

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 21 July 2014

At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor Mrs J C Baker (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames C Holliday
 Ms M J C Curry J S King
 R F N Curry
 A D Harvey

Officers: Town Clerk Democratic Services Officer

F322 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

F323 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

F324 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9 June 2014 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F325 MATTERS ARISING

With reference to page 3, paragraph 4 of the minutes of 9 June, a member enquired if progress had been made in arranging a meeting with officers in connection with budgets. The Town Clerk said that no progress had been made due to the Finance and Budget Working Party being held in the interim and a staffing shortage.

F326 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present for this item.

F327 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Committee received and considered the schedule of payment of accounts. The Chairman queried the property advice payment on page one and it was explained that this was a payment to the Council's solicitor.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the following schedule of accounts be approved:

Cheques 29081-29130 & DD/BACS in the sum of £58,222.48 Imprest a/c

Cheques 100954-956 DD & standing orders in the sum of £66,115.14 General a/c

Cheques 29131-29181-& DD/BACS in the sum of £67,264.67 General a/c

Cheques 100958-962 DD & standing orders in the sum of £63,292.95 Imprest a/c

2. that the bank reconciliations as at 31 May 2014 and 30 June 2014 be noted.

F328 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee considered the Financial Report as circulated with the agenda.

The Committee discussed the recommendation from the Amenities Committee with regard to the repair of St Mary’s Churchyard wall. They were concerned if by repairing the wall, the Council would be accepting responsibility for it in the long term. The Facilities Manager was still trying to establish the ownership of the various sections, but it was a very complex matter. The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council held public liability insurance but not against accidental damage. It was noted that the Town Council was obliged to keep the churchyard in good order and in fact the issues with the wall were not due to wear and tear but accidental damage.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that she would be working with Mr Kemp from D C K Beavers in August to profile the budgets over the financial year in order to provide more accurate and meaningful information. A member had produced a sample summary budget paper which he felt would make it easier for Councillors to see at a glance how the Council’s finances were. It was considered this may be useful and that the Finance and Budget Working Party could look at this along with the quarterly accounts. The new style financial reports should be available for the working party at the end of August/beginning of September.

The Town Clerk explained the situation with regard to the Carnival and how the damage deposit worked. Regrettably, she had been informed by the Facilities Supervisor that there had been a significant amount of litter which resulted in more man hours and extra costs to cleanse the area. In usual circumstances a deduction from the deposit would be made.

Subsequent to her report the Town Clerk had received a request from WODC to install a permanent CCTV camera on The Leys. The Town Council had been asked for 10%of the capital cost - £500 - towards the camera and to install wi-fi in the pavilion to facilitate the feedback of the camera, which struggled to connect to the Police Station due to the trees in the area.

The Committee noted that the Council already contributed £10,000 per annum for CCTV and was not inclined to contribute more. However, the installation of wi-fi could be an advantage to those using The Leys and the Pavilion.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the Financial Report of the Town Clerk be noted
2. that the recommendations from the Amenities Committee be agreed and in particular to proceed with the repair to the churchyard wall but to write to the church making it clear that this was an act of goodwill as ownership could not

currently be established. The work was needed due to accidental damage and not routine maintenance. This would not set a precedent for future work.

3. that the £600 grant to the Carnival Committee be retained as a damage deposit until the cost of the damage is established, and any costs incurred be deducted before releasing it.
4. that the procurement of a new telephone system be delegated to officers within the available budget.
5. that it be suggested the contribution towards the capital cost of CCTV camera on the Leys should be taken out of the Town Council's annual contribution.
6. that the Officers look into the cost of installing wi-fi at The Leys pavilion, should the installation of the CCTV camera proceed.

F329 **DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the DSO and the discretionary grant application as circulated with the agenda.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that St. John's Ambulance (Witney) be awarded the sum of £500;
3. that Witney Town Band be awarded an additional grant of £100.00 in recognition of their contribution to the recent Twinning Anniversary in Unterhaching;
4. that payments 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 purpose not otherwise authorised
5. that a press release be issued advising of grant support given by the Town Council.

F330 **INTERNAL AUDIT – FINAL REPORT 2013/14**

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

RECOMMENDED: that the Internal Audit – Final Report 2013/14 be noted.

F331 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES (WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL)**

The Committee received and considered the District Council's review of polling districts and places as circulated with the agenda.

It was commented that having three polling areas within Burwell Hall was confusing for voters, but there was nowhere else for the elections to be held in that area.

A member asked if the polling stations that currently used Langdale Hall would relocate to the Corn Exchange when the building was ready and the Town Clerk said that she had already advised the District Council of this.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

F332 **FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Finance and Budget Working Party held on 23 June 2014 as circulated with the agenda.

In answer to a member's question the Town Clerk informed that the new format accounts would be available during September.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted.

F333 **COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Communications and Media Working Party held on 11 June 2014, as circulated with the agenda. A member asked if there had been a response to the Mayor's letter to Newsquest and the Town Clerk said there had not.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted.

F334 **LETTER FROM INFORMATION COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**

The Committee received and considered a letter received from the Information Commissioner's Office as circulated with the agenda.

RECOMMENDED: that this correspondence be noted.

F335 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Committee agreed to the exclusion of the press and public in order to discuss staffing matters.

It was therefore **RESOLVED** that in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission 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 Committee adjourned the meeting at 7.40pm for a meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee and subsequently came out of confidential session and continued at 7.54pm.

F336 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the Personnel Sub Committee minutes of 9 June 2014 and a verbal report from the meeting held that evening.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes and the recommendations contained therein be agreed.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Chairman