

Minutes of the Meeting of St Ives Town Council held in The Guildhall, St Ives on Thursday 31 August 2017 at 6pm

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor S Tanner
Vice-Chairman – Councillor J Symons

COUNCILLORS

Andrewes T	Lait R
Griffin J	Nicholls C
Harris A	Tanner J
Henry R	Tulley R
Hughes K	Williams T

OFFICERS

Town Clerk
Facilities Manager

51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Chard, H Garrod, R Glanville and A Mitchell.

52. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced an event intended to demonstrate the level of public support for the re-opening of the Edward Hain Community Hospital, at the Harbour on 26 October.

53. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBER/OFFICER INTERESTS

None.

54. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None.

55. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 27 July 2017

56. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – “That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meeting) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the press and the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.”

57. APPOINTMENT OF FINANCE OFFICER & CONSIDERATION OF ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

The Town Clerk presented the written report circulated prior to the meeting, setting out the need for the Council to agree on the way forward in appointing a Finance Officer and to review the accounts package used by the town council, both were necessary to safeguard business continuity and to facilitate a smooth transition of the accounting function in the coming months.

Appointment of Finance Officer

It was reported that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had considered this matter at two meetings (6 July and 20 July) and had explored the potential for a full-time post, perhaps split into two part-time jobs at differing levels, with the committee recommendation to Council being to appoint a full-time Finance Officer with a job description and salary scale that recognised the level of the qualification/experience required for the more complex aspects of the post.

The Town Clerk reported that in working up the details for the job description and in benchmarking the post against other, similar, local councils, the officer recommendation at this point was that the council's needs would be best met through the appointment of a part-time Finance Officer (30 hours per week) with a detailed draft job description appended to the report.

During discussion on this item, the following points were considered:

- the ultimate decision on this matter rested with the Council, made by the elected Members
- concern at the need to make a decision at this meeting, with the Town Clerk reminding Councillors that this was first brought forward for consideration in early July and that there were time constraints that needed to be factored in
- it was noted that the Finance & General Purposes Committee recommendation was for a full-time higher level Finance Officer
- the cost of the support by the external accounts advisor for additional work outside their core contract was based on the original contract terms and would need to be confirmed
- the council was about to take on the library, an additional service and building which would add to the financial workload of the council
- the additional hours allocated to the Finance Officer post should help to bring a better balance to the workload of the Town Clerk
- further consideration was given to the option for the Finance Officer post to be a full-time accountant post, to cover all aspects of the accounts for the council and although the Finance & General Purposes Committee recommendation was proposed and seconded, at the vote it did not have sufficient support.
- there was a request for the job description to cover the same job role, but in less detail, to be more appealing to potential candidates

Ultimately, it was

RESOLVED – that

1. the Finance Officer post is to be advertised on the terms and in accordance with the job description as set out at paragraphs 6.1 to 6.3 and Appendix A of the report, with the job description to be amended to cover the same role but with less detail, and for the post to be expressed as 30 hours per week;
2. the shortlisting and interview panel to recruit to the Finance Officer post will be the

Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, the Mayor and the Clerk; and

3. the Town Clerk/RFO is authorised to commission occasional additional support from Hudson Accounting Ltd (on each occasion to be approved by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee), with the level of such support to be monitored to inform future provision.

Accounts Package

With regard to the account package, Members noted the recommendation set out in the report, with reference to the council's Scheme of Delegation.

RESOLVED – that the Town Clerk/RFO is authorised to work with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, supported by Hudson Accounting Ltd, on determining the most suitable accounts package, with a recommendation to be presented to the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Meeting closed at 7.01 pm

Chairman