

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 18 March 2013

at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present

Councillor: Cllr Harry Eaglestone (Chairman)

Councillors:	Mrs J C Baker	T J Morris
	A K Beames	C K Woodward
	P J Dorward	
Officers:	Town Clerk	Democratic Services Officer
	Deputy Town Clerk	

F119 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for his absence was received from Councillor B J Woodruff.

F120 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

F121 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the following meetings be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman:

Ordinary meeting of 28 January 2013
Special meeting of 11 February 2013

F122 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

F065 – Public Participation - The figure in the final paragraph was amended to read £3,500.

With regard to St Mary’s Churchyard wall, a Member had spoken further to Mr Mills, and remarked that the closed cemetery was handed over 1977 and so he understood that the Town Council were responsible. The Town Clerk commented that she did not disagree with regard to the maintenance; however, the damage had been caused by a vehicle hitting the wall and as St Mary’s insured the wall she considered that it was acceptable for them to put in a claim.

A Member queried whether the transfer document had been located and the Town Clerk confirmed that she had not seen a copy to date; she also clarified the work the Town Council was responsible for, and carried out, in the churchyard.

F067 – Grant Application – The Town Clerk commented that, having declared a disclosable pecuniary interest, it was not appropriate under recommendation (2) for the Chairman of the Public Halls Committee to be involved in the negotiations. It was agreed that he should be replaced by the Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. A Member raised some concerns with regard to this application. The Town Clerk advised that as it was still under negotiation, it was appropriate to bring it back to Council on 8 April 2013.

F123 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

F124 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

Copies of the schedule of accounts paid since the last meeting of this Committee, and of the bank reconciliation statements as at 31 January 2013, had been circulated. These were signed by Councillors H B Eaglestone and C K Woodward prior to the meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the un-presented cheque was payment as compensation and would be written off at the end of the year.

A Member queried the amounts paid to the grounds maintenance contractor. The Town Clerk confirmed that they had been the lowest quote in the tender process for the contract, which ends in 2015. A Member suggested that officers should also look at costings to bring the work back in house. The Deputy Town Clerk remarked that the Facilities Manager had negotiated a reduction in the current contract with regard to the roundabouts in the town. The Town Clerk confirmed that WODC had been invited to tender previously but had been unable to fulfil the criteria. She also confirmed that the tender was subject to a proper process and governed by financial regulations.

RECOMMENDED:

1) that the following schedules of accounts be approved:

Cheques	28215-28252 & BAC 1-2	in the sum of	£73,772.70	Imprest a/c
Cheques	100904-100906 & DD 1-8 SO 1-6	in the sum of	£111,732.98	General a/c

2) that the bank reconciliations as at 31 January 2013 be noted.

F125 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda.

It was noted that two sponsors of the Christmas lights had not yet paid. Councillor Baker agreed to follow up one of these.

The Deputy Town Clerk expanded on report with regard to the bank interest rates and suggestions for investing in different banks to gain a better rate. A Member considered that it was not advisable to lock away money to gain a relatively small amount of interest, it was important to retain the flexibility. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the reserves could not be spent, unless allocated in the budgets, and therefore there appeared to be no problem in locking this money away. The Town Clerk raised caution, advising that prior to entering into any long term investment a cash flow forecast for the year should be carried out. A Member queried whether the existing bank would start to impose bank charges if a large amount was moved to another bank. The Deputy Town Clerk responded that she did not think there would be any reflection on charges.

RECOMMENDED:

1) that the report be noted.

2) that the recommendation to spend £2,395 on the removal of graffiti at Burwell Hall, be agreed.

3) that a grant of £1,000 from the building reserves fund towards the excess on the insurance for repairs to St Mary's Church wall, be agreed.

- 4) that poll cards are not required for the forthcoming by-election.
- 5) that the Deputy Town Clerk reports to the next meeting of this committee with regard to cash flow and demonstrating due diligence in investing Council funds.
- 6) that a decision on a minimum reserves policy be agreed following the report at (5) above.

F126 **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS**

The Committee received and considered the draft calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2013/14, as circulated with the agenda.

The Town Clerk highlighted changes to the usual cycle in that it was proposed that the Planning & Development Committee should meet every three weeks, and an extra week had been allowed between the ordinary Council and the Budget meetings in December.

A Member queried whether it would be possible for each committee to agree its own start times. The Town Clerk commented that we are required to publish a calendar of meetings and that it would be confusing if each committee started at a different time.

RECOMMENDED: that the calendar of meetings, as circulated, be agreed.

F127 **REPLACEMENT OF DUMPER**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Works Contracts Supervisor and the Town Clerk, as circulated with the agenda.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted
- 2) that, subject to satisfactory investigations of history, service, etc., a second hand dumper is purchased.

F128 **DISCRETIONARY GRANTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Democratic Services Officer, as circulated with the agenda.

A Member considered that as there were no funds remaining, these applications should be deferred to the next financial year. The Town Clerk remarked that the application from Voicebox was for an event in May and therefore the next meeting in June would be too late to consider this application.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the report be noted
- 2) that the following grants be awarded:

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Grant</u>
a) Tiddlywinks	Subsidised use of Burwell Hall for 10 meetings.
b) Voice Box Choir	£66.31 (balance of current budget)

- c) Witney Town Bowls Club **Defer to next financial year**

3) 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
- c. **Local Government (Misc. Prov) Act 1976, s19** – Power to provide and equip premises for use of clubs and societies having athletic, social or recreational objectives

F129 **INTERNAL AUDIT**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Internal Auditor, as circulated with the agenda, and the interim report circulated at the meeting.

Members congratulated the Town Clerk on a satisfactory report.

RECOMMENDED: noted.

F130 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC** – To consider and if appropriate, to pass the following resolution

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 meeting adjourned for the Personnel Sub-Committee, being 7.20pm)

F136 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Chairman gave a verbal report from the Personnel Sub-Committee held earlier in the evening.

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

The meeting closed at 7.35pm

Chairman