

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Held on Monday 25 July 2016

At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: TJ Morris (Chairman)

Councillors: S E Bartington C Holliday
 A K Beames C E Reynolds
 C Brown C K Woodward

Officers: Town Clerk RFO
 Democratic Services Officer

F393 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr A D Harvey.

F394 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

F395 **MINUTES**

- a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June as a correct record, to be signed by the Chairman.
- b) **MATTERS ARISING:** there were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed at the meeting.

F396 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

F397 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

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

A member asked what the payment to J King related to and the RFO replied that the payment had been made to him from his Mayors allowance which he passed over to his Charity for his term of office.

Several items were queried where the narrative of what was purchased seemed expensive, but this was due to how the accounting system combined invoices during the cheque run. The RFO agreed to change the information presented to be more meaningful, although without distorting the description in the nominal ledger.

The Chairman noted that the June salaries were £6,000 less than those in May. This was due to the Council having to pay £4,000 to OCC for pensions in May and the fact that a staff member had left in May.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that payments covering multiple maintenance items were noted as General Maintenance;
3. that the bank reconciliations and statements as presented be noted;
4. that the schedule of accounts as detailed be agreed:-

Cheque No.s	In the sum of:	Account
Cheques 30463 to 30503 & DD	£62,915.72	Imprest
DD and Standing orders	£670,101.39	General
Cheques 30415 to 30462 & DD	£62,208.29	Imprest
Cheques 101031 to 101032 & DD/Standing orders	£42,867.53	General

F398 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. The Town Clerk gave an additional updates from the recommendations arising from the Community Services and Public Halls Committees.

Via the Community Services Committee, the Public Transportation Working Party had recommended a £750 grant to The Villager bus in order for it to include pickups and drop offs at Deer Park. It had also recommended a supplement to Go Ride of £100 per week for 12 weeks to provide a peak morning service from September to November to include Wood Green School. The Chairman of the Working Party added that residents had expressed a wish for a Saturday morning service. Costs looked like £80 per day - £920 in total. All these costs would be met from the £10,000 set aside previously. Members discussed the Saturday service and the possibility of getting businesses to sponsor it.

The Town Clerk reported that a Circus would be running at The Leys which would bring in £400 rent and the Public Halls Sub-Committee had set aside £10,000 in next year's budget towards a new lift in the Corn Exchange. The Committee had also set a policy to not permit loan of Town Council furniture unless it was within its curtilage.

She also advised that it have been recommended that the Council should apply for planning permission for change of use for the Langdale Hall, which would have a financial implication.

The Town Clerk had been contacted by the police about the half pipes at the skate park. The BMX/Skatepark Working Party had recommended not doing this work and using the budget to build a graffiti wall from marine ply. Members discussed this and recommended that the decision by Amenities to accept the Working Party's recommendation was overturned. There was concern that the original earmarked sum of £600 would not be enough as it had been several years since the quotation for the work had been obtained. The Committee decided to set aside an additional £400 for this.

The discussion turned to use of The Leys for fitness classes. Member had read the policy drawn up by the RFO but wanted more definition on what constituted commercial usage. The Town Clerk advised that she considered some charge should be levied on those running business which effectively had no overheads whilst using The Leys. Members agreed that there should be a charge for commercial use but did not feel the draft policy was quite right and wanted it to be reviewed again at the next Amenities Committee meeting.

The Chairman referred back to the proposed policy on not lending furniture, saying that he was uneasy with it. It did not feel very supportive of the community, especially if the furniture in question was not in use. Another member who was involved with Madley Park Hall explained that it no longer loaned out furniture as it had come back damaged and sometimes late. There was also the question of health and safety as some tables could be dangerous if erected without training. The Chairman understood this and all members were supportive of the policy.

The RFO referred to the PRS for music consultation as detailed in her report. Members were happy with the changes. The Committee noted the update on the CCLA investments.

There was an addendum referring to the Council's vehicles which needed repair. There was money in earmarked reserves but not enough to buy new ones. Members thought that a comparison between purchase and leasing should be done. The repairs themselves had to be carried out.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the recommendations from Amenities Committee be agreed with the exception of the decision not to block in the ramps and to erect a graffiti wall at the Sate Park – these were to be reversed with an increased budget to £1,000 and that the draft policy on Fitness classes be reviewed at the next Amenities Committee;
3. that the recommendations from Community Services be agreed;
4. that the RFO completes the consultation on PRS for music;
5. that a comparison between lease hire and purchase of Council vehicles be carried out and brought back to the next meeting so that figures could be added to the budget for next year.

F399 **BUDGET PARAMETERS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. The Chairman proposed that the Committee should look at the broad parameters and follow this up with a Council “away day”. Members wanted to see West Witney Sports Ground included in the budget – the Town Clerk pointed out the money set aside in the earmarked reserves for building maintenance. A member referred to the possibility of a 3G pitch from S106 money but this was in the hands of WODC and more information would be needed.

A member said that a list of S106 monies would be very useful in planning ahead. The Town Clerk replied that the Town Council had been trying to obtain this information from WODC and OCC since January. Another member said that he had a complete list from 2013 and would pass this onto officers. Cllr Reynolds offered to work with the Town Clerk to obtain information from WODC.

The Chairman asked members what level they would like to set the precept at. The previous Council had had a policy of 2% which the RFO had been asked to work with last year but the Council had been prepared to accept a higher level if 2% was not workable. The precept had come in at a slightly higher level.

The Chairman proposed a figure of 3.5% and members thought this could be justified as there would be devolved services being taken on by the Town Council.

Members noted other items highlighted by the RFO. Recharges would continue, building maintenance budgets would be adopted as a medium term strategy for 3 years and ideally for the next 5 – 10 years; the budget would incorporate a 5% increase in utility prices; and a 1% pay increase across staffing had been built into the budget.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and that RFO tries to achieve a budget whereby the precept for 2017/18 be set at 3.5%.

F400 **DISCRETIONARY GRANT AWARDS**

No applications had been received, but there was a letter of thanks from Base 33, which had been circulated with the agenda.

The Town Clerk had received a request from Oxfordshire Youth Arts Project (OYAP), Witney Youth Action Team (YATS) and Base 33 who wanted free use of the Corn Exchange on 15 and 16 August (five sessions in total) to rehearse and put on a piece of theatre exploring the themes of social media and teenage mental health problems. The cost would be £600 if it was paid for.

The Town Band had asked the Town Council for use of the Corn Exchange to rehearse for the National Brass Band Championships. They had requested 16 September from 7.30pm – 9pm and 17 September from 9.30am – 10.30am. The Town Band always supported Council events. Members were in favour of this.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the letter of thanks be noted and that OYAP/YATS/ and Base33 be granted free use of the Corn exchange for their performance only. This would be funded from the subsidised lettings budget;
2. that the Town Band be granted free use of the Corn Exchange for rehearsal as requested – to be funded from the subsidised lettings budget.

F401 DATA PROTECTION ACT 2018

The Committee received and consider the report of the Town Clerk, which detailed changes in Data Protection law as circulated with the agenda.

The Town Clerk and Cllr Bartington, with other Officers, had been on a training course on Data Protection which had been very informative. They thought that the training would be useful for all councillors. Members agreed.

There had been requests by members in the past for Town Council e-mail addresses. The Town Clerk had discussed the legal implications at length with professional advisors and as long as there were clear caveats that opinions expressed in e-mails were those of the individual and not the Town Council, there would be no issues. A member suggested that the training would help Councillors understand appropriate usage. Members thought that it would be better if councillors had access to Town Council e-mail addresses only once they had completed the training.

The Council's Technical support had offered three options for setting these up – members chose the first option at a cost of £217.50 plus VAT per month.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that in house training be run for all councillors on the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information on a Saturday, date to be confirmed by the Town Clerk;
3. that Town Councillor e-mail addresses are set up via option one detailed in the Town Clerk's report.

F402 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.

F403 **CORN EXCHANGE**

The Committee received and considered the confidential verbal report of the Town Clerk, which included an update on the meeting she had with Cllrs Morris, Dorward and Bartington and the Council's professional advisors regarding the valuation of the lease to the CEWT.

She advised that an alternative lease term had been suggested as a result of that meeting and the advice receive. The professional advisor had remodel the financial projections for the valuation. This, the group felt, would give the CEWT a mandate for grant funding if they had more responsibility. A meeting had been arranged to discuss this with trustees on 27 July 2016.

RECOMMENDED: that the confidential verbal report be noted.

F405 **LANGDALE HALL**

The Committee received and considered the confidential verbal report of the Town Clerk.

She advised the Committee of the recommendations reached by the Public Halls Sub-Committee at its meeting on 19 July 2016. She also informed Members that she had earlier in the day been advised by WODC Planning department that Neptune Iceford had withdrawn their planning application. There was a discussion on the future use of the hall and the opportunity for the Council to consider its future options and needs

RECOMMENDED: that the confidential verbal report be noted.

The Committee adjourned for the meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee at 7.23pm. Minute ref S404-S413 refers. The meeting reconvened at 8.23pm

F414 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received a confidential verbal report from the Personnel Sub Committee held earlier that evening.

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

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Chairman