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MERTON AND SUTTON JOINT CEMETERY BOARD
21 FEBRUARY 2023

(2.00 pm - 2.50 pm)

PRESENT Councillor Paul Cole (in the Chair),
Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina, Councillor Caroline Charles,
Councillor James Williscroft, Councillor Hina Bokhari,
Councillor Michael Paterson and Councillor Sam Cumber
ALSO PRESENT Zoe Church (Treasurer), Ijaz Chutton (Assistant Treasurer),
Richard Seedhouse (Clerk), Andrew Kauffman (Client Manager),
Anthony Potter, (idverde)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies received from Cllr Rob Beck

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes were amended to show that the Vice Chair was elected for 22/34, rather than 21/22 as minuted.

4 CONTRACTOR REPORT (Agenda Item 4)

The contractor introduced the report. In response to questions, confirmed that:

- The plan is to replace the bins with Euro wheelie bins that would be black, they are in use at London Road. The order will be placed soon.
- Idverde work well with the local mosque and local minority communities.
- Hedge planting will start in in July, with removal of the hedging, allow the ground to settle and replant in November.
- The approximately 6 headstones, out of approximately 300 that require further work in M, work in MU has finished. The anomalies are where they aren't permitted headstones, Affected parties have been written to.
- Idverde are meeting with contractors to discuss improvements to the toilets, they were last done in 2017.

It was RESOLVED that the committee reviewed the information and noted the content of the report.

5 CLIENT REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Client Manager introduced the report. In response to questions confirmed that:

- The budget sums are slightly inflated, but the belief is that the projects can be brought in under those budgets. More detail will come in June.
- There are some graves purchased in the 70s or 80s, if the addresses attached to these stones are no longer applicable, we are unable to contact the relevant parties, we foot the bill, around £200 per memorial.
- The budget for roads/paths budgets for 23/24 has allowed for the overspend in 22/23. Costings are based on estimated costs for the works, and we have firm costs now, so the budget is accurate.
- The Committee would be welcome to a site visit to see the work that has been done.

It was RESOLVED that the Committee:

- Reviewed the information and note the content of the report
- Noted and fed back on the programme of works for 2022/23.
- noted the next programme special works for consideration in 2023-24.

6 BUDGET MONITORING 22/23 AND REVENUE ESTIMATES 23/24 (Agenda Item 6)

The Assistant Treasurer introduced the report.

In response to comments and questions, the Client Manager and Contractor confirmed that

- The the price increases were detailed in the appendices and were still cheaper than neighbouring boroughs such as Lambeth and Wandsworth.
- The 5% increase would cover increased costs
- Some residents would be eligible to apply to DWP for up to £2000 towards their funeral costs

The Treasurer explained that there was a risk around VAT liability which was being reviewed by specialist tax advisers and reserves were to be earmarked to settle any VAT liability, should it be required. The work was ongoing.

It was RESOLVED that:

- the current budgetary position for 2022/23 based on the end of January 2023 shown in Columns 1 to 5 of Appendix A was noted. 2.
- Members adopted 2 omeetings per annum and approved Revenue Estimates for 2023/24 shown in Column 6 or 7 of Appendix A as appropriate .
- the precepts for the financial year ended 31 March 2024 be set at zero.

- the Board approved a price increase of 5% on Fees and Charges from 1 April 2023 as detailed in Appendix H
- the Board agreed to earmark £525k from the common fund to fund any possible VAT liability
- the Board reviewed and approved the Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register (as at February 2023) attached as Appendix I

7 SWEARING IN OF THE CLERK (Agenda Item 7)

RESOLVED: That Richard Seedhouse, Democratic Services Officer, London Borough of Merton, was appointed Clerk to Merton and Sutton Joint Cemetery Board, with effect from 1 April 2022.