

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, St Ives Town Council, held in the Committee Room, The Guildhall, St Ives on Thursday 9 February 2017 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Chairman - Councillor R Tulley

COUNCILLORS

Garrod H
Glanville R
Mitchell A
Nicholls C

Prior P
Symons J
Williams T

OFFICERS

Town Clerk
Facilities Manager

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – were received from Councillors T Andrewes and L Taylor.

F&GP93. PUBLIC SPEAKING

None.

F&GP94. MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 2 November 2016.

F&GP95. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman noted that a number of reports had not proved possible to circulate (due to busy office, Feast Day, and items such as decorative lights procurement process and review of banking arrangements had proved more complicated and time consuming than anticipated).

F&GP96. DECLARATION OF COUNCILLOR AND OFFICER INTERESTS

Councillor Symons stated that her husband was a member of the Porthmeor Bowling Club and so although she did not need to declare in interest in the grants application for the Belyars Bowling Club, she would not vote on that item.

Councillor Mitchell declared an Interest in Minute F&GP.113 (debtors and creditors) as his business was included on the debtors list and so he withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor Nicholls declared an Interest in Minute F&GP.103 (grant applications – Drama Express) as a relative of the applicant and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Facilities Manager declared an Interest in Minute F&GP.102 (review of job description) as the post holder and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

F&GP97. TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE REPORT

The Clerk's update report was circulated and noted.

- Regarding F&GP.53 (CCTV), it was noted that an invitation to apply for funds was awaited from the Police and Crime Commissioners Office.
- R.220 (Market House repairs), it was noted that the works had not yet been carried out. The Facilities Manager reported that there had been pressures for works across the council's estate and that this would be progressed and would be reported upon via the Facilities Committee

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

F&GP98. FINANCE REPORT INCLUDING UPDATE ON RESERVES AND STAFF COSTS

The Town Clerk presented the finance report. During consideration of this item, the following points were raised:

- The Clerk gave an undertaking to review the presentation of accruals in the budget v actual income and expenditure report
- Concerns that the VIC income targets had not been met and that the staff wages costs were set to exceed the budgeted expenditure
- Noted that wedding extras costs should be cost neutral against the income for these items which would cover the cost of supply and commission to cover staff time incurred.

RESOLVED – that the Finance Report be noted.

F&GP99. REVIEW OF RESERVES POLICY AND ASSIGNMENT OF RESERVE AND WORKING FUND

Councillor Tulley gave an overview of the Council's approach to maintaining levels of reserves to enable the financial stability of the council. Simplistically, if Reserves were regarded as the funds held by the council at the end of the financial year, Earmarked Reserves are those set aside for specific uses and the rest are General Reserves.

As of June 2016, Reserves held were at 70% of total expenditure (within the 3 to 12 months recommended as good practice). Of the General Reserves, an element of this needs to be a working balance to cushion the flows of income and expenditure.

It was to be suggested that, other than the 'cushioning' working balance, the Earmarked Reserves and General Reserve be placed in the Cornwall Council Deposit Account for Town and Parish Councils, with the working balances to be transferred to a current account. This to be subject to report to Council on 23 February when there will be a report to Council recommending to switch the council's current account due to the closure of the St Ives branch of HSBC. An objection to the use of the phrase 'working balances' was noted.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- Considered the ethics of holding 70% of expenditure as reserves, taking into account the difficulties that many householders in the town faced in paying their next bill – a consideration to take into account during the budget setting process.
- Reserves had increased in previous years reflecting the setting aside of funds for projects that had not come to fruition until the staffing had been put in place to enable works to proceed.
- The Council needed adequate reserves to safeguard the services provided by the council and to enable the council to continue to be progressive in its plans for devolution and improvements to services and facilities for the community.

RESOLVED – that the comments raised at the meeting would be taken into account in formulating recommendations for Reserves to be presented to the next scheduled meeting of the Committee, to link with the new banking arrangements where possible.

F&GP100. **PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

Members noted the need to ensure sufficient funds for ongoing refurbishment works on the public conveniences.

RECOMMENDED – to Council that any remaining refurbishment funds from 2015/16 and 2016/17 be carried forward as an Earmarked Reserve for public convenience refurbishment works, to be delegated to the Facilities Manager to access this Earmarked fund in the same way as approved budgeted expenditure.

F&GP101. **REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROLS**

The Clerk reported that this item had been deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee, due to time constraints and workload.

F&GP102. **REVIEW OF JOB DESCRIPTION – FACILITIES MANAGER**

The Facilities Manager declared an Interest and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

During discussion it was noted that items 3, 4 and 5 on the job description amendments were covered by item 8.

RESOLVED – that the additions to the job description be approved and adopted, with the exception of items 3, 4 and 5 as they were covered by item 8. Also that the Facilities Manager be commended for the way he has carried out the role over the preceding 12 months.

F&GP103. **GRANTS APPLICATIONS**

Councillor Nicholls declared an Interest in the Drama Express application as a relative of the application and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

Application – Drama Express – to cover the costs to practice, promote and perform a play about St Piran

Consideration – a good project and will be a benefit to 8 young disabled people from the St Ives parish

Decision – to award £500 for the purposes set out in the application.

Application – St Ives Allotment Association – to purchase additional water tanks and a communal poly tunnel

Consideration – an improvement to the allotments site

Decision – to award £750 for the purposes set out in the application

Application – St Ives Bowling Club – purchase of a new shed to house all bowling and ancillary items.

Consideration – noted that the club was a valued community organisation.

Decision – to award £750 for the purposes set out in the application.

Application – St Ives Community Orchard Group – to fund an event with an aim to create a new concrete skate park in the Palemon Best Recreation Ground

Consideration – noted the investment that the town council has put into repairing and replacing the existing skate ramps and the longer term benefits of a new concrete skate ramp, should this prove possible.

Decision – to award £400 for the purposes set out in the application.

Application – The Rose Lodge Fishermen's Lodge – Repair to the fabric of the Lodge structure in particular wood framed windows.

Consideration – As the owner of the building, the town council

Decision – to award £500 for the purposes set out in the application, to be accompanied by a letter to set out the council's position with regard to the ownership of the lodge (ie that the council leases the lodge to the Rose Lodge members on a full repairing lease basis.)

Application – UK Bodysurfing Association CIC

Consideration – out of parish and so against policy to award.

Decision – not to award a grant.

RESOLVED – that the award of grants as set out above be approved and implemented.

F&GP9104 CODE OF CONDUCT AMENDMENT

Deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee.

F&GP105. CORRESPONDENCE

- 1) Hayle Day Care Centre – letter of thanks for grant was noted.

F&GP106. 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.”

F&GP107. DECORATIVE LIGHTS – APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTORS FOR REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF FESTOON LIGHTS (Paragraph 3)

Members were advised that five firms had quoted for the works, with three firms having met the criteria and been shortlisted. Shortlisted companies had been asked for further clarification that all wires and fixings would be made of stainless steel and clarification on maintenance works quoted for.

From the quotes received, it was expected to be able to remove all festoon lights and to replace at least 3 streets before Easter. Members expressed gratitude to St Ives BID for the additional £10,000 funding to be made available if the lights could be installed before Easter.

It was noted that the letter to property owners would notify that fixings would be applied to their properties, and that they could contact the council with any questions about this.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The report be noted;
- 2) To delegate the decision on the appointment of a contractor to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Facilities Manager, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

- 3) The Facilities Manager and Town Clerk be granted delegated authority to work with Cornwall Council, Amberon, the selected contractor and any other bodies in order to ensure that the option selected by the committee was successfully implemented; and
- 4) That property owners be advised by letter that anchor points will be inserted in their buildings during the installation process.

F&GP108. ANNUAL REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL PROPERTY ARRANGEMENTS (Paragraph 3)

The Clerk reported that this item had been deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee, due to time constraints and workload.

F&GP109. REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS COST OF REPAIR TO SERVICE PIPES – TRENWITH BURROWS PUBLIC CONVENIENCES (paragraph 3)

Members considered the report circulated setting out the circumstances of a repair to a service pipe carried out by a tenant. Taking into account the specific circumstances, it was

RESOLVED - that the amount be paid upon receipt of a copy of the invoice, and to seek to reclaim the VAT if possible.

F&GP110. VAT PARTIAL EXEMPTION (Paragraph 3)

The Clerk reported that this item had been deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee, due to time constraints and workload.

F&GP111. REVIEW OF DEVOLUTION PROJECT MANAGER CONTRACT (Paragraph 3)

The Clerk reported that this item had been deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee, due to time constraints and workload.

F&GP112. REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT PORTHMEOR CAR PARK PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – UPDATE ON PROGRESS WITH LEGAL TRANSFER AND PROJECT PLANS (Paragraph 3)

Members considered the content of a letter circulated with the agenda papers, setting out the reasons for the works being delayed until the autumn.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

F&GP113. DEBTORS AND CREDITORS (Paragraph 3)

Councillor Mitchell left the meeting at this point.

The Town Clerk was requested to check the situation with regard to income from the 2016 September Festival bar.

Officers reported on all outstanding debtors and creditors, noting that efforts were always taken to ensure that all amounts due to the council were received.

In view of particular circumstances, the following write-off's for bad debts were agreed to be recommended to Council:

Allotment invoice A100362 of £40 (unreasonable to continue to attempt to collect)

Room hire invoice CH0614 of £20 (unreasonable to continue to attempt to collect)

Cancellation of hall hire invoice CH0442 as the bookings had not taken place

Hire invoice 0356 for £50 as the booking was understood not to have taken place.

RECOMMENDED – to Council that the write-off's of bad debts set out above be approved.

The Town Clerk reported on a claim of payment made by one of the debtors listed and in view of the circumstances it was

RESOLVED - to request the Council's independent Internal Auditor to investigate the processes related to this matter and the circumstances of the claim, with a report expected to be presented to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Chairman