

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

Held on Monday, 15 July 2019

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

Present:

Councillor R Bolger (Chair)

| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| Councillors: | L Duncan D Enright V Gwatkin | A D Harvey J Aitman (In place of L Ashbourne) |
| Officers: | Nicky Cayley Adam Clapton Sharon Groth | Democratic Services Officer Office Manager Town Clerk |
| Others: | 1 member of the public. | |

F343 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs Ashbourne, Collins and Smith.

F344 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

F345 MINUTES

The committee received and considered the minutes of the Policy, Governance and Finance meetings held on 17 June and 26 June 2019.

a) **RESOLVED:** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2019 and the Special Meeting held on 26 June 2019 be signed by the Chairman.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:** Min F265 – a member asked if there had been any resolution regarding Witney Feast. The Town Clerk replied that this was an ongoing situation with negotiations still taking place.

F346 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned in line with standing order 45 to receive public participation from Mrs P Chirgwin on behalf of Volunteer Link Up.

F347 **GRANTS**

This item was taken next with the express permission of the Chair, in order that Mrs Chirgwin could listen to the debate on the grant application from Volunteer Link Up.

a) Grant Award Policy

The Committee received and considered the revised policy with changes made as requested at the previous Committee meeting. All members were happy that this was correct.

b) Discretionary Grant Applications

The Committee received and considered the report of the Democratic Services Officer and the grant applications.

The requests were: -

| | | |
|----------------------|------|---|
| 1. Joss Searchlight | £500 | 4100/407 to support delivery of Winter Wonderland |
| 2. Volunteer Link Up | £125 | 4100/407 to cover one evening's hire of The Corn Exchange |

Members discussed both requests and agreed that both were worthy causes. Winter wonderland delivered a great event to the community and Volunteer Link Up also delivered great benefit to local residents. All would be welcome to attend the AGM to be held on 17 September in the Corn Exchange.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the revised grant policy as presented be agreed.

RESOLVED:

2. that the report and correspondence be noted;
3. that the following grants be made under the General Power of Competence:

| | | |
|-------------------|------|--|
| Joss Searchlight | £500 | to support delivery of Winter Wonderland |
| Volunteer Link Up | £125 | to cover one evening's hire of The Corn Exchange for the AGM |

4. that the organisations receiving funding be asked to acknowledge the Town Council's financial support within their publicity and literature;
5. that a report is sent to the Town Council illustrating how the grants have been spent by each organisation

F348 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk as circulated with the agenda and the payment schedules from both the general and imprest accounts. This was a control measure and also to ensure that the Committee and Council did due diligence.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the bank reconciliations and statements be noted;
3. that the following schedule of accounts be approved:

| Cheque No's | In the sum of: | Account |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Cheques 101108-110, DDRs and Standing Orders (May 2019) | £57, 429.35 | General Cashbook 1 |
| Cheques 32210 – 32243 and DDs (May 2019) | £75, 306.85 | Imprest Cashbook 2 |

F349 FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, containing spending recommendations from the Halls and Green Spaces Committee.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the recommendations as detailed in the report of the Town Clerk from the spending committees be agreed.

F350 REVIEW OF COMMITTEE STRUCTURE/CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Office Manager. Whilst the number of Committees had been reduced from five to four, a lot of working parties had been agreed and Officers were trying to mitigate the circumstances for both officers and members. The Office Manager had tried to schedule in working parties rather than leaving them to be arranged ad hoc. He had also produced a draft calendar for the 2020-21 year reducing the cycles of meetings to four.

The Chair of Halls and Green Spaces Committee stated that she was very concerned about reducing the number of meetings of that Committee as the workload was heavy and things often needed quick decisions.

Another member commented that the Council may have to try it and review it at a later date.

Members discussed the issues and were worried that less meetings would mean longer meetings and that there might not be enough time to give due consideration to the democratic

process. Suggestions made included use of agency staff and making reports shorter to just bullet points.

The Town Clerk suggested that now Committees had delegated powers, perhaps Full Council could meet less.

Members agreed that there was nothing that could be done this year as the calendar was already published, but accepted the suggested timings for working parties and sub committees.

However, Officers were requested to carry out further work on the draft calendar for next year to include five or six meetings for committees but reducing Full Council to four. This should be taken to Full Council on 29 July.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report is noted and;
2. that the Committee approves the amended calendar for the remainder of the municipal year 2019-20 – inserting sub-committees and working parties;
3. that Officers carry out further work to the proposed calendar for the municipal year 2020-21 to set the number of Committee meetings to five or six per annum and reduce Council to four;
4. that the Council agrees that unless where absolutely necessary, meetings should end after 2 hours per Standing Order 48(a);
5. that Sub-committee and Working Party meetings are scheduled during the day where possible;
6. that Sub-committee and Working Party meetings are held in the Town Hall Council Chamber where possible, subject to a Committee room becoming available in the downstairs building of the Town Hall;
7. that no Committee, Sub-committee or Working Party meetings be held before scheduled ones unless it is absolutely necessary because of urgency and the need to meet;
8. that potential bookings for dates and times at the Corn Exchange which would clash with committees are discussed between the Bookings Office and Town Hall; again subject to a Committee room becoming available in the downstairs building of the Town Hall;
9. that Planning & Development committee meetings be held in the Foyer of the Corn Exchange in order that the Committee Clerk is able to determine who is in the building at the end of the meeting and can then lock up, subject to agreement with the Chair of the Committee

F351 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.

F352 **PROPERTY MATTERS**

The Committee received a report which had been circulated to the previous Council from the Council's Property Agent and Solicitor concerning the Langdale Hall. The Town Clerk provided a verbal update on a recent meeting with the tenants and the Leader of the Council.

RESOLVED: that the report and the update be noted.

F353 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee held on 10 July 2019.

RECOMMENDED: that the report be noted and the recommendations contained therein approved.

The meeting closed at: 8.05 pm

Chair