

SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 23 March 2016

At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: J S King (Chairman)

Councillors:	A K Beames	C Holliday
	Mrs B J Churchill	C E Reynolds
	C Brown	
Officers:	Town Clerk	RFO
	Democratic Services Officer	

F141 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Harvey and Woodward.

F142 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declaration of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

F143 MATTERS DEFERRED FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2016

a) Request to Vary Agreement from Premier Tennis

A request had been received from Premier Tennis to vary the agreement made with the Council. The Town Clerk referred to the original agreement in which they had offered the Town Council £48,000 over ten years. In year one, the payment was due to be £3,000 in addition to 50% of the Crazy Golf takings. They were now looking for this to be waived and a reduction by half of what they had proposed to pay in year two. A member asked what the rationale behind this was. The Town Clerk pointed out that Premier Tennis had invested significantly in the pavilion and had not started on site as early as had been anticipated.

A member commented that they seemed to be engaging with the Council and there was a positive and amiable relationship. This led him to believe that they were more likely to be honest, and they seemed to be providing a good facility for the Town. He asked if they had provided a cash flow statement. The RFO replied that Premier Tennis was now a "Not for Profit" CIC, and therefore any profits would be ploughed back into the facility, however the Town Clerk pointed out that the rent was in fact agreed to cover the resurfacing of the tennis courts after the 10 year tenure.

Members discussed the request, with some feeling that £5,500 was a lot to write off and concern was expressed that the Council might not have enough money in ten years' time to resurface the tennis courts. A member proposed to vary the agreement subject to receiving a revised cash flow and business plan, and a guarantee that the Council would still receive £48,000 over ten years. All members agreed with this proposal.

RECOMMENDED: that the Council agrees to vary the agreement for the first year with Premier Tennis to defer the payment for the pavilion rent and crazy golf, and for the second year to receive 50% of the rental due, subject to receiving a revised cash flow and business plan, and a guarantee that the Council would receive £48,000 over ten years.

b) Witney Music Festival and Libfest – Request for Free use of The Leys

Witney Music Festival

A member asked if the Council had a policy for grant aiding free use for such events and the Town Clerk advised that all events were considered on their own merit.

The Music Festival had enjoyed free use of The Leys for at least 4 years. It was noted that last year they had made a loss of £428.25, meaning they had not donated anything to charity as per their original proposal. It was also noted that there were substantial amounts being paid for security and salaries. A member commented that they had not submitted proper accounts and they had not paid a deposit. There had been some issues with the festival and she was in favour of charging for it. She didn't want to lose the festival however.

Another member felt that the Council had previously supported the Music Festival and it was something that was good for the town. However, they had not paid any money over to charity and they were not a CIC. After 4 years the event had become established and therefore the hire charges should apply. He was minded that this year, in order to assist the festival, the Council should agree a rental reduction of 50% across the 4 day hire period, subject to compliance with the Council's terms and Conditions, including payment of a deposit. All members agreed with him. Members were clear that the event was only provisional until a deposit had been received together with all required documentation.

The Town Clerk still had concerns about the funfair as the showmen would accrue rights after two years and this would be the second year. A member proposed that the Council should not allow any more showmen to use the ground and therefore accrue rights.

Libfest

Libfest had also requested free use of The Leys. Members were happy to grant this but asked that the organisers are to be mindful of the fact that if the event became a more established and commercial event it may be subject to normal charges.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the Witney Music Festival had previously been supported by the Council, and, although it was acknowledged it was an event the town benefitted from, hire charges should now apply. However in order to assist the organisers this year, the Council would reduce the total hire charge across the 4 day hire period by 50%, subject to compliance with the Council's terms and Conditions, including payment of a deposit.
- 2) that the Council does not permit fair operators in the Showman's Guild to use the Leys because of the potential to accrue rights to the land.
- 3) that Libfest is granted free use of The Leys for the 2016 event.

F144 **INTERNAL AUDIT INTERIM REPORT 2015–16**

The Committee received and considered the interim report of the Internal Auditor.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and the RFO and Town Clerk be thanked for their work.

F145 **EXCLUSIION 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.

F146 **PROPERTY MATTERS – 51 MARKET SQUARE – RENT REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered confidential correspondence from the Council's property agent, Wilsons Commercial, in relation to 51 Market Square.

RECOMMENDED: that the correspondence is noted and the proposal agreed, subject to the word "sell" being removed from D and internal renovations being subject to a structural surveyors report.

F147 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received a confidential verbal report from the Personnel Sub-Committee held earlier that evening and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2016 as previous circulated.

RECOMMENDED: that the confidential verbal report be noted along with the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2016.

The meeting closed at 6.57pm.

Chairman.