

**POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 25 November 2019

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Bolger (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne	D Enright
	O Collins	V Gwatkin
	L Duncan	R Smith
Officers:	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	4 members of the public.	

F470 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr David Harvey.

F471 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

F472 MINUTES

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2019.

- a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2019 to be signed by the Chair.
- b) **RESOLVED:** there were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed at the meeting.

F473 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned so that Mr Eric Marshall could address the Committee on behalf of Witney Music Festival and Faye Carrick could address the Committee on behalf of LibFest.

F474 GRANTS AND SUBSIDISED LETTINGS

- a) This item was moved up the agenda with the express permission of the Chair so that the members of the public could hear the discussion.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk on annual grants and subsidised lettings. These were separate from the other pots of grant funding.

Members agreed that both the Witney Music Festival and LibFest should have the rental of The Leys fully subsidised for their events in June 2020.

The Committee discussed Homestart who had given a presentation earlier in the year and who had been unsuccessful in applying for a grant previously. It was felt strongly that they offered a vital service to members of the community and families and that a budget should be set. As there had been no formal grant application at this point, it was suggested that a provisional sum be built into next year's budget. Members then discussed funding for youth work and it was agreed that rather than separating these two items, one budget covering Children and Youth should be included at a level of £30,000.

Members also wanted to increase the annual grant CAB to £2,000. The grant for the Carnival to cover the toilets was discussed and members felt that it was reasonable for it to stay at the same level.

- b) Members received and considered the report of the Democratic Services Officer including letters of thanks, and the grant applications.

RECOMMENDED:

- a) i) that the report be noted;
- ii) that in respect of subsidised lettings - Witney Music Festival be granted the full cost for its hire of the Leys - £2,880, and LibFest be granted the full cost for its hire of The Leys - £1,400, for their events in June 2020;
- iii) that the following items be put into the 2020/21 budget

Organisation	Amount	Code/Notes
West Oxon CAB	£2,000	4101/407
Witney & District Twinning	£500	4160/407 – for admin
Witney & District Twinning	£65	4161/407 -5 uses of Gallery Rm for meetings
Witney & District Twinning	£1,000 + 2 free uses of C/Ex	Towards Anniversary celebrations – April 2020
Volunteer Link-Up	£500	4162/407
Carnival	£2,000	4104/407 – xmas lights switch on
Carnival	£1,100	4104/407 – toilets for Carnival
Witney Town Band	£500	4100/407 – in return for them playing at 3 WTC events
Witney Dementia Alliance	£1,000	4107/407 – Witney in Blue

		Day
Oxfordshire Play Association	£1,000	4108/407 – Play Day in Witney
WOCT – West Oxon Community Transport	£21,000	4167/407 – Town Centre Bus Service
Children & Youth	£30,000	Towards the provision of children and youth services

- iv) that the budget for general grant dispersal for 2020/21 be set at £10,000;
- b) i) that the report and correspondence be noted;
- ii) that the following grants be made under the General Power of Competence, and that recipients are requested to acknowledge the Council's contribution on all relevant publicity:-

Witney Music Society	£50	Towards artists fees
Lower Windrush Valley Choral Society	£190	To hire professionals
Dance Creative	£500	To run fall prevention classes
Lunch Time Recitals	£250	For fees of visiting soloists
Witney Photo Group	£235	Subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange for 20 June 2020

- iii) that the Witney Model and Collectors Club be offered in house training by the Town Council and if this is not accepted, then the grant should be resubmitted at the next meeting with a quotation from a reputable training company.
- iv) that the application from Witney New Life Church be turned down on the grounds that there are so few members and that the Town Council's grant terms do not permit grants to religious organisations.

F475 OFFICER'S WORK PROGRAMME

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

In response to a Members question she advised there were some complications with the ownership of Woodgreen due to the unadopted road at Little Green and that Unterhaching Park was being dealt with by the solicitor.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

F476 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the following schedule of payments be approved:

Cheque No's	In the sum of:	Account
Cheque 101115, DDRs and Standing Orders (Sept 2019)	£85,930.84	General Cashbook 1
Cheques 32360-32387 and DDs (Sept 2019)	£59,617.87	Imprest Cashbook 2
Cheque 101116-18, DDRs and Standing Orders (Oct 2019)	£59,980.55	General Cashbook 1
Cheques 32388-32428 and DDs (Oct 2019)	£72,690.84	Imprest Cashbook 2

F477 **INTERNAL AUDIT - FIRST INTERIM REPORT FOR 2019/20**

The Committee received and considered the First Interim Report of the Internal Auditor. A member congratulated the Town Clerk on receiving such a good audit report.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

F478 **FINANCIAL REPORTS - REVISED BUDGET 2019/20 AND PROPOSED BUDGET 2020/21**

- a) Revised revenue budget 2019/20 and base revenue budget for 2020/21

Unfortunately, the report for this item was not available due to constraints on the Town Clerk's time. She explained that, in consultation with the Chairs of Committees, she had agreed an extension with the District Council on the submission of the Precept demand and it was her intention to make a full presentation of the draft budget to the whole Council at the meeting scheduled for 16 December 2019.

- b) Schedule of proposed Burial Fees and Charges 2020/21

Members received and considered a schedule of updated Burial charges for the forthcoming financial year. This had taken into account the new legislation of The Children's Funeral Fund in which the Council would reclaim charges. There would be no costs payable for parents.

c) Schedule of proposed Hall Hire Fees and Charges 2020/21

Members received and considered an updated schedule of Hall hire fees and charges for 2020/21. The Town Clerk explained that the new Venue Manager was also working on charges for sundry items such as refreshments etc and this would be brought back to a future meeting of the Halls & Greens Spaces Committee.

d) Schedule of proposed Recreation Fees and Charges 2020/21

The Town Clerk explained that these charges also included the fees to the Clubs, and had been agreed by the Halls & Green Spaces Committee.

e) Revised Capital & Special Revenue Projects Programme 2019/20

Members received and considered the revised Capital and Special Revenue Projects Programme 2019/20 which had been tabled by the Town Clerk prior to the meeting. She explained that this was the current years projects, and the current position of the ones progressed to date.

f) Revenue Growth Items and Capital/Special Revenue Projects Programme 2020/21 and beyond

The Town Clerk had circulated a schedule of projects so far for inclusion in the Council's budget for 2020/21 and beyond. The Chair asked if the Committee would agree to setting a budget for the Climate and Biodiversity Sub Committee. A discussion followed and it was felt that whilst setting a budget was necessary, it did not need to be too substantial as a lot of the work would be lobbying and influencing others. It was agreed to set a provisional budget of £10,000 for 2020/21.

The Town Clerk also brought to Members attention the paper from Cllr Prosser on the provision of a 5K Health Route in the Town, which she had circulated ahead of the meeting. Members were unsure about rushing into a Health Route for the Town at this point as there were many questions that needed answering. These may include the possibility of painting blue lines in a conservation area and what would happen if work was needed under the pavement which had been painted, particularly as he was requested a budget of £17,000. It was agreed to refer this to the Halls and Green Spaces Committee for further discussion.

RESOLVED:

- a) that the Town Clerk would work towards making a presentation on the draft budget to the Extraordinary Full Council on 16 December 2019;
- b) that the updated Burials charges be agreed;
- c) that the updates Halls charges be agreed;
- d) that the updated Recreation charges be agreed;
- e) that the revised Capital and Special Revenue Projects Programme 2019/20 be noted and;

- f) that the Revenue Growth Items and Special Revenue Projects Programme 2020/21 and beyond be noted; that £10,000 be added to the budget for the Climate and Biodiversity Sub Committee and that Cllr Prosser's proposal for a 5K health route be referred to the Halls and Green Spaces Committee for further investigation/debate.

F479 **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.

F480 **PROPERTY MATTERS**

The Town Clerk gave the committee a confidential verbal update on situation relating to the lease of Langdale Hall to the ICE Centre.

RESOLVED: that the confidential verbal report from the Town Clerk be noted.

F481 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the verbal report of the Personnel Sub-Committee held earlier that evening.

RESOLVED: that the confidential verbal report be noted and the recommendations contained therein approved.

The meeting closed at: 8.20 pm

Chair