

LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL

AT A MEETING of the **FINANCE AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 22 October 2013 there were present:

The Mayor Councillor Susan Pike - in the Chair

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

Town Clerk - Mr Andrew Deacon

Minute Clerk - Mr Stuart Houghton

Member of the Public: John Kendrick Crawshaw

402/13 PUBLIC SPEAKER

Mr Kendrick Crawshaw had two questions to ask.

1. He understood that the Website was being updated but was concerned that the Agenda for this meeting had not been published.
2. Minute 298/13 of the Town Council meeting held on 17 September 2013 stated that all Councillors had not signed the bank mandate which had been brought to that meeting for signature. Had all Councillors now signed this mandate?

The Town Clerk replied that the Agenda for this meeting was published on the Council notice board and that all Councillors had not signed the bank mandate. This was their choice.

403/13 APOLOGIES

An apology was received from the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Phil Seeva.

404/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

405/13 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 24 SEPTEMBER 2013

The Minutes of the Finance and Strategy Committee meeting held on the 24 September 2013 were noted.

406/13 MATTERS ARISING

Part II (Minute 319/13(Cattle Market Car Park))

An update would be given in Part II.

407/13 AUDIT FOR YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2013

The Town Clerk circulated comments from the external Auditors Report for the year ended 31 March 2013.

Section 2, Annual Governance Statement

Although copies of the Minutes had been provided to show that the Annual Return had been discussed by the Council, the Annual Governance Statement had not been discussed as an item. It was on the agenda to be discussed at this meeting. Next year sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Report would be circulated to facilitate full discussion.

Matters drawn to our attention

1. Trust funds. Box 11, section 1 had not been ticked
2. Financial regulations had not been reviewed in the year; they were on tonight's Agenda
3. Internal Financial Controls needed to be periodically reviewed; they were on tonight's Agenda. The Mayor would periodically check the bank reconciliation.
4. The Audit Report had been displayed on the Council's notice board for 14 days as required by regulation.

In response to a suggestion that our procurement rules did not mirror those of Cornwall Council, the Town Clerk replied that he would check the details.

408/13 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Town Clerk presented to the meeting a copy of "Accountability for Local Councils, A Practitioners' Guide (England) 2010". This Council had followed the document's recommendations in previous years and he recommended that this Council also adopt it. He agreed that Members should read the document prior to its adoption which must be done before the end of the year.

He circulated a copy of the Council's Financial Risk Assessment (Internal Safeguards and Controls) which was adopted in 2010. These Controls were in place and were accepted by both the Internal and External Auditors. This discussion would satisfy the needs of the External Auditor's comments in his report for the year to 31 March 2013.

409/13 INVESTMENT STRATEGY REVIEW

The Town Clerk circulated a copy of the Council's Investment Strategy which was adopted in 2010. He gave a history of the Council's investments and bank accounts and stated that he had not yet found an account that would match the interest received last year. He was worried about the Governments' guarantees for deposits: should a bank fail, only £85k would be protected. The Post Office would not hold corporate accounts and he would not recommend that the Council made off-shore investments. He would continue with his investigations and report to the next meeting

of the Committee. In response to a question, he said he was not aware if the Government would bail out an individual Authority and would investigate the matter.

410/13 INVESTMENT REVIEW

The Council was currently insured by Aviva on a three year agreement, which was started last year; the premium for next year had increased by only £8.42.

The premiums were paid by monthly instalments for which no charge was made. Our insurance brokers, WPS, had carried out a comprehensive review of our requirements and had managed to have our Public Liability Insurance increased from £5m to £10m at no additional cost. The additional premium to cover the new alcohol licence would be £20.

The Town Clerk recommended that the Council continue with the arrangements made by WPS.

411/13 BUDGET REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2013

The Budget Report was circulated and discussed. The Town Clerk explained that the Professional Fees were over-budget due to the Council taking over the toilets. He had managed to save over £600 by completing the application to change the liquor licence himself. Although the Election expenses were not shown, they had been paid to Cornwall Council. The installation of the CCTV system was approaching completion but a maintenance and cleaning contractor had not yet been appointed.

412/13 PRECEPT

The Town Clerk reported that this item had been included to get everyone to think about the Precept. It was now October and no recommendations had been made. The Utility bills would not rise this year as the Council was tied into a three year agreement which started last year. Items were discussed for which information was required:

- The operation and maintenance costs for the CCTV;
- Museum Curator's salary;
- The Business Rate increase of around 3.1% this year;
- The likelihood of the Council receiving the Cornwall Council rate Support Grant as last year.

Councillor J. Shrubsole presented a spread sheet that he had prepared which allowed potential increases to be input to show the impact on the overall Precept. He explained the workings to the Town Clerk and offered to provide him with an electronic copy.

The discussion moved to the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. It had been the decision of the Full Council to proceed with this. Most Councillors were keen to be involved. Items discussed;

- The DCLG information showed that the amount of detail in a Plan was the decision of the Council.
- Support could come from Cornwall Council or the Government; there would be no need to employ consultants. This would contain the cost.
- A grant of up to £7k would be available from DCLG.
- A Project Manager could be useful for the production of the Plan.
- The costs of preparing the Plan over the next two years should feature in the Precept.
- The draft Local Plan could be used to assist the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- There was a need for consultation with neighbouring Parishes, especially Trewidland, Dobwalls and St Cleer Councils in order to define the area to be covered by the Liskeard Plan and to ensure that it was sympathetic with their needs.
- The Plan should include green energy; installations in neighbouring Parishes had a visual impact on Liskeard.

The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk would write to Dobwalls, Trewidland and St Cleer Councils to inform them that this Council would prepare a Neighbourhood Plan and to invite them to a meeting after the 11 November 2013.

The Committee also **RESOLVED** that an informal meeting of the Town Council be held in the Council Chamber at 7.00 pm on Monday 11 November 2013 to discuss the production of a Neighbourhood Plan.

413/13 GRANTS

1. An application for a grant of £250 had been received from Mazed

The Mayor proposed, Councillor Brooks seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that a grant of £250 be paid to Mazed

2. An application for a grant of £300 had been received from the Lions Club of Liskeard.

Councillor Goldsworthy declared an interest in this item and left the meeting at 8.59 pm.

Councillor Brooks proposed, the Mayor seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that a grant of £300 be paid to the Lions Club of Liskeard

Councillor Goldsworthy returned to the meeting at 9.00 pm

414/13 CORRESPONDENCE

None

415/13 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors to concentrate their thoughts for the Precept.

416/13 PART II. 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.

417/13 ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE MAIN PART OF THE AGENDA

1. Cattle Market
2. No 4 The Arcade

418/13 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.

419/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Finance and Strategy Committee meeting would be at 7.30 pm on 26 November 2013.