

LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL

AT A MEETING of the **FINANCE AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber at 7.30 pm on **TUESDAY 13 AUGUST 2013** there were present:

The Mayor Councillor Susan Pike - in the Chair

The Deputy Mayor Councillor Phil Seeva

Councillors; Rachel Brooks, Ian Goldsworthy, Jane Pascoe and James Shrubsole,

Town Clerk - Mr Andrew Deacon

Minute Clerk - Mr Stuart Houghton

Members of the Public: None

205/13 APOLOGIES

No apologies were received

206/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made either Pecuniary or Non Pecuniary.

207/13 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE

The Mayor explained that it was customary for the Mayor to be the Chairman of this Committee and the Deputy Chair to be the Deputy Mayor. All present agreed for this arrangement to continue.

208/13 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The draft Terms of Reference were tabled.

The Town Clerk explained that the budgets had been adjusted to suit the new Committee arrangement and terms of Reference and recommended that Members took the information away to consider. Only one item, the CCTV had not been allocated and he recommended that it remained with the Finance Committee.

Councillor Brooks said she wished to strengthen the description for item a to include the development of strategic options as Finance was not the only purpose of this Committee, it was for the forward planning for the Council. The Mayor suggested that this was covered by item c, forward planning. Councillor Goldsworthy said that strategy was different to strategic development. The purpose of this Committee was to take the councils priorities, when adopted, to allocate funds for their development. The mayor said the purpose was the financial delivery of the Councils priorities and the town Clerk said he saw this committee as an overview operation. Other Committees would make recommendations to the Council which would pass it on to this Committee for financial allocation. He as the Responsible Officer had to ensure that all procedures and proposals were in order. He saw no reason for the Committee not to adopt the options as to h as they were open and transparent

Councillor Brooks said she agreed with Councillor Goldsworthy's comment about strategic and strategy but wanted item a to include strategy. Item c was forward planning which would be formal meetings where ideas would come from and be driven forward. The Town Clerk replied that this was a local authority and was bound by rules and Councillor Goldsworthy said that the descriptions were in plain English without any buzzwords, the public could see what was in the tin. The Mayor said that the Comm & Eng Committee would present ideas and consult for opinions of the public, report to the Council for approval which would then refer the matter to the Finance committee. There was a balance between the full Council and the two Committees

The Deputy Mayor compared the Council to a company, this Committee was the Finance Department for running the company but we must get the description right now. In response to a comment by the Mayor the Town Clerk said it was not necessary to appoint anyone else to this committee. The Committee reported to the full Council which could instruct the committee to revisit items. In response to Councillor Brooks he said he thought it would be difficult for a Cornwall Councillor to sit on this Committee, they would be trying to serve two masters and could leave things open to conflict.

He agreed with Councillor Brooks that this Committee usually met monthly, not quarterly stated in the Terms of Reference.

Councillor Brooks proposed, the Deputy Mayor seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that the Council to adopt the Terms of Reference with the following amendments;

Item a to read "The co-ordination and periodic review of the Council's Financial and Strategic affairs"

Item 3 to read "The Committee meets monthly, but not in August, with additional meetings as and when necessary. The Town Clerk, as Responsible Financial Officer, will be present whenever the Committee is in session."

209/13 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 23 APRIL 2013

The Mayor explained that these minutes were presented as a matter of procedure to be noted, because the Membership had changed. The Town Clerk said that there were no actions agreed at that meeting to be considered.

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 23 April 2013 were noted.

210/13 BUDGETS

The Town Clerk explained that the Budgets presented tonight had been amended to reflect the Option B. It showed the monies spent to the end of June 2013, in his opinion the recorded spend was in line with the Budgets.

In response to Councillor Pascoe's question, he said that he had discussed the finances of the Town Forum with its Chairman, who would make a report at the next

meeting of the Forum. The finances of the Forum were in good shape, they had money in the bank and no outstanding projects or accounts. He could find no reason for the previous practice of the Chairman of the Forum applying to the Town Council for the residual budget. The Mayor added that it might have been because Councillor Mallard had been the Chairman of the Forum and had also prepared the Annual Accounts. She felt that as he was a Councillor, and Chairman of the Forum, he had made the application to be transparent and open.

The Chairman called for comments on the budgets that had been presented.

1. Finance and Strategy

Under the Admin line the costs for the Council's website should be transferred to the Communication and Engagement Committee. The Town Clerk asked the Committee to agree a sum of money for the annual costs for the maintenance of the website, which would be constrained by the budgets already set. The Committee agreed a sum of £1200. The Town Clerk said that if the website was to be changed a budget needed to be set for it. Councillor Goldsworthy said that the Priorities for the Council needed to be agreed as soon as possible so that work on setting the precept for next year could begin in October.

In response to a question about the advertising spend being in advance of the projected budget, the Town Clerk said that the advertising had been for staff following a retirement and a resignation, which had been unplanned. He had been shocked at the charges made by the Cornish Times and had reduce the size of the advertisements.

In reply to Councillor Goldsworthy's comment about election expenses the Town Clerk informed the committee of the constraints that had been imposed on him by the previous Council and agreed with Councillor Goldsworthy that a budget should be set each year to build up a dedicated reserve. The Mayor choosing ceremony was a civic event; it was a Council event as should stay with this Committee. He will inform the Committee about the superannuation budget at the next meeting.

2. Property

The Town Clerk reported that this week he had received notification from Cornwall Council that because there had been a delay in the transfer of the Westbourne toilets they had checked their costs for them and found them to be more than the proposed grant to the Council, therefore this Council would not receive any grant for taking over the toilets. Also, if the toilets had not been transferred by the end of September Cornwall Council would close them.

The Town Clerk went on to say that there was an odour problem at these toilets, he thought it was because the urinals discharged into an open pipe but Cornwall Council have declared that all their work in these toilets was complete, but when he made his inspection of the toilets there were several items that had not been completed.

Councillor Goldsworthy said he was concerned about the apparent poor performance of either Cornwall Council or their Contractor in the refurbishment of the toilets, he

thought that the work had been done to a low standard to keep costs to a minimum. Their quoted costs for the past 15 weeks bore no resemblance to their projected cost for the year; they had either underestimated the projected costs or had received high costs for the operation of the toilets. The Mayor said that the costs had not been itemised and Councillor Goldsworthy asked the Town Clerk to obtain an itemised account from Cornwall Council and bring it to the next meeting.

It was agreed that the Trailer should be transferred to the Communication and Engagement budget. The town Clerk said that the materials to fit out the Trailer had been purchased in the previous year but the work had not been completed as the Handyman was on long term sick leave.

In response to the question about receipts from The Parade the town Clerk said that he had not received a follow up from the initial enquiry so had not included it in the budget.

3. Communication and Engagement

Councillor Brooks said it had been agreed that Street Furniture, Market and Dilapidations lines be transferred to the Property budget and asked why there was not a line for the TIC receipts, last year they had totalled £4k. The Town Clerk replied that he was instructed by the previous Council not include any receipts other than those of rents, as there was no certainty of the other receipts. The reason for the TIC costs being in advance of the budget was because they had purchased a large quantity of stock at the start of the year together with a new cash register. He had visited the TIC yesterday and was impressed by how busy it was and how the staff arranged accommodation for an Italian family.

Councillor J. Shrubsole asked what the mechanism was for allocating salaries to budgets, the Town Clerk replied that it followed the tried and tested system but he was not aware of how the system was devised. Councillor J. Shrubsole asked that all information about salaries, staff costs and their allocation be made available before the next budget is started.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor commented on the new working practice initiated by the new Head Caretaker and Councillor Goldsworthy commented on the improved relationship with the Museum Curator.

4. Museum

The Town Clerk reported that the Curator had applied for grants and it was thought that the Museum might receive up to £25k by Christmas, this was a good thing as the councils budget was only a contribution to the running cost of the Museum. Councillor Goldsworthy said that he had met with the Curator; the Caradon Hill Project Grants would enable her to establish more permanent displays which would enhance the potential of the Museum. The Curator was also establishing links with the local schools.

5. Staff

The Town Clerk reported that this was a new committee so no budget had been set for it; however he had transferred the training element to this committee as staff training had been recognised at the Staff Committee meeting earlier this week.

He explained that the Council have retained Ellis Witham as advisors for Employment and Health and Safety issues, the premium was £2.5k pa. They had made a Health and Safety inspection of the Council's property and were advising him on employment matters.

211/13 CORRESPONDENCE

None

212/13 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

The Town Clerk said that two grant applications had been made;

1 Liskeard Flower Arrangers

The Liskeard Flower Arrangers had applied for a grant of £250 to support their festival. This is a large event and the Council had supported it in the past.

The Deputy Mayor proposed, The Mayor seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that a grant of £250 be **RECOMMENDED**.

2. Town Traders Association

Councillor Pascoe asked if she should declare an interest in this item as she was a shopkeeper and a member of the Chamber of Commerce. The Town Clerk said that it would be in order for her to join the discussion.

The Town Traders Association had applied for a grant of £413.50 to cover the cost of insurance for their benches in Fore Street. Last year the Council awarded a grant to cover the cost of this insurance.

Councillor Brooks asked why did the Council award this grant last year, Councillor Goldsworthy said why do the Council awards any grants, this was a good scheme that added to the street scene, now that it was up and running he thought that the Traders should contribute to its costs. Councillor J. Shrubsole proposed that a grant be made this year on a diminishing scale. Councillor Pascoe agreed that the benches enhanced the street and suggested that the Traders could apply to the Town Forum for a grant also. She also suggested that details of grants be added to the newsletter.

Councillor J. Shrubsole proposed, Councillor Pascoe seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that a grant of £200 be **RECOMMENDED** and that the Traders be informed that this was on a reducing scale.

213/13 PART II

214/13 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, it was **RESOLVED** that the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of Business.

215/13 ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE MAIN PART OF THE AGENDA

Cattle Market Car Park

216/13 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960 it was **RESOLVED** that the members of the Press and Public be re-admitted to the Meeting.

Members ratified the discussions held in closed session.

217/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Finance and Strategy Committee meeting would be at 7.30 pm on the 24 September 2013.