

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 20 November 2017

At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: C K Woodward (Chairman)

Councillors:	Dr S E Bartington	Mrs B J Churchill (sub A D Harvey)
	A K Beames	P J Dorward
	C Brown (sub C E Reynolds)	C Holliday
		T J Morris (from 6.25pm)

Officers:	Town Clerk	RFO
	Democratic Services Officer	

Others: 1 Member of the Public

Cllr Woodward assumed the Chair as Cllr Morris did not arrive until 6.25pm. He asked Cllr Woodward to remain in the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

F599 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for their absences were received from Cllrs A D Harvey and Mrs C E Reynolds.

F600 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

F601 **MINUTES**

- a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 to be signed by the Chairman.
- b) **MATTERS ARISING:** there were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed at the meeting.

F602 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned in line with Standing Order 42 so that a member of the public, Ms Deborah Robson-Grey, could address the Committee on a grant application for "Wash My Pink Jumper" and the Homes4All, a charity to help the homeless.

The Committee reconvened following the address by the member of the public.

F603 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. A member asked if payments to Triumph Technologies were monthly and if it was a

good value service. The RFO replied that she believed it was value for money but would be reviewing it next year. The Town Clerk added that a large proportion of the cost was to cover the councillors Town Council .gov e-mail addresses previously requested and agreed by Council.

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 31203 to 31248 and DD	£65,064.89	Imprest
DD, Cheque 101064 and Standing orders	£37,823.72	General
Cheques 31249 to 31296 and DD	£153,470.64	Imprest
and DD/Standing orders	£ 17,391.09	General

F604 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO as circulated with the agenda. In addition to her report she advised that there would be some additional unexpected costs in respect of the Langdale Hall refurbishment as an asbestos survey had to be carried out and some asbestos had been found which would need to be removed.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted:
2. that the recommendations from the Estate Management Committee and its working parties be agreed;
3. that the recommendations from the Sport and Recreation Committee and its working parties be agreed;
4. that the recommendations from the Community Services Committee and its working parties be agreed;
5. that the Capital and special projects funding for 17-18/18-19/19-20 be noted with further consideration to 18/19 and beyond being given at agenda item 9;

F605 **DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

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

The Committee was very supportive of “Wash My Pink Jumper/the Homes4All” and agreed to grant free use of the Corn Exchange as requested on the same terms as other applicants – 3 free uses.

There had been a late request from Witney Rugby Club for Council support toward its free annual firework display. At the outset this had been intended to be a fundraiser but this year the Club was expected to make a loss. The display cost around £2,000. The Committee discussed this and was keen to support such a good display that was in essence free for the town, although people were asked for donations. It was agreed to create a special line in the forthcoming budget for a grant to support the display.

Members noted the annual grants in the report and this led to an in depth discussion on the request from West Oxfordshire Community Transport for an annual grant. Members noted that the organisation had not complied with the terms and conditions of the original grant which was to acknowledge the Town Council’s support in any literature that they may produce. Members also thought that the buses could be appropriately branded to acknowledge the support given by the Town Council.

There was further concern that legislation may be introduced meaning the West Oxfordshire Community Transport could not collect the whole amount of concessionary reimbursements, which may affect its ability to operate. The RFO advised that the company received £1,250 on a monthly basis which could be stopped at any time, rather than them receiving the full annual grant at the start of the financial year.

The Committee considered giving a grant on the condition of branding being in place and West Oxfordshire Community Transport picking up the Villager’s service but decided that this may be too onerous. It was decided to continue grant funding on the condition that West Oxfordshire Community Transport put appropriate branding on their vehicles and acknowledged the Town Council’s support on their literature.

The Chairman proposed increasing the grant to the Twinning to £500 and reducing the CAB grant to £500. All members agreed with this proposal.

A member proposed a grant of £500 for Base 33 as it contributed a very valuable service to the town. All members agreed.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the following grants be made:

- Wash My Pink Jumper/Homes4All – 3 free hires of the Corn Exchange from the subsidised lettings budget;
 - Witney High Street Methodist Church Organ Reservoir Appeal - £250;
 - Witney Model and Collectors Club - £300 for pop up banners.
3. that Witney Rugby Club be granted £500 towards their firework display for 2018 and a new budget line be created for this;
4. that the following annual grants be agreed:
- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------|
| Witney & District Twinning Assoc. | Grant | £500.00 |
| Witney Town Band | Grant | £500.00 |
| West Oxfordshire C.A.B | Grant | £500.00 |
| Volunteer Link-Up | Grant | £500.00 |
| Witney Carnival | Grant | £800.00 |
| Witney & District Twinning Assoc. | Subsidised Letting | £65.00 |
5. that West Oxfordshire Community Transport be granted £15, 000 towards their running costs in the next financial year on the condition that it abides by the terms of the grant and brands its vehicles appropriately;
6. that these grants be awarded using the General Power of Competence;
7. that all recipients are asked to fully acknowledge the support of the Town Council in their literature and publicity.

Ms Robson-Grey left the meeting.

F606 INTERNAL AUDIT- FIRST INTERIM REPORT

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

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted.

F607 REVISED BUDGET 2017/18 & ESTIMATES FOR 2018/19, FEES & CHARGES FOR 2018/19, CAPITAL & SPECIAL PROJECTS FOR 2018/19 & PREPARATION POOL 2019/20

The Committee received and considered the reports of the RFO as circulated prior to the meeting. She tabled an additional report which included the Precept Support Grant and taxbase.

Members discussed the Mayoral allowance and agreed that it should be increased by £1,000. Cllr Woodward asked for it to be recorded that he abstained from voting on this proposal.

Members also agreed to a £3,000 budget for publicity for the Corn Exchange as part of the larger business plan.

The RFO advised that the precept support grant would be £34,199, meaning that the precept required at a 2% increase would be £1,381,937. She cautioned that major works were needed to the Langdale Hall and possibly to the Town Hall, although there was the rolling capital budget and also some earmarked reserves.

The Town Clerk advised that she had been informed at a meeting with a Twinning report of the first Rallye du Jumelage (20 cars travelling from Le Touquet to Witney taking place from 17 – 21 June 2018). They would be looking for somewhere to display the cars and also for some financial support. The Committee gave agreement in principle and asked that it be referred to the next Community Services Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Mayoral Allowance is increased by £1, 000 to £3,000 in 18/19 budget;
3. that a £3,000 budget for Corn Exchange Publicity is added to the 18/19 budget;
4. that the revised base revenue budget for 2017/18 and the draft estimate for 2018/19, as detailed in the budget papers, be adopted, amended to incorporate the member's decisions made during the meeting, subject to final scrutiny by officers, for submission to the Special Policy and Resources committee on 11 December 2017
5. that the increase in Precept for 2018/19 of 2% is recommended to Full Council for adoption;
6. that the capital projects as detailed be approved and recommended to Full Council for adoption;
7. that the revenue growth items as detailed be approved and recommended to Full Council for adoption;
8. that the fees and charges for 2018/19 as detailed be approved and recommended to Full Council for adoption.

F608 **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.

The Committee adjourned for a meeting of the Personnel Sub Committee at 6.35pm, the Democratic Services Officer and the RFO left the meeting.

The meeting reconvened 7.45pm.

F615 **STAFFING MATTERS**

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

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the confidential verbal report be noted and recommendations contained therein approved.
2. that the Town Clerk is granted the resources to be able to facilitate the sickness cover in the office as she deems appropriate

The meeting closed at 7.47pm.

Chairman