

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 8 February 2018 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

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

COUNCILLORS

Andrewes T	Symons J
Garrod H	Tanner S
Henry R	Williams T
Mitchell A	

OFFICERS

Town Clerk
Facilities Manager

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – were received from Councillors R Glanville, A Harris and K Hughes.

F&GP.76 PUBLIC SPEAKING

None.

F&GP.77 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 23 November 2017.

F&GP.78 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following agenda items were deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee:

- Report 2 (update of reserves policy and Financial Regulations) (The proposer of the motion was not present at the meeting)
- Confidential Report 5 (VAT update: exempt activities and wedding charges) (Report pending while work on these activities are underway)
- Confidential Report 6 (Staff Appraisals) (more time required to consider the information provided)

Confidential Report 8 (Porthmeor public conveniences redevelopment) was withdrawn as this matter had been actioned through a separate approval.

Confidential Report 1 (Staffing and Governance Review) was moved back to become the final agenda item.

F&GP.79 DECLARATION OF COUNCILLOR AND OFFICER INTERESTS

None.

F&GP.80 **TOWN CLERK'S UPDATE REPORT**

Members considered the report updating on actions taken to implement council decisions previously made. Points of note included:

- F&GP.44 (second vehicle) – the Facilities Manager reported that due to weather and working arrangements, it has not proved necessary to lease the second vehicle with immediate effect, but will be required as the work necessitates.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

F&GP.81 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Town Clerk reported on the actual income and expenditure against that budgeted, staffing costs against staffing budgets, and the projected balances and reserves at year end. Members attention was drawn to exception points of note within the reports.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

F&GP.82 **UPDATE TO RESERVES POLICY AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

This item was to have been presented by Councillor Glanville and so, in his absence, it was

RESOLVED – that this matter be deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee.

F&GP.83 **REVIEW OF EARMARKED RESERVES**

The Committee was asked to review the earmarked reserves held by the Council, make recommendations for the movements in reserves in the year, and a new system of recording and releasing earmarked reserves.

The levels of the various earmarked reserves were discussed, noting the differences between general and earmarked reserves and the importance maintaining these at adequate, but not excessive, levels. The adequacy of reserves was a matter for consideration at budget-setting time in particular, and as a matter of review throughout the year.

The earmarked reserve levels were reported, in the context of reviewing the amounts to be held and also the mechanism for the release of funds, with various funds agreed to be delegated to committees or officers, within set parameters, to enable the work of the council to be expedited more efficiently.

During discussion, the proposals set out in the report were agreed, with two changes to be made:

- Allotments Earmarked Reserve – deferred until considered alongside the report later in the meeting
- Property Earmarked Reserve – to cease

RECOMMENDED – to Council that, noting the provisions set out in the report and any further amendments agreed by the committee, the levels of Earmarked Reserves be approved, to be implemented with immediate effect.

F&GP.84 REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Council's policies are subject to annual review, with responsibility for conducting reviews and making recommendations to Council resting with this committee.

The Town Clerk's report set out draft amendments to Financial Regulations and Standing Orders relating to contracts (exceptions), tender processes, payment processes and thresholds for assets and funds held.

During discussion a further recommendation was made, that for transfers and payments between the town council's own accounts, there should be no specified limit on these payments and transfers.

The Town Clerk's recommendations were considered and the following amendments were agreed:

- a) Financial Regulation 18.1(a)(ii) be amended to make provision for specialist **or** professional services and that if this exception is used, the decision and the reasoning applied is to be reported to the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
- b) Financial Regulation 18.1(b) and Standing Order 19(c) be amended to state that the minimum value of contract to require formal tender is **£30,000** and that for tenders and quotes the requirement will be that officers: '**shall endeavour to obtain**' ...
- c) Financial Regulation 5.5 (c) and the schedule on pages 25 and 26 be amended to state that permitted payments by cheque may be up to a maximum of £50,000 and that the value of cheques between St Ives Town Council, Cornwall, accounts is unlimited.
- d) The Schedule on page 26 of Financial Regulations be amended to state that internet banking transfer limit for payment be amended to enable internet banking transfers and online payments of up to £50,000
- e) The Schedule on page 26 of Financial Regulations be amended to set out the process for direct payment of salaries, as set out at paragraph 6.2 of the report to committee.
- f) Financial Regulation 21.2 be amended to increase the threshold figure from £250 to **£2,000 provided that it is within budget.**
- g) A second appendix be added to the Financial Regulations to set out the agreed process for the Finance Officer to monitor the level of funds held in the Unity Trust Bank account and that when funds reduce to £75,000 a transfer is made from the Cornwall Council Deposit Account of the minimum transfer amount of £25,000, meaning that the Unity account should be maintained at a level between £75,000 and a reasonable amount above £100,000.

RECOMMENDED – to Council that the necessary amendments to Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as detailed above, be approved and adopted.

F&GP.85 REVIEW OF FIRE RISK IN THE GUILDHALL LANE

Following previous concerns raised through the Facilities Committee and in view of the need for this council to manage and mitigate against foreseeable risks, the committee considered an update from the Facilities Manager following a recent meeting with Cornwall Council officers from the fire and the waste services and with the manager from Wetherspoons.

The issues relating to the storage of bins in the Guildhall lane, and potential steps to address the problem were considered.

The Facilities Manager made it clear to the committee that the bins which currently present a fire risk to the Guildhall and concert hall must be moved in the interest of ensuring the safety of users of the building. If this advice is followed and the bins are required to be removed, then there was the expectation that enforcement measures would be necessary.

RESOLVED – that the steps set out below be approved and implemented:

- i. Wetherspoons be asked to remove their bins from the lane completely
- ii. A ‘move or remove’ order be issued to Tregenna Flats
- iii. If necessary at a later date, council to consider increasing the CCTV coverage in the lane to deter / evidence fly-tipping, damage to property, etc
- iv. Caretakers be asked to actively monitor the area.

F&GP.86 **GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Committee considered applications from St Uny Church (new coin operated toilet), Lelant village Hall (Replace lighting with LED) and St Ives Community Orchard (to buy a heavy duty lawnmower)

Application – St Uny Church, Lelant seeking funds to support the change of a toilet

Considerations – would be a good facility for that locality.

Decision – to award a grant of £1,000 for the purpose set out in the application.

Application – Lelant Village Hall, towards cost of replacing lights with LED lighting

Considerations – recognise the value of the village hall to the local community, and the benefits of moving towards LED lighting.

Decision - to award a grant of £750 for the purpose set out in the application.

Application – St Ives Community Orchard, to buy a heavy-duty lawnmower

Considerations – Noted the valued work of the volunteers at the community orchard and the benefits to the local community.

Decision - to award a grant of £500 for the purpose set out in the application.

RESOLVED – that the grants be awarded as set out above.

F&GP.87 **DATA PROTECTION**

The report set out the new GDPR regulations which come into force on 25 May 2018.

RESOLVED – that the committee notes the forthcoming changes in data protection law, endorses the training to be attended by the Town Clerk and requests a further report to Committee to detail

the provisions which will have to be put into place in order to ensure compliance with legislation.

F&GP.88 **INTERNAL AUDIT MEETINGS HELD SINCE LAST MEETING**

Councillor Tulley reported that he and Councillor Andrewes had carried out an internal audit of the hall booking function and that action points had been raised with the Town Clerk/RFO.

RESOLVED – that the update be noted.

F&GP.89 **CORRESPONDENCE**

None

F&GP.90 **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&GP.91 **CCTV MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT AND INSTALLATION PLANS (Paragraph 3)**

The report set out the agreement terms for the maintenance and monitoring of the public realm CCTV system.

As there were a number of questions raised at the meeting in relation to the contract costs and increases since the scheme was approved, it was

RESOLVED – that this report be referred to Council for decision.

F&GP.92 **POTENTIAL PURCHASE OF ALLOTMENT SITE** (Paragraph 3)

Councillor Tulley reported on a recent meeting with the landowner of the allotment site at Trowan in which the potential for the town council to purchase the site had been discussed. The town council currently holds a 10 year lease on the land.

During discussion Members were pleased to note the success of the allotment site and noted also the investment that the town council had already put into the site, including the installation of the borehole and solar panel.

RESOLVED – to make an offer of the lower of the two valuation figures given for the purchase of the allotment site, subject to confirmation by Council.

F&GP.93 **APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR**

Following consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED – that Mr Gallie be appointed as the independent internal auditor for the 2017/2018 financial year.

F&GP.94 VAT UPDATE: EXEMPT ACTIVITIES; AND WEDDING CHARGES (Paragraph 3)

This item was deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee.

F&GP.95 STAFF APPRAISALS (Paragraphs 1,2 & 3)

This item was deferred to the next scheduled meeting of this committee.

F&GP.96 SALARY REVIEWS (Paragraphs 1,2 & 3)

Following consideration of the report, it was

RECOMMENDED – that the Town Clerk be instructed to carry out a job evaluation review of the post of Admin Support Officer and to present a report to Council on the recommended payscale for this post.

F&GP.97 PORTHMEOR PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REDEVELOPMENT (Paragraph 3)

This agenda item was withdrawn.

F&GP.98 DEBTORS AND CREDITORS (Paragraph 3)

Members considered the report circulated prior to the meeting and the Town Clerk advised that outstanding payments due were being followed up.

RESOLVED – that the report was noted.

F&GP.99 STAFFING AND GOVERNANCE REVIEW (Paragraphs 1,2 & 3)

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report, setting out the work of the Clerk and the review group to date and seeking a steer from the committee on principles to be applied. During discussion there was consensus on a number of points and so these areas of agreement and any further considerations raised were noted in order to inform the review process.

RESOLVED – that the principles agreed by this committee be reported to the staff structure review working group and be used to inform recommendations to council on the staffing and governance structure.