

## **LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL**

**AT A MEETING** of the **FINANCE AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 25 March 2014 there were present:

The Mayor Councillor Susan Pike - in the Chair

\*The Deputy Mayor Councillor Phil Seeva ex-officio

Councillors: Rachel Brooks, Ian Goldsworthy and Jane Pascoe

Town Clerk - Mr Andrew Deacon

Minute Clerk - Mr Stuart Houghton

Member of the Public: None

### **875/13 PUBLIC SPEAKER**

No members of the Public were present.

### **876/13 APOLOGIES**

An apology was received from Councillor James Shrubsole

### **877/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **878/13 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING 25 FEBRUARY 2014**

The Mayor proposed, Councillor Goldsworthy seconded and the Committee **APPROVED** the Minutes of the Finance and Strategy Committee meeting held on the 25 February 2014.

### **879/13 MATTERS ARISING**

#### **1. Quotes and Tenders (Minute 777/13)**

Councillor Brooks said that she thought that the thresholds differencing when quotations and tenders should be obtained were confusing, and wished for these figures to be reconsidered. Comments from the Committee included;

- The purpose of the previous discussion was to set up a register of quotations and tenders requested and received
- Why reconsider what was in our Standing Orders
- It was believed that there had been discrepancies in the interpretation of these regulations in the last twelve months
- The discussions must be as "the Council", discrepancies might have occurred when the discussions were blurred

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- The suggestion that a chart be prepared to show how expenditure could be made was considered to be a good suggestion

## 2. CCTV Maintenance Contract (Minute 778/13)

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council had entered into the Option 3 Maintenance Contract with ESSA.

## 3. Any Other Relevant Business (Minute 781/13(1))

Councillor Brooks considered that the third paragraph was misleading, the TIC did keep records of income and expenditure; she suggested that “must keep income and expenditure records” be changed to “keep improved income and expenditure records.”

## **880/13 BUDGET REPORT TO 28 FEBRUARY 2014**

The Budget Report was circulated, discussed and noted. The Town Clerk stated that the Advertising budget had been exceeded due to the need to advertise for staff and the co-option of a Councillor. He also said that the Forum line was misleading, as it showed very little expenditure during the year. The remaining monies were paid to the Forum at the end of the Financial Year, he thought that the monies should be paid at the beginning of the year.

Councillor Goldsworthy suggested that the payment to the Forum be made in two stages, to mirror the Councils receipt of the Precept from Cornwall Council. In response to a question he replied that Miscellaneous Items were those which did not have a dedicated line, this would be discussed under item 6.

## **881/13 AMENDMENT TO THE FORMAT OF INTERNAL BUDGETS**

The Town Clerk said that this item had been included as comment had been made at each Committee meeting about the way the information had been presented; Councillors wanted a more detailed account of expenditure.

It was suggested that additional training in the use of the SAGE accounting package would enable more detailed reports to be given. It was possible that this could be provided by either of the accountancy firms in the Town which could provide information and training to meet our needs. Some of the major changes would be for Reserves to be transferred as they were used, not at the end of the financial year, and for each item to have a line on the report. The allocation of salaries also needed to be considered.

Councillor Goldsworthy said that for the Property Committee he would like to see individual lines for rates, gas, electric and water plus all costs associated with the maintenance of the buildings such as labour and materials costs.

The Mayor proposed, Councillor Brooks seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED**

that the Town Clerk would approach the local accountants to see if they could provide the necessary training to the office staff. The training should also be available for the Chairs of all Committees and the members of the Finance Committee. The Town Clerk would report to the next meeting of this Committee and the Chair of each Committee would suggest how they would like the budget reports to be presented.

### **882/13 OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

The Town Clerk reported that, as requested, he had obtained a purchase price for the replacement photocopier, it was £6196 plus £1799 for the settlement of the existing lease, the total was £7995. The service agreement was the same for both a purchased or hired machine and covered replacement parts and labour and a four hour response time.

Members were in favour of purchasing the machine, the potential savings were around £1k per annum over a five year lease, but they were unhappy about the cost of the termination of the lease; they would prefer to defer the purchase until the lease had expired, and if necessary earmark a reserve for the machine.

Councillor Goldsworthy proposed, Councillor Brooks seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk would discuss the cost of settlement of the existing lease with the owner. If this was unsuccessful, the purchase of the new machine should be deferred until the present agreement expired, and a reserve be set up for the purchase of the new machine.

Councillor Goldsworthy proposed, Councillor Brooks seconded and the Committee **RESOLVED** that an Earmarked Reserve of £7000 be set up for for the purchase of a new colour photocopier.

### **883/13 PREPARATION FOR THE INTERNAL AUDIT BY KEN ABRAHAM**

The Town Clerk reported that the internal audit would take place on 29 April 2014. the Annual Return had been received and had to be returned by 20 June 2014. He had already been advised of some questions that would be asked and he wanted to take particular attention to Earmarked Reserves, General Reserves and Accruals.

### **884/13 UPDATE ON TIC SHOP ACCOUNTING PROCEDURE**

Councillor Brooks informed the Committee that advice had been sought from helpful shop owners in the Town, they had offered good advice which was under consideration. Comments made by Members included;

- The accountants that might offer the SAGE training might be able to advise on this
- It was confirmed that the TIC and Museum sales were kept separate
- Daily reconciliation / cashing up was suggested, as a must, by the Members of the Committee who keep shops
- In view of the increased retail activity, stock control was a major consideration to help guard against theft

Councillor Brooks suggested that the Town Clerk should discuss this with the TIC staff to ensure that the correct working practices were employed.

### **885/13 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCREASING REVENUE**

The Mayor said that the Council should not rely on the Precept for its income; it should be proactive to raise revenue. Better use might be made of the Refreshment Room, the Public Hall could also be used to show films and improvements made to Westbourne Gardens, such as the provision of a small bandstand. Grants were available for Community Projects, but for new items, not improvements to existing facilities. However, new fixtures adjacent to existing might result in improvements to the existing. She then asked for suggestions;

- The Public Hall had been used recently for a wedding reception and had been attractively decorated
- Could the Hall be licenced for wedding ceremony?
- Commercial kitchen facilities would be needed, some hirers had complained about keeping food warm during service

The Town Clerk said that the Council should actively look to see what grants might be available. Councillor Pascoe produced a leaflet from Community Led Local Development via CLLD LEADER in Cornwall. CLLD LEADER was an innovative way of integrating and distributing investments from the next EU programme to create jobs and achieve sustainable economic growth at a local level. By offering a bottom up approach, it allows businesses, social enterprises and the voluntary and community sectors in an area, to be directly involved in shaping its own regeneration and economic development.

### **886/13 GRANTS**

#### **1. Jessica Lamble, Scouting**

An application had been received for a grant towards the cost of attending the International Jamboree in Japan next year. Members agreed that the Council did not make grants to individuals for personal use, but they thought that one of the trust funds operated by the Council might.

It was agreed that a relevant application form should be provide to the applicant.

#### **2. CHICKS**

An award of £200 had already been made to this organisation in this financial year. It was agreed that they be instructed to reapply in the next financial year for a grant.

#### **3. Liskeard Ploughman's Fayre**

An application for a grant of £300 had been received from Tony Wood who was organising this event.

\*The Deputy Mayor declared an interest in this item and left the meeting at 8.52 pm.

The Town Clerk introduced this item and gave a brief description of the intention of the Fayre, which would be held on the nearest Saturday to the Feast of Assumption. The Town's Charter permitted a three day Fayre at this time. Members discussed the proposed Fayre;

- It was worthy of support
- It was a new venture for the Town and should be helped to get operational
- It would be an asset to the Town
- It was in the early stages of planning, many details had yet to be firmed up
- If a grant was awarded the monies did not have to be passed over now, it could be awarded in principle and paid when details were confirmed
- Concern was expressed that if this grant was agreed, it would open the floodgates to all sorts of applications

The Committee **RESOLVED** to invite the organiser of the event to attend the next meeting of the Finance Committee to inform Members of the purpose of the Fayre.

#### **887/13 CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

#### **888/13 ANY OTHER RELEVANT BUSINESS**

##### **1. Town Council Card**

The Mayor reported that she had received invitations to events, from other Councils, which were contained in a "greetings card" which showed photographs of the Town from which the invitation had been sent. She suggested that the Town Council could have such a card; it could be used at Christmas and for other notable events such as Mayor Choosing.

The Town Clerk replied that he thought that the Town did have such a card with the Town's Crest on it, inserts could be added for invitations and greetings such as Christmas, he would make investigations.

#### **889/13 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.

#### **890/13 ITEMS REFERRED FROM THE MAIN PART OF THE AGENDA**

The Cattle Market

#### **891/13 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.

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Members ratified the discussions held in closed session.

**892/13      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next Finance and Strategy Committee meeting would be at 7.30 pm on 22 April 2014.

The Deputy Mayor gave an advance apology for this meeting.