

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Held on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015**

**At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall**

**Present:**

Councillor: J S King (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs B J Churchill      C Woodward  
D Harvey  
Mrs C Reynolds

Officers: Town Clerk      RFO  
Committee Secretary

**PART I: PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**F437 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Beames, Holliday and Morris.

**F438 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr King declared a non-pecuniary interest as the President of the ATC, which had applied for a grant, and Cllr Mrs Churchill also declared a non-pecuniary interest in the grant previously awarded to the Witney Photo Group as her husband was a member (minute F443 refers).

Cllr Harvey declared an interest in the report from the Grounds Maintenance Working Party, as he is the West Oxfordshire District Council Cabinet Member for the Environment (minute F450 refers)

**F439 MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2015 as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:** there were no matters arising

**F440 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public were present.

**F441 PAYMENTS OF ACCOUNTS**

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) submitted a report (previously circulated) concerning the accounts, along with the payment schedules and bank statements.

The RFO confirmed that the unrepresented cheque for £75,181.20 was for the Climbing chimney supplied by Huck Nets (UK) Ltd. This had been issued only a short time before the bank reconciliation was prepared, hence it showed up as "unrepresented".

**RECOMMENDED:-**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) To note that cheque number 29914 was void, and that cheques 2994 to 2998 should have been 29940/29941/29942/29943/29944;
- (3) To approve the bank reconciliation and statements for signing;
- (4) To approve the following schedule of accounts:-
  - Cheques 29870 to 29944 and DD in the sum of £73526.95 (Imprest account);
  - Cheques 101005 to 101009, DD and standing orders in the sum of £305721.56 (General account).

F442 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The RFO submitted a Financial Report (previously circulated) that included a confidential appendix for Members' consideration.

The Committee noted and considered the contents of the confidential appendix, and agreed to the suggestion made that the Council, having exhausted the normal methods of chasing debts, escalate this to the next level, including court action should that be necessary.

The issue of the Mayor's Chain was considered. Following some discussion, the Committee agreed the following:

Option1 – Double Chain – to remove the outer chain from the Mayoral chain and create a new outer chain at a cost of £2,250, with velvet backing at a cost of £295.43.

To purchase a new ribbon for the Deputy Mayor's chain, at a cost of £15.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) To agree the recommendations from the Amenities Committee;
- (3) To agree the recommendations from the Community Services Committee;
- (4) To agree that legal action should be taken in respect of the outstanding debts listed by the RFO;
- (5) To agree the supplementary budget for the Mayoral Chain as shown above.

F443 **DISCRETIONARY GRANTS AWARD**

The RFO submitted a report (previously circulated) concerning the following applications for discretionary grants from the Town Council.

- (1) 2210 (Witney) Squadron of the Royal Air Force Cadets – requested the donation of the rental fee for the Corn Exchange for their annual awards ceremony. The Town Clerk reminded Members of the support the ATC gave the Council at the various civic events during the year. Committee was happy to support this;
- (2) Rotary Club of Witney – requested that the Town Council sponsor a part in aid of their new minibus. The Committee did not believe that the Council had the power to do this, and therefore this request was refused.
- (3) Witney Photo Group – grant request made and agreed at the Committee meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> July has now been actioned. The Committee noted this.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the following grants be awarded:  
  
2210 (Witney) Squadron of the Royal Air Force Cadets – donation of rental fee for Corn Exchange on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2015;
3. that the award of the above grants be made under the following powers:
  - a) Local Government Act 1972. s145 – Provision of Entertainments
  - b) Local Government Act 1972. S137- Power of Local authorities to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised
4. that recipients are asked to acknowledge the Town Council’s support on their literature;
5. that a press release be issued advising of grant support given by the Town Council;
6. That the refusal of the application from the Rotary Club, and the expediting of the grant to the Witney Photo Group, be noted;
7. That two letters of thanks from Enrych and Adventure Plus be noted.

**F444 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME**

The Town Clerk submitted a report concerning the new Local Council Awards Scheme. She explained that this replaced the Quality Council scheme. Witney Town Council had been a “Best Value” authority, but had chosen not become a Quality Council.

The Committee considered the report, and asked what advantage there would be to the Town Council if it participated in this scheme? Members also wished to know if participation would have any impact upon Town Council resources, and if so, what that was likely to be. The RFO observed that participation in the scheme might provide a useful framework for staff, however the Committee felt that the Town Clerk should first carry out a more detailed assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the scheme, including consideration of any financial impact, and then report back to the Committee.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the Town Clerk assesses the Local Council Award Scheme in more detail and then report back with her findings to a future meeting.

F445 **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

The Town Clerk submitted a report (previously circulated) which set out a proposed Social Media Policy for the Town Council.

The Committee was satisfied with the policy as presented, and agreed that it should be adopted.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the draft Social Media Policy be adopted by Witney Town Council

F446 **SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN**

The Town Clerk submitted a report (previously circulated) concerning the safeguarding of children. She explained that safeguarding is an activity designed to promote the welfare of vulnerable adults, young people and children, and to minimise the risk of harm. Following recent cases of sexual exploitation within Oxfordshire, Town and Parish Councils within the county were advised to have a safeguarding policy. The Town Clerk had drafted a policy for consideration that was based upon Cherwell District Council's policy.

The Committee suggested that the Town Council's policy be sent to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for consideration. If the LADO was satisfied with it, then the Town Council should adopt it.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (1) That the Town Council's draft policy be submitted to the LADO for review;
- (2) Subject to approval from the LADO, the Town Council should approve and adopt the Safeguarding Children Policy.

F447 **OPENNESS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODIES REGULATIONS 2014 – RECORDING OF DELEGATED DECISIONS**

The Town Clerk submitted a report (previously circulated) concerning the requirement under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 to keep a written record of any decision delegated to an officer under express authorisation, or under general authorisation. The report provided examples of decisions that should be recorded, and examples of others that would not require a record to be kept.

**RECOMMENDED:** to note the report

F448 **TOWN HALL**

The Facilities Manager and the Town Clerk submitted reports (previously circulated) providing an update on the Town Hall project; and a request made at the Annual Town Meeting for improved signage to the Town Hall. The Town Clerk presented both reports to the Committee, and explained that:-

- The Town Hall roof was finished;
- A bat survey had been carried out;
- An asbestos survey had been completed;
- The grant from the Town hall Charity for the roof repairs had been received.

The Committee felt it would be useful to see a budget for the works needed. The Town Clerk would circulate the previous report, and asked the Committee to note that a further budget would be set when the Council considered its total budget requirements for 2016/2017 at the end of the year.

The Committee considered the request for improved signage to the Town Hall. It was noted that the sign in the Town Hall foyer needed updating, and that this was already in hand. The Committee did not feel that there was any need for improved external signage to the Town Hall at present.

**RECOMMENDED TO:**

- (1) Note the Town Hall project update report;
- (2) Identify a further budget for repairs to the windows of the Town Hall, and for the repainting of its exterior, as part of consideration of budgets for 2016/17;
- (3) Note the report concerning Town Hall signage, but agree to take no further action on this at present.

F449 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the commercial and confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

**PART II: EXEMPT BUSINESS**

Summary of business transacted in private session

F450 **REPORT FROM THE GROUNDS MAINTENANCE WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and noted a confidential report from the Grounds Maintenance Working Party meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

It was noted that the shadow bid information had been submitted, and that the Grounds Maintenance Working Party would meet again to consider the “wish list” of any additional items.

**RESOLVED:** to note the report.

F451 **REPORT FROM THE CCTV MANAGEMENT GROUP**

The Committee received and considered the confidential minutes from the CCTV Management Group meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

The Committee provided comments for the Town Clerk to report back to the CCTV Management Group.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the Town Clerk takes the following comments back to the CCTV Management Group – that it is the preference of Witney Town Council to have a stand-alone CCTV scheme for Witney.

F452 **PHOTOCOPIER CONTRACT RENEWAL**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the RFO concerning the photocopier contract.

The Committee felt that only one of the three quotations really met the specification given. One reflected what the Town Council already had, and one was most unsatisfactory. As a result, the RFO was asked to investigate this issue again.

**RECOMMENDED:** that this issue is examined again and a further report back is made.

*The Committee adjourned for the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee at 7pm. Minutes S453 to S458 refers.*

F459 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the verbal report from the meeting held earlier.

**RECOMMENDED :** that the verbal report be noted and recommendations contained therein agreed.

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The meeting closed at 7.40pm.

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