

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Held on Monday 20 March 2017

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

Non-Committee Members: H B Eaglestone (sub A D Harvey)

Officers: Town Clerk RFO
Democratic Services Officer

Also present: 1 member of the public

F141 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

F142 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Morris declared an interest in agenda item 8 – Discretionary Grant Applications as he was a member of Round Table who were a carnival partner and the carnival treasurer and he assisted with the accounts for Witney Media CIC.

F143 **MINUTES**

a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2017 to be signed by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:**

Minute no. F034 – A member asked if there was more information on terrorist insurance. The RFO replied that it was in her financial report, circulated prior to the meeting.

Minute no. F037 – The Town Clerk informed members that RAFA had not taken the opportunity to do refreshments at the Annual Town meeting which had been done by Burwell Community Gardeners who raised £35. The Windrush Flower Group had raised £78 by raffling the floral displays.

Minute no. F037 – A member asked if the survey had gone out yet. The Town Clerk reminded members that this had been launched at the Annual Town meeting where there had been plenty of copies available. It was also on line and would be in the April issue of the Witney Letterbox magazine which had a circulation of c.12,000 to all households in Witney.

Minute no F044, item 5 – The Town Clerk requested clarification on whether the Council’s Project Manager was just managing the play area installation or the gym equipment as well, as it wasn’t clear from the recommendation. The Committee discuss the original intention and considered that the project needed to be overseen and managed by a professional. Members who had been present at the meeting felt that it had been intended that the Project Manager oversaw both sections of the project. It was agreed that this was the correct option to take.

RECOMMENDED: that the Council’s Project Manager be contracted for both the play area and gym installation.

F144 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The member of the public present did not wish to address the Committee.

F145 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. A member queried the payment to British Telecom as it seemed high. It was explained that this was for three months and included equipment rental as well as lines and the new hall line.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the bank reconciliations and statements be noted;
3. that the following schedule of accounts be approved:

Cheque No.s	In the sum of:	Account
Cheques 30796 to 30843 and DD	£63,921.50	Imprest
Cheques 101043 to 101045, DDs, Transfer and Standing Orders	£50,492.21	General

F146 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. She highlighted the spending committee’s recent decisions

The Town Clerk advised that the newly established Working Party for the Hall Hire Charges had not yet been able to meet and asked if the Committee would consider delegating authority to the Chairman of this meeting to approve any recommendations. It was agreed that this was an interesting subject and felt that everyone would want to comment on it and therefore proposed a Special Policy and Resources Working Party on 29 March at 6pm should be held to discuss the recommendations of the Working Party.

Cllr Beames arrived at 6.20pm.

Members considered the recommendations of the Oxlease Working Party held earlier that day. The Town Clerk explained that if the Committee approved the recommendation to accept All Play as the supplier for the play equipment, it would be going against the financial regulations of the Council as it was a higher quote. Equipment had been removed to get the quotation within the tender limits.

Members discussed this and as they were reassured that this was the only quote that the Community Group thought fitted the project brief, they would accept the recommendation.

Other items highlighted by the RFO from the Amenities Committee recommendations included the Hailey Road allotment wall, and the additional Leys Footpath.

The Town Clerk explained that the Operations Officer was prioritising items from the matrix for each committee's approval as and when there was anticipated capacity within the works team. This process seemed to be working well. A member commented that she was disappointed not to have been included with any dialogue with the officer and she did not feel that the spending committees' Chairmen were being consulted. The Town Clerk agreed to circulate the matrix to the relevant members once the Operations Officer had an opportunity to update it.

It was noted with pleasure that the bowls and cricket clubs had all responded to the request for club membership information.

A highlighted item from the Community Services Committee was bus shelter renovations, in preparation for the art project.

Members discussed the options for terrorism cover. After thorough consideration of the pros and cons of having it, the RFO highlighted the fact that the premium including it was cheaper than the previous year's, members were therefore in favour of having it.

Members discussed the RFO's investigations into replacement vehicles for the works team. It was agreed that the largest vehicle could be replaced as needed but requested further research into electric/ hybrid vehicles for the halls van.

The Committee also received a report from the Town Clerk on the Community Led Plan. She advised that the Council should consider a budget for this as Witney Vision was using the Corn Exchange for meetings. If the free usage was granted from the subsidised budgets letting it would use most of it up. The Chairman remarked that they would also need funding for reports and consultation in future. Members agreed that in line with other users they should be offered 3 free uses of the hall and this would be reviewed at that point. In total Witney Vision would therefore have had 5 free uses.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the recommendations of the Amenities Committee be agreed;
3. that the Policy & Resources Committee endorses the recommendation arising from the Oxlease WP, being:

- i) *That the revised All Play design be accepted including the loss of the trampoline, boulders, tunnel and dragon head, as the other designs presented were not in keeping with the project brief;*
 - ii) *That the Community Group writes to Tesco as a matter of urgency to ascertain if a different supplier for the equipment could be chosen. If this was the case then the Community Group would select a supplier when it had seen all the quotations;*
4. that the recommendations of the Community Services Committee be agreed;
 5. that Terrorism cover is taken as part of the Council's insurance;
 6. that the largest vehicle could be replaced as needed but the RFO undertakes further research into electric/ hybrid vehicles for the halls van;
 7. that the Operations Officer's request to roll forward the remaining PPE (4009) budget for 2016-17 to 2017-18 be agreed;
 8. that a Special Policy and Resources Committee meeting is held on 29 March 2017 at 6pm to and consider a recommendation from the Public Halls Working Party on the charging structure for the hall hire charges
 9. that in line with other users Witney Vision be offered 3 free uses of the Corn Exchange for the Community Led Plan and this be reviewed at that point.

F147 **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – 2ND INTERIM REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the internal auditor as circulated with the agenda. In answer to a Members question the Town Clerk explained that although Auditing Solutions has been the Council's independent auditor for several years, the general principle was that the auditor was rotated every 3 years.

She also explained that prior to the appointment of the current RFO the contract was reviewed but the Internal Audit market for parish and town councils were limited.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

F148 **DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

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

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the request from Witney Media CIC is not granted;
3. that the Ryan Bull Charity Football match is granted the sum of £95.00 from the subsidised lettings budget for pitch hire;

4. that the grant of £800 for Witney Carnival is agreed as well as free use of the Leys Recreation Ground;
5. that the grant request from Metaphysique Fitness is not granted and it is pointed out that some of the comments in the application were quite offensive to the Council.

F149 CORPORATE RISK ASSESSMENT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk and the Risk Management Policy which explained the process and requirement of the risk assessment which would be presented to Council on 29 March 2017.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

F150 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.

F151 UPDATE ON GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Operations Officer, concerning some changes to the Grounds Maintenance Contract.

The Town Clerk clarified the position with regard to the additions which was in fact a higher specification following professional reports on the current state of the pitches. Whilst the additional sum increased the overall contract value Members did note that it was still significantly less than the previous contract.

RECOMMENDED: that the report and the changes to the Grounds Maintenance Contract be noted.

F152 PROPERTY MATTERS

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk, concerning 51 Market Square, the Langdale Hall, the Corn Exchange, Town Hall, and Cemetery Lodge.

Members discussed the merits of community groups coming together to use the Langdale Hall and the implications of a lease, meeting the Council's objective of turning the hall into a community hub.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the position and action with regard to the tenant of 51 Market Square as outlined in the Town Clerk's confidential report be noted and pursued;

3. that the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Public Halls Sub Committee on 6 March 2017 (minute no H098) as follows are approved, with the addition of referral to the Public Halls Committee (or whichever committee supersedes it) in recommendation c:
 - a) that negotiations with the ICE Centre be progressed with regard to them leasing the Langdale Hall with a commercial valuation on the lease being sought;
 - b) that the necessary works in order to bring the Langdale Hall back into operation be commissioned and the Policy and the Committee agrees the necessary budget to cover the works;
 - c) that negotiations for a full repairing lease be delegated to the Leader and Town Clerk and presented back to the *Public Halls Sub Committee*, Policy and Resources Committee and Full Council for agreement;
 - d) that expressions of interest are invited for the lobby of the Corn Exchange; that the Council's 2012 visions is the first item of business for the Committee in 2018/19 .
4. that the outcome of the negotiations with the Council's tenant in Cemetery Lodge Tower Hill be noted.

The Committee adjourned for a meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee.

F158 STAFFING MATTERS

The Committee received and considered a verbal report of the meeting held earlier that evening.

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

F159 PEST CONTROL

With the permission of the Chairman the Town Clerk brought to members attention recent increased communication from someone offering 'pest control' services in the Windrush Cemetery. Members felt that the request was inappropriate for the area and declined the offer.

RECOMMENDED: that the request to provide pest control in the Windrush Cemetery be declined.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Chairman

