

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee, St Ives Town Council, held in the Committee Room, The Guildhall, St Ives on Tuesday 28 August 2018 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Chairman – Councillor R Glanville
Vice-Chairman – Councillor C Nicholls

COUNCILLORS

Andrewes T	Messenger K	Tanner S
Garrod H	Mitchell A	Tulley R
Harris A	Symons J	Williams T
Henry R		

OFFICERS

Town Clerk	Facilities Manager	Visit St Ives Centre Manager
------------	--------------------	------------------------------

F&GP.147 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – were received from Councillor T Williams.

F&GP.148 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Chairman of the Friends of St Ives Library (FOSIL) spoke with regard to the agenda item on the library transfer timetable. He said that the town council had not engaged with the community and that there had been a loss of trust between the town council and the Library Group which needed to be rebuilt. He highlighted the - FOSIL's efforts in scheduling extra talks, events and classes at the library, and said that the Library Group should be involved in future planning.

F&GP. 149 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record of the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 5 July 2018.

F&GP.150 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Report 2 on the agenda: "Recruitment" would be considered as confidential Report 3 as it would involve discussions on confidential matters relating to the business of the council.

F&GP.151 DECLARATIONS OF COUNCILLOR AND OFFICER INTERESTS

Councillor Mitchell declared an Interest in Minute F&GP.155 as a relative of a member of Cormac staff employed at the library, and withdrew from the meeting during consideration of that item.

The VIC Manager did not declare an interest, but withdrew from the meeting while the confidential reports were considered.

F&GP.152 LIBRARY TRANSFER TIMETABLE

Members considered the written report which gave an overview of the proposed timetable to achieve the transfer of the library building, service and staff by the end of October. Subject to approval by Council, it was proposed that TUPE consultation with Library staff would be completed by 29 October 2018, enabling the transfer to be carried out on that date. It was then proposed that the appointment of staff to new job roles would be carried out in December, in readiness for the creation of a single team in early 2019 and for the new, combined service to be launched by 31 March 2019.

Two corrections were made to the report (para 2.2, penultimate line, reference to the **library and information service**; and par 2.3, membership of the Task & Finish Group to include Councillor Andrewes).

In response to comments raised during the public speaking session, it was noted that town councillors had regularly attended meetings of the Library Group, as active members. Councillors had endeavoured to keep the Library Group updated on what progress was being made, and the factors that had sometimes slowed that progress. The group had been given updates on the aspirations of the council and had been consulted on layout and floorplans, opening times and opening days of the week, with its input helping to inform subsequent committee decisions. The town council had had to deal with staffing as a confidential matter and would continue to work on the basis that staff should be informed of developments with regard to their working conditions before other organisations and members of the public. The town council and Library Group had previously agreed to establish a Library Partnership Board to provide a forum for community consultation but the Library Group had failed to nominate its representatives. The Board could begin its business as soon as the group's nominations had been made, giving an additional communication channel.

Members strongly rejected the group's assertions that any redundancies are being sought, but noted that, with the potential for voluntary redundancies this would not lie totally within the control of either of the councils. There would remain uncertainty until all staff had transferred and any new positions were confirmed and so Councillors were keen to bring this phase of the project to conclusion.

The committee was advised that significant work had been carried out on developing a staff structure to provide the necessary level of cover and leadership for the new service, with external HR support guiding processes and the evaluation of the posts to determine proposed payment levels. Further, detailed, reports will be brought to future meetings of this committee.

Varying views were put forward regarding the timing for the move of the VIC to the library, with some concerns that there needed to be sufficient planning for the move to be successful. It was noted that there had already been a significant amount of planning and preparatory work carried out by the Task & Finish Group, and that it was common for libraries to have to evolve to meet the changing needs of the community and to operate within shrinking public sector budgets. One councillor said that, unless the services in the library are made relevant to a much wider section of the community, they would wither and die, and urged members to support the transfer timetable.

During discussion it was noted that it was the objective of the town council to complete the move of the VIC into the library by 31 March 2019, though this date could be flexible if necessary and practicable. It was agreed that that date remained the objective.

RECOMMENDED – to Council that:

- 1) the library transfer timetable as set out in the report, be approved; and
- 2) the Town Clerk is authorised to carry out the transfer of staff, service and building to completion, seeking advice when necessary from the Library Task & Finish Group.

F&GP.153 **EXCLUSION OF 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 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&GP.154 ISSUES RELATING TO THE CREATION OF THE NEW LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE (Paragraphs 1,2 & 3)

The committee considered the confidential report which gave further background information relating to the timing of the proposed conclusion of the transfer process. It set out some initial considerations relating to managing and financing of the new service which would be set out in more detail in future reports to this committee.

Following discussion and advice from officers and from members of the Library Task & Finish Group, it was

RESOLVED – that the committee notes the report.

F&GP.155 CLEANING OF ST IVES PUBLIC LIBRARY (Paragraphs 1, 2 & 3)

The committee considered the confidential report which set out initial information relating to the cleaning of the library and considerations which needed to be factored in to future decisions when more detailed reports are brought to committee. Following brief discussion, it was

RESOLVED – that the committee notes the report.

F&GP.156 RECRUITMENT (Paragraph 3)

The committee chairman expressed his concern that a senior management position was vacant and that circumstances meant that officers were covering duties on a temporary basis that would not prove sustainable. There were concerns also that developmental work had been put on hold and that staffing capacity needed to be increased to meet the aspirations of the council.

Conflicting views were given on the extent of consensus previously achieved through the work of the staffing review working group, although there was agreement around the table that there had been value in the work of that group in exploring options and issues to be addressed.

When considering carrying out this work in-house, an assurance was given that there would be due consultation with staff.

Following debate on whether the review should recommence, and whether this work was best carried out in-house or by commissioning external and independent expertise, it was

RESOLVED – that a revised job description be produced for the post of Support Services Manager, to be written by the Town Clerk, Town Mayor and Chairman of Finance & General Purposes (with the committee vice-chairman named as a deputy if needed), to present a recommendation to the 27 September meeting of this committee.

Councillor Mitchell requested that his name be recorded as having voted against this resolution.