09/2020**

		2020/21	2020-21
		Budget	Forecast
<b>Finance &amp; General Purposes Committee</b>	Expenditure	608,684	678,644
	Income	35,155	43,671
	Net	<b>573,529</b>	<b>634,973</b>
<b>Community Services Committee</b>	Expenditure	1,053,905	329,548
	Income	715,346	261,515
	Net	<b>338,559</b>	<b>68,033</b>
<b>Golf and The View Committee</b>	Expenditure	1,174,660	962,556
	Income	1,117,418	696,706
	Net	<b>57,242</b>	<b>265,850</b>
<b>Total Committees</b>	Expenditure	2,837,250	1,970,748
	Income	1,867,919	1,001,892
	<b>Council Net Expenditure</b>	<b>969,330</b>	<b>968,856</b>
PLUS Transfer to General Reserves	25,000		
PLUS Transfer to EMR- Restricted use			
CIL		10,950	
Capital Receipts		106,583	
	<b>Council Funding Requirement</b>	<b>994,330</b>	<b>1,086,389</b>
<b>Funded From</b>			
<b>Earmarked Reserves</b>			
EMR340 - Equipment (towards borehole)	8,759		
EMR363 - Capital Receipts	75,000	43,650	
EMR364 - Spike Bar	38,548		
EMR 366 SDP		2,030	
<b>Precept</b>	872,023	872,023	
<b>General Reserve</b>		168,686	
	<b>994,330</b>	<b>1,086,389</b>	
General Reserve 01/04/2020	184,069	184,069	
Transfer to (from) General Reserve	25,000	(168,686)	
Transfer from EMR 365- Bore hole/pump house		48,215	
Transfer from EMR334/335		1,744	
Forecast General Reserve 31/03/2021	<b>209,069</b>	<b>65,342</b>	



## Seaford Town Council

## Report 53/20

<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Full Council</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> September 2020</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Establishing an Assets Working Group</b>
<b>By:</b>	<b>Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk</b>
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	<b>To establish a working group to review the Town Council's assets</b>

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### Recommendations

#### The Council is recommended:

- 1. To establish a working group to review the Town Council's assets consisting of Town Councillors, with the support of Council Officers.**
  - 2. To note that the working group need not co-opt further members from outside of the Town Council at this stage in the process.**
  - 3. To agree the terms of reference of the working group as 'To review the Town Council's portfolio of assets, with the support of Town Council Officers, and make recommendations back to Full Council on any assets which the group feels the Town Council should carry out a feasibility study in to the possibility of disposing of (selling).'**
  - 4. To request nominations to appoint a Chair of the working group at this early stage, to enable the group to make arrangements for its first meeting as soon as possible.**
- 

### 1. Information

- 1.1** The Town Council is currently not in a strong financial position. Officers have been continually monitoring the Town Council's finances, looking at ways in which to reduce spending and/or increase income; as explained further in the Financial Update Report elsewhere on this agenda.
- 3.1** The next logical step is for the Town Council to look at its assets with a view to assessing whether or not any may be suitable for disposing of (selling).
- 3.2** The Town Council has in the past been identified as having one of the largest portfolios of assets in the country. This inevitably means a higher level of associated expenditure to manage and maintain such assets.
- 3.3** The formation of the working group would by no means be a predetermination that there are assets that can be disposed of, but it is a process that Officers feel needs to be undertaken and that this should be led by Town Councillors with the professional support of the Council Officers.



- 3.4** At this Full Council meeting it is not expected that there will be any discussion on the Town Council's assets but simply that Full Council will establish a working group which will present back to a future Full Council meeting, at which point discussions on the assets themselves would take place.
- 3.5** The recommended terms of reference for the working group are:  
'To review the Town Council's portfolio of assets, with the support of Town Council Officers, and make recommendations back to Full Council on any assets which the group feels the Town Council should carry out a feasibility study in to the possibility of disposing of (selling).'
- 3.6** Depending on the outcome of the subsequent Full Council meeting, the terms of reference of the working group can then be reviewed and amended accordingly if further work in to be carried out by the group. It would be at this stage, if feasibility studies were being looked in to, that the group may wish to look at co-opting further members with expertise in relevant areas (including any from outside the Town Council).
- 3.7** Subject to Full Council agreeing to establish the working group, Officers will contact all group members with a view to providing them with some initial documentation to review and arranging the first group meeting at the earliest possible convenience.
- 3.8** It should be noted that members of the working group will need to be able to commit availability over the coming months to attend remote meetings (evening if required by any of the group members) and review a considerable amount of documentation.

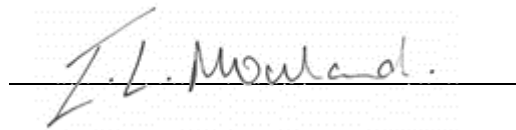
## **2. Financial Appraisal**

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

## **3. Contact Officer**

The Contact Officer for this report is Isabelle Mouland, Assistant Town Clerk.

Assistant Town Clerk



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "I. L. Mouland.", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and includes a period at the end.