

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 11 June 2012

at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present

Councillor: H B Eaglestone (Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs J C Baker T J Morris
 A K Beames C K Woodward
 P J Dorward

Officer: Town Clerk Democratic Services Officer
 Deputy Town Clerk

F240 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

F241 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

With regard to agenda item 9 – Discretionary Grant Awards – Cllr T J Morris declared a personal interest in the application submitted by WitneyTV and Cllr Mrs J C Baker declared a personal interest in the application submitted by the Rotary Club of Witney.

F242 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Councillor P J Dorward be appointed Vice Chairman of this Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

F243 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2012 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F244 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

Minute 135 – Financial implications of recommendations made by spending committees – The Town Clerk confirmed that the balance on the West Witney Sports ground earmarked reserves was £218,218. A Member remarked that as there was a tenant on the site, he understood the water supply could not be switched off. The Town Clerk confirmed that Alder King were arranging a meeting with Blenheim Estates to discuss this issue.

With regard to recommendation (3) of the above minute, the Town Clerk explained the situation with regard to the professional fees and remarked that the land agent was currently “working at risk” for the Town Council. She commented that further details on this would be included at the meeting of the West Witney Sports Ground Working Party which was scheduled for later in the week.

F245 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

F246 VANDALISM TO COUNCIL PROPERTY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Amenities Manager, as circulated with the agenda.

RECOMMENDED: that the Amenities Manager's report be noted.

F247 **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 March and 30 April 2012, had been circulated with the agenda. These were signed by Councillors A K Beames and C K Woodward.

RECOMMENDED:

1) that the following schedules of accounts be approved:

Cheques	27673 to 27727 & BAC 1-2	in the sum of	£65,973.95	Imprest a/c
Cheques	100870 to 100874 DD 1-5 SO 1	in the sum of	£65,316.28	General a/c
Cheques	27728 to 27797 & BAC 3-4	in the sum of	£69,685.78	Imprest a/c
Cheques	100875 to 100879 DD 6-9 SO 2-7	in the sum of	£88,733.02	General a/c

2) that the bank reconciliations as at 31 March and 30 April 2012 be noted.

F248 **CAPITAL SPECIAL PROJECTS BUDGET**

The Committee received and considered the reports of the Town Clerk and Amenities Manager, as circulated.

The Town Clerk explained that at the Special Finance & General & Purposes Committee meeting held on 12 December 2011, it had been agreed to adopt a new approach to setting the Capital Budget, and this was detailed in her report.

The Town Clerk commented that due to other work commitments she had been unable to extract the figures for the 'true cost' of the Christmas Lights display and Switch On evening, as previously requested by the Committee. A Member commented that the Committee should be looking forward to what is needed/provided and that this should be considered by the Christmas Lights Working Party.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) that the reports of the Town Clerk and Amenities Manager be noted.
- 2) that the replacement of the Ford Transit Tipper be agreed, at an approx. cost of £10,705 to be met from the rolling capital fund.
- 3) that with regard to extending the footpath at the Leys, the officers investigate the costs and bring back to a future meeting.
- 4) that the market research for the Corn Exchange be agreed, at an approx. cost of £8,000 to be met from the rolling capital fund.
- 5) that the Christmas Lights Working Party reviews what should be provided in the way of lights, entertainment, etc. in order to establish the costings (including staff time) for the current year.

F249 **DISCRETIONARY GRANT AWARDS 2012/13**

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

The Town Clerk advised that it was usual for the Witney Town Band to receive an annual grant of £500 from the Discretionary Grants Budget in recognition of the fact that they attended civic events, such as Remembrance Sunday, Civic Reception, etc. without payment.

Members were concerned that some of the applications would be better dealt with by offering subsidised lettings to encourage use of the halls, although it was recognised that the financing of these should to be met from a specific budget. The Town Clerk suggested a discretionary fund for “subsidised lettings” within the budget, whereby groups could apply (to Finance & General Purposes Committee by completing an application form in the usual manner) for a subsidy on their hire of the public halls.

RECOMMENDED:

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

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Grant</u>
a) Churches Together in Witney	£150
b) Ryder Cheshire Volunteers	£100
c) Rotary Club of Witney	Free use of hall for Annual Charity Dinner
d) Witney Arts & Crafts Society	Subsidised use of halls up to £100
e) Witney Woodland Volunteers	£350
f) WitneyTV	£300
g) Eve Women’s Wellbeing Project	Subsidised use of halls – first 3 sessions free
i) Lunchtime Recitals	£100
Total	£1,000

- 3) that a grant of £500 be awarded to Witney Town Band.
- 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
 - 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
- 5) that no grant be awarded to (h) High Street Methodist Church.
- 6) that a “subsidised lettings” budget be agreed within the public halls budget, with applications for this being made by submission of a grants application form to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.
- 7) that the Town Clerk reports to a future meeting with details of the setting up of the budget, as detailed at (6).

F250 INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee received and considered the Internal Auditor’s report, as circulated with the agenda.

The Town Clerk circulated a corrected page to insert into the Auditor's report, noting that the payroll function had now been brought back in house. Members congratulated the Town Clerk on a good job.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

F251 **REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS, FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, DELEGATIONS AND COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Town Clerk had been unable to complete the report and associated work for this item.

RECOMMENDED: that this be deferred to a Special meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee to be held on Monday 25 June 2012 at 6pm.

F252 **ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

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

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and the Annual Investment Strategy agreed.

F253 **REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S MISSION STATEMENT AND CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

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

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and the Council's Mission Statement and Corporate Objectives as contained therein be agreed.

F254 **ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2011 – NOTICE OF ANNUAL AUDIT FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2012**

RECOMMENDED: that the correspondence from the Council's external Auditors be noted.

F255 **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.

F256 **NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP**

The Committee received and considered the confidential minutes of the meetings held on 29 March and 26 April 2012.

The Town Clerk confirmed that Councillor Mrs B J Churchill had resigned as the Council's representative on the Neighbourhood Action Group and a replacement would be sought at the Council meeting on 25 June.

RECOMMENDED: that the minutes be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm

Chairman