

LISKEARD TOWN COUNCIL

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4 March 2015

MONTHLY MEETING of the PROPERTY COMMITTEE
will be held in the Council Chamber at 7.30 pm on
10 March 2015

AGENDA

The Chairman will advise those present of Housekeeping matters.

Members of the public are invited to attend and take part in a public session for 15 minutes prior to the start of the meeting.

1. Housekeeping
2. To receive Apologies
3. To receive Declarations of Members' Interests both Registerable and Non-Registerable
4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 10 February 2015
5. Clerks report – for information
6. Budget Report to 28 February 2015
7. Hot Desk use of spare desk/phone line/broadband connection in the Members Room – to consider whether Council would be willing to allow the Members Room on a fees and cost payment basis.
8. Seagulls – Discussion on advice from Looe Town Council and Truro City Council.
9. Council Objective Setting – to consider the results of the Objective setting activity and how it might impact on the Council's Property function.
10. Correspondence – Allotments Association (see attached)
11. Date of next meeting 14 April 2015

PART II

12. Lease Renewal – Chris Munson – Studio Winter The Guildhall (Small Room) –
Recommendation – to renew the lease as requested. To review the annual
rent.

13. Former tenant Unit 4, The Arcade, Guildhall – to consider actions on recovery.

Stephen Vinson
TOWN CLERK

5. Clerk's Report – For Information – Property 10th March 2015

Meeting & Action	Update	When
P Sept Set up Public Hall working group to consider use.	Public Hall working group met and considered range and scope of issue. Report at agenda Item 7 regarding Hot Desking in the Members Room.	TC Mar 2015
P Sept Allotments – improve untidy plots by inspection and follow up.	5th January additional plot given up by previous plothead. This is a large plot. There are 6 individuals and couples on the allotments waiting list. One expression of interest dating back to 2010, 3 from 2013, 1 in 2014 and 1 in 2015. Plot let. See attached letter from the Allotments Association under Agenda 10. Correspondence.	TC Mar 2015
P Dec	Maudlin Farm Amenity Land – Cornwall Council have been notified of the Town Councils views. These have been passed onto the Bank dealing with case.	TC Mar 2015
P Feb 2015	Following approval at Feb Council an application has been made to the Government under its Rural Community Energy Fund for £19,750 to support a Liskeard Town based renewable energy assessment and business plan programme. Letters of support were submitted by the Town Forum and the Liskerret Centre.	TC Mar 2015

7. Hot Desk use of the spare desk/phone line/broadband connection in the Members Room – to consider whether Council would be willing to allow the use of the spare desk in the Members Room on a fees and cost payment basis.

There are two desks in the Members Room. The room has a telephone line and broadband connection. It has been suggested that this might prove suitable for use as a hot desk for hire on a fee paying basis. If the concept is approved by Council a fee for the hot desk could be set to cover a proportion of broadband and telephone costs. Should it prove necessary this might also cover the use of photocopying and stationery.

Interest has already been expressed in this possible arrangement by the new South East Cornwall Local Area Action Group. This will cover an area from Torpoint to St Austell and Liskeard would prove a good central location to base their proposed one member of staff. The set up will eventually administer a £1.7 million programme of regeneration grant moneys for the area. They have already booked one year's worth of meetings in the Long Room for their board meetings. It is hoped that the benefits to us and the Town as a whole would be:

- Increased income from the letting of office hot desk and meeting room space in the Public Hall
- Increased knowledge and awareness of the Liskeard Town and the various regeneration projects put forward by local partners. This might well increase the number of local projects receiving funding under the next programme.

Recommendation: That the Council RESOLVES to adopt the principal of the hot desk proposal.

8. Seagulls – Discussion It has been suggested that it might be worth a general discussion on the issue of seagulls. Contact has been made with Sara Mason at C.A.L.C. with a view as to which Town Councils might have a good approach to the issue. It was advised that Looe Town Council and Truro City Council would be worth contacting.

Looe Town Council report that they have previously tried both egg oiling and egg pricking and found them not to be effective. They have considered the use of birds of prey. It has been suggested that the use of a birds of prey might well disturb the birds away to another part of the town.

For the last 5 years Looe Town Council have been using false eggs weighted with sand. The contractor they currently use is also that retained by the MoD to deal with the seagull issue at HMS Raleigh. The contractor tackles 70 – 80 houses per year. Looe Town Council wait until the birds have started nesting and then call in the contractor. The contractor usually place 2 to 3 eggs per nest and returns in the season to check. The annual cost to Looe Town Council is £2,000. This does not include the false eggs which have been purchased and owned by the Town Council. The Town Council involved the Guides in the actual filling of the hollow egg with sand. This has the benefit of helping to educate young people on the issue of seagull control.

Truro City Council The Clerk at Truro City Council used previously to be an environment health specialist including dealing with landfill sites. His advice was that seagulls are very clever and very aggressive. He gave examples of the seagulls waiting in adjacent fields until the landfill staff went home and then descending within minutes to commence feeding. He also recounted seagulls attacking birds of prey when the birds of prey used were of the smaller species. His advice is that food sources need to be controlled as this is always what attracts vermin. Hence, Truro City Council try to encourage the wider community to modify their buildings and food waste disposal to make the city less attractive to seagulls. Attached is the page from their website regarding

seagull control. It should be noted they do not undertake any form of egg pricking, oiling, false egg placement nor use birds of prey.

Liskeard Town Council The Town Council has previously used:

- egg oiling – which was organised by the County Council on their own building stock and the Town Council took part. This only lasted for one year.
- weighted false eggs – the Town Council obtained and still has weighted false eggs for use on the Public Hall. They were used in conjunction with an initial batch of seagull spikes. The weighted false eggs were only used for a year. The seagull spikes were extending and the roof silver lined to deter seagulls from landing.
- Seagull scarer – this is still in the clock tower of the Guildhall. It appears that there were complaints from adjacent residential properties about the volume and timings of the noise.

Conclusion The availability of food appears key to attracting seagulls. The Town Council could modify the seagull control guidance of Truro City Council and put it on its website and make the information available to the Chambers of Commerce, Traders Association and South East Cornwall Tourism Association businesses.

Re-use of the seagull scarer if it has previously upset residents is not advisable. We do have some weighted false eggs. That might help reduce the cost of using that method. We do not have an approved budget for such measures which needs to be considered if the Committee consider that we should initiate any form of active control beyond an information notice.

9. LISKEARD COUNCIL DRAFT OBJECTIVES Following the last meeting of Council an objective setting workshop was held. The results have been collated and are reproduced below. These give a good range of themes for the Council to consider. The Service Committees have been asked to take a look at the objectives and see what changes need to be made.

The activities of the Property Committee fit under certain headings but could be more precisely named. For example, under:

1. Improve Social and Leisure Facilities in Liskeard – mention could be made of our own Rapsons Multi Use Games Area, Thorn Park and not least the space provided in the Public Hall for letting to a whole range of activities.

2. Boost Prosperity and Increase Employment Opportunities in Liskeard.
- mention could be made of our 6 business units in the Guildhall. etc.

Task Consider the key areas for comments and change in 1 – 8 below.

Proposed text of objectives is shown in bold and capitals. Bullet points under each objective are contents of post-it notes from the workshop for further information.

The idea is for a set of broad objectives to establish the overall direction to May 2017. These will be backed up by more detailed operational plans.

Key areas for comments/changes:

a) Are these the right areas for our objectives? Do we need to add any others, especially around maintaining current Town Council functions?

b) Do we want to change the precise wording of any of the objectives?

1 IMPROVE SOCIAL AND LEISURE FACILITIES IN LISKEARD

- Better place. Evening social. Activities A. Families B, Youth C. Young Professionals
- To redefine the town as a positive place.
- Community more youth facilities
- Improve play equipment and spaces
- Put on more activities in Westbourne Gardens
- Continue the work started for creating a play area on Maudlin site
- Things that might bring in people and provide for community e.g. play centre

2 BOOST PROSPERITY AND INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN LISKEARD

- Promote town to inward investors to create jobs
- Boost prosperity. Promote Liskeard as a key hub for business and tourism in SE Cornwall
- To reinstate Liskeard's position as a true market town
- Hub of the area
- To increase employment opportunities
- Prosperity. Employment
- Promote. Better place to live work and play. Boost prosperity
- May 2017 Provision of employment opportunities
- Focus on moving forward conditions to improve employment opportunities
- No more houses without real jobs
- To attract less traditional employment
- Listen to the business community
- Liskeard better place. To attract new businesses to the town

3 MARKET WHAT LISKEARD HAS TO OFFER TO LOCAL PEOPLE, BUSINESSES AND VISITORS

- Advertise. To promote –radio / mags / brown signs !
- Market the town more widely
- Good use of websites
- Use websites to promote community groups and events
- Encourage everyone to look at the website more
- Good use of websites
- Market the town more widely
- Promote the town to encourage visitor numbers e.g. our world heritage site walking centre ?
- Boost prosperity. Promote the virtues of Liskeard as a tourist destination

- Promotion comes from good marketing. What is our identity?
- Attract more visitors to Liskeard
- Work with local businesses to promote town centre
- Identity. Give back/renew town ID
- Promote Liskeard. To find a/the distinctive USP for Liskeard and market it ruthlessly. (Branding in other words)
- “Liskeard means business”
- We are a market town but hopefully with a 21st Century twist

4 ACHIEVE THE WISHES OF THE COMMUNITY ON LAND USE THROUGH THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- Use the Neighbourhood Plan to help in economic regeneration
- Make the neighbourhood plan work
- Achieve by 2017. Put in place the Neighbourhood Plan
- Drive forward the Neighbourhood Plan for a community-validated vision of the town
- Achieve the wishes of the community through the Neighbourhood Plan

5 ENGAGE AND COMMUNICATE WELL WITH LOCAL PEOPLE AROUND KEY ISSUES

- Communicate and engage with the disconnected
- Listen to our community about what they feel strongly about even if we might feel in disagreement e.g. parking issues
- Create smarter quicker ways of engaging public
- Councillor photos in Town Crier so they know who we are!
- Community. Social media – getting people used to “doing it for themselves”.
- Devolution means getting local people and businesses to do what CC used to do

6 WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS, BUILDING THE COMMUNITY AND INCREASING LOCAL RESILIENCE

- Resilience. Focus on youth. Nurture our 18-25 year olds – using RIO etc.
- More resilient. Reduce dependency on external resources e.g. by encouraging a community-wide renewable energy scheme
- Resilient
- Communicate with – schools,shop,businesses

- Listen
- Strengthen the partnership across public, private and voluntary sector
- Support other organisations and groups when they are doing something beneficial to the town
- Stronger sense of community – give people some “ownership” of the town through community schemes such as share issues for energy scheme
- Bring together those working on health and well being especially of the vulnerable in one shared plan
- Identify organisations and businesses with resources (land, money, knowledge) that we can work with for the benefit of the town

7 GEAR UP THE TOWN COUNCIL'S INTERNAL ORGANISATION TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS

- Town Council more effective. Vision and longer term objectives.
- Focus on a limited number costed priorities to ensure they are achieved
- May 2017 Get gold Quality Award (and Power of Competence)
- Spend more time on innovation
- Research what other towns have done
- Councillors use their time more effectively

8 WORK TOGETHER WELL AS A TEAM OF COUNCILLORS AND STAFF

- Team work between the members
- TC being effective. Enjoy our differences
- That we have fairly and honestly represented our community (electorate) and not just personal ambitions.
- To accept that we have different views but we work together

10. Correspondence – Allotments Association (see attached)

PART II

12. Lease Renewal – Chris Munson – Studio Winter The Guildhall (Small Room) - Recommendation - to renew the lease as requested. To review the annual rent.

Lease Renewal Options The lease of the Small Room at the Guildhall is due to expire. The tenant has contacted the Council asking for a renewal. In the course of discussions as to the most appropriate type of agreement and term length possible future development options for the Guildhall were discussed including the forward commercial plan of the company. The latter factor is strictly commercial in confidence.

The potential for a tenancy at will with no defined term length was suggested. This would allow the Council some degree of control in the short term should a renovation option prove possible in the next two to three years. However, the tenant indicated that this did not offer the same security of tenure of a lease of a defined period.

The tenant is of the view that he has sufficient work for a period of at least three years and possibly longer. He did express the view that for the purposes of considering a comprehensive review of options that it might be beneficial to run his new agreement to the same determination date as the other unit on that same level of the Guildhall. Originally, the company itself occupied the whole of the first floor and only gave up the largest unit upon the restructure of the business due to the death of the senior partner.

Interestingly, Chris Munson himself had suggested to the senior partner how a scheme could be designed to both increase the number of office units accommodated on the first floor and increase the area of the ground floor units by taking the frontage out to Fore Street. This did not go beyond the concept stage to the point where a structural survey of the Guildhall was undertaken and planning and listed building consent would need to be achieved. These ideas conform quite closely with

those that have occurred in discussions between the Town Clerk and Chairman of Property.

If the Council is minded to offer a new three year agreement it would run from April 2015 to April 2018. If the Council is minded to run the determination dates of both agreements for the two letting units of the first floor of the Guildhall this would run from April 2015 until September 2018.

Rent Review The rent payable for Studio Winter is currently £2,000 per annum. It is recommended that a rent increase of 5% for the period of lease is also approved. Hence the new annual rental would be £2,100.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Council **RESOLVES** to offer Chris Munson trading as Studio Winter a new lease on the Small Office in the Guildhall with a preferred determination date of September 2018.

That the Council **RESOLVES** to review the rent on the Small Office in the Guildhall to £2,100 per annum for the new lease period.

13. Former Tenant Unit 4, The Arcade, The Guildhall – to consider actions on recovery

Background Stella Medlin trading as “New 2 You” was a tenant of Unit 4, The Arcade, The Guildhall. She occupied the Unit from 1st January 2014 until 23rd September 2014. The annual rent was £5,000. This was initially scheduled to be paid quarterly in advance. Following a request to assist in the cash flow of the business the rent payment schedule was changed to monthly in advance.

Problem In April 2014 the tenant reported and it was noted that there was a significant and localised damp problem. Further investigation suggested that there might be a down pipe in an internal wall that was leaking. A contractor was retained to make repairs. On removing the wall panels it was shown that asbestos panels were part of the structure and repairs were halted. A suitable contractor for dealing with asbestos was

retained and the once the asbestos removed the repairs undertaken to the Unit. There was indeed an old cast iron down pipe within the wall that had cracked which could have been as a result of very heavy rain in the early part of last year.

Tenant The tenant indicated to the Council that she was giving up tenancy of the Unit 4 on 23rd September 2014. She is no longer trading.

Issue The tenant was invoiced for rent and water rates on 28 August 2014. The amount due being £332.48. The period being until the 23rd September 2014 the date at which her occupancy ceased.

Former Tenant's Initial View The former tenants' initial view was that the goods that she had stored in Unit 4 had been damaged by damp and that this was the fault of the Council. As a consequence she believed that she did not need to pay the further amount of rent to take her up to her determination date. The Council refereed the case to its insurance company which after due consideration came to the view that the Council was not to blame for the problem. Hence, the rent should be paid.

Former Tenant's Revised View The former tenant has continued to fail to answer correspondence regarding paying the outstanding amount. In discussions with the Town Clerk, the former tenant has indicated that she believes that the rent for her unit should have been lower during the period that the unit was being repaired in August and September. Hence, she should not pay the outstanding £332.48.

Conclusion The former tenant is technically liable for the payment of rent. Does the Committee feel that on this occasion the outstanding rent should not be pursued.

