

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**Held on Monday 14 March 2016**

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

**Present:**

Councillor: TJ Morris (Chairman)

Councillors:	A K Beames	C Holliday
	B J Churchill	A D Harvey
	C E Reynolds	C K Woodward

Non-Committee Member:	C Brown
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Officers:	Town Clerk	RFO
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Also present:	2 Members of the public
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**F136 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr J King.

**F137 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Harvey declared a non-pecuniary interest as he is the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for the Environment at West Oxfordshire District Council and they may tender for the Grounds Maintenance contract – Agenda Item 12

**F138 MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2016 and 20 January 2016 as correct records, to be signed by the Chairman.

**b) MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute F029 – Annual Town Meeting – Following Cllr Morris’ proposal that a working party be established in the new council year to review the format for the Annual Town meeting, the committee suggested that this be referred to the Communications Steering Group.

**RECOMMENDATION:** that the Communications Steering Group be tasked with reviewing the format of the Annual Town meeting in the new council year.

**F139 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Joe Cartledge spoke regarding Premier Tennis’ request to vary the agreement on the lease for the pavilion at the Leys. He explained that though the Coffee Shed was doing well it had been a tough winter. The group have invested in both the physical improvement of the Pavilion building and staffing as they now had a manager, assistant and apprentice. They were offering free activities and encouraging a community atmosphere on the Leys.

However the original plan had been based on the opening of the café in April/May 2015 and they did not open until July. This has impacted on the finances of the group so the request was for the rent and contribution for the mini golf to be absolved for the first year (2015-16) and levied at 50% of the agreed rate for the second year (2016-17).

F140 **REQUEST TO VARY AGREEMENT FROM PREMIER TENNIS**

The Chairman brought forward this item for discussion by the Committee and considered the letter from Premier Tennis, taking into account the presentation from Mr Cartledge.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the letter be noted;
2. that the decision be deferred to the Policy & Resources meeting on 23 March 2016 when a report from the Town Clerk with the financial implications would be available.

*Mr Cartledge left the meeting after the discussion of this item*

F141 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO and the schedule of accounts paid and bank reconciliations paid as circulated with the agenda. Cllr Reynolds queried payments to:

- KMC Management – being the consultancy fee for the review and tender of the council's Grounds Maintenance contract;
- Lamps and Tubes – being the second and third payments for Christmas Lights paid for in stages (deposit, set up & installation and removal);
- Thomas Fattorini – payment for the works to the Mayor's chain;
- Push Start Marketing – being in respect of the production and delivery of the newsletter. Councillor's expressed concern that the delivery had not been achieved to all areas of Witney to which the Clerk explained that though the payment had been raised the cheque had not been sent out. Councillors requested that the delivery issue be investigated;
- OALC/NALC – annual memberships. They provide advice, model policies and training specific to town and parish councils;
- WODC - Contribution to CCTV – this is for the town centre CCTV scheme and its monitoring. The CCTV on the Leys is awaiting tender agreement at WODC. The Town Clerk advised that she had been regularly chasing this; the delay was due to staff changes at WODC. Cllr Churchill in her capacity as Chairman of the NAG stated that the police were very keen to get this installed as quickly as possible.

Other questions were:

- 'How regularly are service contracts reviewed?' to which the committee were advised they were reviewed on renewal.
- 'How were the defibrillator's funded?' to which the committee were advised that these had been fundraised for by the Rotary, Methodist Church and U3A.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. the report be noted;
2. the bank reconciliations and statements be noted;
3. that the following schedule of accounts be approved:

<b>Cheque No.s</b>	<b>In the sum of:</b>	<b>Account</b>
30164 to 30234 and DD (Cheque 30224 in following month)	£83,809.11	Imprest
DD and Standing orders	£6,108.04	General
30224, 30235 to 30266 and DD	£66,782.53	Imprest
101018 to 101020 and DD/Standing/Bank Tfr to BP Ac	£853,093.09	General
30267 to 30322 and DD	£71,871.53	Imprest
101021 to 101023 and DD/Standing orders	£62,194.05	General

**F142 FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda.

The Committee discussed the recommendations of the Amenities Committee and asked that recommendation 4 be changed to show the virement was coming from the ‘Windrush Cemetery’. The Chairman requested that for the Policy and Resources Committee finance report the budget and spend for both Amenities and Community Services be included against the recommendations.

The Chairman asked if the Community Services Committee had sight of audited accounts when recommending that Witney Music Festival and LibFest receive free use of the Leys, and asked Officers to request these in line with the Council’s Discretionary Grant Policy.

The Community Services Chairman also highlighted the situation with regard to the Witney Music Festival the recommendation being that the event proceeded subject to approval by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG). The Town Clerk had been advised that SAG would not be reviewing this event, despite the attendance being anticipated around 10,000. Furthermore the future of SAG was questionable given the reorganizational changes at WODC. Councillors expressed concerns that the documentation was not in place for the Witney Music Festival and the deposit taken was a personal cheque that could not be cashed. The Town Clerk suggested that perhaps the Council’s H&S Advisor GH Safety could review the paperwork, once received from the organisers, in order to safe guard the Council. This charge would need to be billed to the Witney Music Festival.

The Town Clerk brought to the attention of the Committee an issue relating to the use of a drone on the Leys for commercial purposes. This was an authorised use of a drone by a licensed individual but as the council requested risk assessments and other paperwork, an

administration charge had been requested to cover Officer time. A Member was particularly concerned with the use of drones over play areas and linking into child safety. The Town Clerk suggested that a policy on the use of drones on council land might be useful which councillors agreed with.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the recommendations from the Amenities Committee are agreed with the amendment to recommendation 4 so it reads 'that the funds are vired from the Windrush Cemetery to cover the memorial testing at Tower Hill Cemetery'
3. that with regard to first recommendation from the Community Services Committee, the following is recommended:
  - a) that the latest audited accounts be requested from Witney Music Festival and LibFest so that the free use of the Leys Recreation Ground can be agreed, at the next meeting on 23 March 2016;
  - b) that a valid deposit is requested from Witney Music Festival so that the event can be confirmed;
  - c) that on receipt of all the necessary documentation as per the council's terms and conditions the Council's Health and Safety Adviser be asked to review and report on the risks to the Council; and the cost be recharged to the Music Festival organisers.
  - d) that the second recommendation be agreed – that the Community Fitness Class Fiesta be allowed free use of the Corn Exchange.
4. that the situation with regard to the negotiation of the utility contracts from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016 be noted;
5. that the Cycle to Work Scheme be implemented with effect from 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016 and an allowance (loan) of £500 per member of staff taking up the offer be agreed;
6. that the outstanding debt per the attached confidential appendix to the RFO's report be recommended for legal action in order to recover the debt;
7. that 'Budget' and 'Spend' columns be included in the financial report against the recommendations from the Spending Committees;
8. that the Town Clerk seeks guidance from NALC on drafting a policy for the use of drones on Council owned property.

**F143 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the proposed revised Financial Regulations as circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman highlighted the addition to regulation 12.1 *Orders for Works, Goods and Services* – that any order which will, or may, result in an expenditure over £1,000 is to be countersigned by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk also pointed out that prescribed limits had been inflated since the last revision in 2012, by inflation. She also highlighted the inclusion of regulation 10(d) on the 2015 Public Contract Regulations, whereby any contract over £25,000 has to be advertised on the government's contract finder website.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the proposed revised Financial Regulations be adopted.

F144 **DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered reports prepared by the DSO as circulated with the agenda. The members considered all three applications but noted that none of them were based in Witney and the number of Witney people to benefit was very small. Therefore all three requests were rejected.

The letter of thanks from Witney Model and Collectors Club was noted and very much appreciated.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the report be noted and the applications for grant funding be not awarded due to their locality and minimal benefit to the people in Witney.

F145 **AUDIT PROCUREMENT FOR SMALLER AUTHORITIES 2017**

The Committee received and considered the report from the RFO as circulated with the agenda.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the report be noted and the Council *opts in* to the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Limited (SAAA) scheme for external audit.

F146 **CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda, which also included the Council's updated policy on Risk Management and the Action Plan arising from the Risk Assessment generated by the Local Council Risk System (LCRS). She advised Members that this report was for information only and would be presented to Full Council on 23 March 2016.

A Member expressed his concern as to the robustness of the risk assessment, having just been through a similar process professionally, and asked if any of the contingencies been practised. A Member echoed this and also suggested that if the Council could evidence practice of contingency plans then the insurance company may review its charges. Both councillors felt that the risk assessment should be a tool to be used to demonstrate due diligence, for training plans, succession planning and critical incidents.

Cllr Woodward also offered to be a lead Councillor liaising with the appropriate Officers to complete and manage the corporate risk system in the new council year.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the report be noted and presented to full Council on 23 March 2016

F147 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND 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 confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

*The remaining member of public left the meeting at this juncture*

The Chairman agreed to vary the order of business so that Cllr Harvey could leave during the discussion of the Grounds Maintenance Contract having declared an interest at the start of the meeting.

F148 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting on 8 March 2016 as circulated prior to the meeting. As most Members did not have the minutes with them it was decided to defer this item to the meeting on 23 March 2016.

**RECOMMENDED:** that minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2016 be deferred to the Policy & Resources meeting scheduled for 23 March 2016 so all councillors can read the minutes.

*Councillor Harvey left the meeting*

F149 **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT**

The Committee received and considered a report from the Council's consultant working on the review of the Grounds Maintenance Contract prior to tendering it in the spring.

Cllr Woodward expressed his concern that this was on the agenda as he recalled this being finalised at the Grounds Maintenance Working party before it was dissolved. The Town Clerk confirmed that that was the case; however when she had conveyed the Council's decision Mr McAnespie had suggested that, in order to make guaranteed savings, a fixed price option would be the best way forward. Members discussed the report and agreed that the price/quality option was still the option they wanted to proceed with as per what was originally agreed. Members also discussed the performance incentive

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Contract is tendered on a price/quality balance basis;
3. that the Council does not offer any financial performance incentive in the contract.

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The meeting closed at 7.35pm.

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Chairman