

Minutes of the Meeting of the Facilities Committee, St Ives Town Council held in the Guildhall Committee Room, on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> October at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Chairman – J Wells

COUNCILLORS

Arthur K

Beveridge J (7.05pm approx.)

Dale A

Hodson C

Messenger K

IN ATTENDANCE

OFFICERS

Town Clerk

RFO

Cultural Services Manager

Buildings & Amenities Manager

Project Officer

Admin Support

F.36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ NON ATTENDANCE

**Apologies from:** Councillor Harris, Councillor Tanner, Councillor Ryall,

**Non-Attendance:** Councillor Gaunt

F.37 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

F.38 MINUTES

**RESOLVED** – that the Chairman signs as a true and correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2021.

F.39 PUBLIC SPEAKING

None

F.40 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBER/OFFICER INTERESTS

Councillor Dale declared an interest in the first confidential item.

F.41 OFFICER'S UPDATE REPORT

The Committee considered the officers' report and, in response to members' comments, the following points were clarified, and amendments agreed:

F25: Review of the toilet cleaning contract – The tender pack is ready apart from the contract which is still with the solicitors. They have apologised for the delay and the draft is expected within a week.

F28: Guildhall redevelopment project update and recommendations from working group – members would like an update on the timescale for suppliers for the next meeting.

F13: Changing places funding – Dove Street toilet/ Sloop – The Town Council is on the shortlist of submissions, which Cornwall Council has submitted to be allocated a share of the funding. The Sloop block has been put forward and may need to be extended to accommodate the facility. Currently awaiting the Government's decision.

*Councillor Beveridge joined the meeting.*

F.39 Market House Condition Survey

On a related issue, the Town Clerk informed members that Buildings & Amenities Manager is dealing with a report of a structural issue at Market House. There is a lump under floor that requires investigation/ excavation. The Clerk is checking with the insurers about the cover for loss of rent and material damage, should the shop need to be closed during this period.

RESOLVED – That subject to any actions or changes as set out, the report be noted.

F.42 REMOVING LATE FINES FROM THE LIBRARY

The Cultural Services Manager introduced the report. She explained the background to the decision by Cornwall Council. As a devolved site, the Town Council did have the option to make a different decision. However, all other libraries in Cornwall had decided to remove fees and so the library might be placed at a disadvantage. She invited questions and views from members.

The Committee debated the proposal. Some Councillors were concerned about the message it sent and also the impact on the LIS budget. They asked whether Cornwall Council would undertake a review after the first year of operation.

RESOLVED – that, the Committee RECOMMEND to Council that it abolish overdue fines from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022 in exchange for a single revenue grant payment of £725.95 from Cornwall Council for the reasons set out in the report, save that officers request that Cornwall Council undertake a review following a full year of implementation.

F.43 MAINTENANCE PROJECT MANAGER’S UPDATE

The Town Clerk reminded the Committee of the arrangement the Council had in place with external building surveyors to manage a number of capital projects which had experienced a delay because of previous work backlogs. As projects completed and more projects were being managed in house, this work was diminishing. The current update was as follows:

**Library Repairs:** Delays had been due to concerns about snagging. However, final repairs were done and were due to be signed off next week with a final inspection.

**Guildhall Refurbishment – Step free Access/ Toilets Development:**

Awaiting borrowing approval.

**Skatepark:** As discussed at Community & Environment Committee there is an ongoing discussion about a potential need to seal the surface of the park. Any decision to do so must be taken carefully with the advice of the Council’s Facilities team, surveyor, contractors and listening to the evidence from other sites. A site visit is due next week. Regardless of the outcome, a provisional sum has been made in the Council’s maintenance budget for next year and a maintenance plan needs to be drawn up.

In response to questions, the Clerk confirmed that it had not been raised at specification stage. However, grant funding for the project had been allocated to the Council as owner of the park and the Council was obligated to maintain it under a management agreement with Palemon Best.

RESOLVED – that the Committee note the report.

F.44 UPDATE FROM THE GUILDHALL WORKING GROUP AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The Town Clerk informed members that in consultation with the Guildhall Working Group, the Town Council had appointed theatre company technical advisors, called PLAN to complete the feasibility study and assist with business planning in support of the Town Deal funding allocation.

The study will be funded from early allocation of the grant which has been made available by Cornwall Council to projects to provide technical support. The company attended a recent site visit with members of the working group. Cornwall Council has also employed technical advisers (Mutual Ventures) to support projects in preparing their Treasury Green Book business cases throughout the process. She also confirmed that the Project Officer will be project manager.

The Cultural Services Manager gave an update on recent events in the hall. She stated that they learnt a lot during the recent programming in the Guildhall and this has been reflected in the budget for 2022-23.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee note the progress to date.

F.45 **BUILDINGS AND AMENITIES MANAGER’S UPDATE REPORT**

The Buildings & Amenities Manager gave a verbal update to the Committee. He discussed changes in staffing and reported that the service had seen a phased return by a member of staff from long-term-sick leave. It was also hoped that a temporary team member was interested in becoming an apprentice. The team was getting on with urgent projects.

**Memorial Benches:** An officer is working hard on repairing the benches. As far as possible, existing benches were being repaired, not replaced.

**Toilets:** Planned refurbishment stated that the work to replace the wallgates in West Pier Toilets had not commenced due to the volume of visitors to the town. He was proposing that the West Pier toilets male and female, were closed for 3 weeks before and after Christmas in order to completely refurbish them, including replacing the wallgates as agreed by the Committee. They would be open for Christmas and New Year’s.

**Fishermen’s Lodge Area:** The Town Clerk

The Town Clerk advised that the BID had requested that the location of benches to the right of the fishermen’s lodges be adjusted, to accommodate the moving of the large public litter bins to the back of the benches. It may also be possible to revisit their relocation to the side of the lodges where the temporary removal of the East facing bench had been replaced by planters by persons unknown.

**Palemon Best Recreation Ground:** The full replacement of benches, picnic tables and the installation of the water fountain and storage shed would be undertaken during November, when the park was less busy.

**Health & Safety:** The annual Fire Risk Assessments would be carried out for all Town Council buildings during November and the outcome reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** - that the Committee note the report and

- i) Support the closure of the West Pier Gents Toilets for refurbishment 3 weeks before Christmas and the Ladies for 3 weeks after New Year’s;
- ii) Grant permission to St Ives BID, in consultation with officers to re-align benches to the East of the Fishermen’s lodges, in order to relocate public bins to a less prominent location.

F.46 **NEW YEAR’S EVE ARRANGEMENTS**

The Town Clerk informed members that an update report would be presented to the next full Council regarding the longer-term arrangements for New Year’s Eve and the Town Council’s role in the event. However, this report set out proposals for the management of this year’s event.

Cornwall Council have agreed that they will be joint signatory with BID to the event notification for this year but for the last time. Cornwall Council have made it very clear that this is not their event, and they will not be able to perform this role in future. The Town Clerk has met with the relevant Cornwall Council director and, subject to a decision to take over the role, have been given some assurances about the continued role of the Council in terms of their land owner and statutory responsibilities. They will carry out full street cleaning. They will also give long term assurances about the use of the pier for fireworks. Assurances in relation to the use of the Sloop carpark will need to be sought from the relevant portfolio holder.

In terms of the Town Council's responsibilities, they will, for this year, be much the same as in previous years, as set out in the report. Namely, CCTV monitoring, provision of a room for command and control, erection of road closure notices, opening of the toilets.

In response to queries about the event going ahead, the Clerk advised that it was not a ticketed event. If bars and restaurants were open and people were staying in town, the only decision which could be changed would be to cancel the fireworks, which would be a decision for BID. They will be following the status of Government COVID guidelines.

Members requested that they be kept up to date and a detailed fact sheet provided nearer to time on operational arrangements.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee **RECOMMEND** to Council that it agree to the use of facilities and resources as recommended in report to support the delivery of a successful New Year's Eve and that officers provide councillors with regular updates on arrangements.

F.47 **HEALTH AND SAFETY REVIEW FOR GUILDHALL EVENTS**

The Town Clerk introduced a completed health and safety audit for events in the Guildhall. It was carried out in the lead up to the September Festival and so several urgent actions were completed at that point. In addition, the Council's assessor attended during one of the live events. In general, although there are a number of recommendations, it is positive that none are urgent / high risk. This will be also tabled at the Health and Safety working group in terms of actions. In response to a query, the Clerk explained that the group did not meet formally last time as it was not quorate.

Councillors had no further questions.

**RESOLVED** - that the Committee note the report and refer it to the Health and Safety Working Group for detailed consideration and a status report on the resolution of short-term risks be brought back to the Committee in due course.

F.48 **SCALE OF CHARGES FOR 2022-23**

The RFO introduced the report. He explained that proposed increases were relatively modest for many services, although some increases reflected the need to charge VAT at the Guildhall, in addition to any fee increases. Opting to tax had been agreed as being essential for the Council to maximise tax efficiencies.

Members discussed the report and proposed the following amendments:

- i) To retain the concession rate for block bookings of the hall at 10% and for any requests for additional discounts or concessions to be brought to Council for decision.
- ii) To keep the regular market hall hire block booking discount at 10%
- iii) To introduce two rates for left luggage; £4 for hand luggage size items and £6 for large items
- iv) To increase the hourly hire charge for the Island Centre to £15 an hour

Members discussed the new fee structure for new memorial benches and the Town Clerk clarified that the full memorial bench service cost would be based on the following elements :

1. Purchase of the bench
2. Purchase and inscription of the plaque
3. Two cycles of maintenance works at years 3 and 7
4. Repairs for damage and vandalism
5. An administration and installation fee

Based on the agreed design, this fee would be £2299 for the full 10 year period.

In response to a query about a review of wedding charges, the Town Clerk advised that the Council would be undertaking a comprehensive review of the wedding service, following the departure of the wedding Co-ordinator. But chapel fees would be increased. Wedding packages were already subject to VAT.

**RESOLVED** - that the Committee approve the proposed scale of charges for 2022-23, as set out and **RECOMMEND** them to Council for adoption to inform the budget setting process with the following amendments:

- i) To maintain the concession rate for block bookings of the hall at 10% and for any requests for additional concessions to be brought to members for decision.
- ii) To keep the regular market hall hire discount at 10%
- iii) To charge two rates for left luggage to £4 for hand luggage size items and £6 for large items
- iv) To increase the hourly hire charge for the Island Centre to £15 an hour.

F.49 **BUDGET FOR 2022-23**

The RFO introduced the budget. He highlighted that a number of income and expenditure codes were proposed to be changed. Some income lines were based on more optimistic forecasts, post pandemic. On the cost side, there were a number of potential pressures, for example the need to make provision for increases in contract costs, such as cleaning and also utility costs. Due to staffing levels in some key services, proposals being considered by the Staffing Committee would also see staffing costs rise. The Chairman noted, for example that the decision to move to a 100% renewables energy tariff attracted a premium. Councillors requested that the Council should make a statement about this decision.

The Town Clerk informed members that the Town Council was receiving credits to its electricity bill from the feed in tariff being connected to the office meter supply.

Councillors asked about provision for other energy saving initiatives for buildings . In response, the Town Clerk suggested it would be prudent to wait until the Council's carbon audit was completed before determining the most suitable modifications. The Buildings & Amenities Manager stated that due to the age of the Town Council buildings and insulation, ground source and heat pumps may not be suitable.

Members thanked officers for the budget preparations and in particular, welcomed the inclusion of notes.

**RESOLVED** - that the Committee

- i) **RECOMMEND** to the Finance and General Purposes Committee that the draft Committee budget form part of their deliberations in setting a 2022-23 budget for recommendation to Council and
- ii) Publicise the Council's decision to switch to a 100% renewables supplier and report on the

impact of feed in tariff credits delivered by the solar array.

F.50 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee considered the report and had no further comments.

**RESOLVED** – that the finance report be noted.

F.51 **REPORTS FOR INFORMATION**

None.

F.52 **CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

F.53 **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To consider passing the following resolution:

“That in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following matters on the grounds that they involve information of a confidential nature.”

F.54 **CONSIDERATION OF A PROPERTY BUSINESS CASE**

*[At this point Councillor Dale declared an interest and left the meeting]*

The Project Officer presented a draft business case for a property within the Council’s devolution portfolio. The officer set out the principles behind the business case and the aspiration that this be linked to the Council’s wider work on arts and heritage assets. Members debated the report, and the following key points were made:

- Concern that Cornwall Council asked for a business case on one individual asset when their policy position was for a package approach
- It was important that this was linked with other heritage buildings and funding was provided so the project was delivered, that the Town Council was in the best position to safeguard buildings for community use.
- Concerns about the on-going relationship with the relevant community group
- The need to be clear that Cornwall Council had determined the process to be followed not the Town Council, it would be their decision
- That meetings should be arranged with the local group concerned to discuss their future relationship.

It is **RESOLVED** – that the Committee submit the draft business case to Cornwall Council and, should the proposal be accepted,

- i) Form a small officer-member working group
- ii) Allocate the project a revenue from the consultancy budget in order to commission and undertake early stage surveys and evaluations
- iii) Arrange a meeting with the relevant community group to discuss their ongoing relationship

F.55 **CONSIDERATION OF A TENDER FOR LEASE**

The Town Clerk raised with the Committee a piece of land which was part of the Council’s devolution package. The Council’s intention was to become the freehold owner of the tenanted land. It now looked likely that the site would be offered by Cornwall Council under a short term lease for 6 years. This had the potential to impact on the devolution package. The Clerk sought the views of the Committee on any necessary actions or response to Cornwall Council’s proposed tender. The Committee debated the issue and, whilst it was necessary for the Council to maintain a

**Facilities Committee**

**28 October 2021**

watching brief, it was agreed that no further action was necessary at this stage.

RESOLVED – that the Committee maintains a watching brief on any invitations to tender issued in relation to the site in order to consider how to proceed.

Date of next scheduled meeting

20 January 2022

Meeting closed at 20:59 pm

Chairman