

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday 24 September 2018

At 6pm in the Council Chamber, Town Hall

Present:

Councillor: D Temple (Chairman)

Councillors: A K Beames (from 6.12pm) P J Dorward
H W Chirgwin H B Eaglestone
B J Churchill C Holliday
T J Morris

Officers: Mrs Sharon Groth - Town Clerk
Mr Adam Clapton - PA to the Mayor & Town Clerk

F480 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies of absence received for the meeting.

F481 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Eaglestone declared an interest in agenda item 7 – Discretionary Grant Applications – as he was a member of the Witney Model Collectors Club.

F482 MINUTES

- a) **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2018 be a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.
- b) **MATTERS ARISING:** there were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed at the meeting.

F483 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

F484 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Committee received and considered the accounts schedule from the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda.

Following an observation by a member, the Town Clerk confirmed that individual names on the accounts generally related to Public Halls deposit refunds.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the schedules 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 31656 to 31689, BACS and DD [31688 cancelled]	£61,817.42	Imprest
DD, Cheque 101081 and Standing orders	£23,255.65	General
Cheques 31690 to 31741, BACS and DD [31740 & 31717 cancelled]	£77,923.04	Imprest
DD, Standing orders and cheques 101083-101084 (101082 cancelled)	£ 55,728.10	General

F485 **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as circulated prior to the meeting pertaining to; income and expenditure, financial implications of the spending committees, tea dance charges, West Witney Sports Ground. A verbal report on debtors was also provided.

Members discussed the report and agreed that an increase in the tea dance charges would not be financially draining to those who attend. The Town Clerk advised that the debtors list had reduced due to the work of officers. West Sports and Social Club had entered a grant application for the works to install an external fire exit staircase and following deliberation on this request, the committee agreed that further information was required regarding owner/tenant responsibility for the structure of the building before the application could be considered. If the works should be paid for by the Town Council it would need to be funded from an existing Estates Management budget.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the recommendations as presented from the spending committees be agreed;
3. that the Town Council's weekly tea dance price be increased from £1.75 -£2.00;
5. that the grant application request from West Witney Sports & Social Club be deferred to the Full Council meeting on 8th October 2018 to allow time for officers to clarify the responsibilities of the Town Council in regards to the structure of the building.

F486 **DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the DSO and the associated grant applications.

The requests were:-

1. Witney Model Collectors Club	£200	Website Upgrade
2. Jewins Women2 Women	£500	Charity Event
3. Witney 2120 Squadron R.A.F Air Cadets	£155	Subsidised letting at Corn Exchange
4. Witney Talking News	£250	Grant for 40 th Anniversary

The Committee approved the applications for Witney Model Collectors Club, Witney Talking News and Witney 2120 Squadron, with agreement that the Air Cadets subsidised letting be added to annual requests.

It was felt that application from Jewins Women2Women would not have a direct benefit to the people of Witney and would help towards an overseas charity, both of which conflict with grant awarding policies 1.2 and 1.3.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the grant application request to Jewins Women4Women be refused as it conflicts with the Council's grant awarding policy;
3. that the following grants be made under the General Power of Competence:

1. Witney Model Collectors Club	£200	4100/407 Grant
2. Witney 2120 Squadron R.A.F Air Cadets	£155	Subsidised letting
3. Witney Talking News	£250	4100/407 Grant

4. that the Witney 2120 Squadron RAF Air Cadets annual awards evening be added to annual subsidised lettings;
5. that the organisations be asked to acknowledge the Town Council's financial support within their publicity and literature;

F487 TELEPHONE SYSTEM

Members received a verbal update from the Town Clerk regarding quotations for a new telephone system for the Council. There were discrepancies with the three quotes currently received which required further investigation. As the current contract for the lease of equipment was not due to end until October 2019, this item was deferred.

RESOLVED: that the research and report on a new telephone system be deferred to the new Office Manager once that post has been filled.

F488 **BUDGET PARAMETERS 2019/20, CAPITAL & SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS 2019/20**

The committee received the report of the Town Clerk as circulated prior to the meeting. There was concern that the amount of money being spent by the Council year on year was increasing and large housing developments within the town would be coming to fruition in the near future with associated play areas and amenities. The Council usually attempted to work towards an increase of 2% on the Council Tax Band D/Precept but there was no cap on Parish Councils. The Town Clerk also noted there would be increasing national pay changes coming into effect.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that taking into account those items already included, the Town Clerk/RFO works towards an increase of 2% on the Council Tax Band D in line with previous years and present this to Council for discussion.

F489 **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 PA to the Mayor & Town Clerk left the meeting at 7.43pm

F490 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 13 September 2018.

The Town Clerk brought to Members attention a concern raised at a recent staff meeting in respect of the safeguarding of employees and the duty of care the Council had to its staff in respect to spurious allegations and vexatious complaints. She advised that both her and the Operations & Estates Officer would be working with the Council's legal advisors to ensure that both health and safety and the well-being of employees was taken into consideration via a Policy.

The Town Clerk also reminded Members of the Councillor/Officer Protocol and the fact that Councillors should not be instructing or going straight to employees.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the minutes of the Personnel Sub-committee held on 13 September 2018 be noted and recommendations contained therein approved.
2. that the Town Clerk and Operations & Estates Officer review the safeguarding of Council employees in light of recent allegations.

The meeting closed at 7.37pm

Chairman