

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 15th FEBRUARY 2017 in the Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown (Chair), Bull, French, Lanxon, Leonard, Murtagh, Oxenham and Palmer

In attendance: David Pooley (Town Clerk), Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk).

F/16/55) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Krishnan and Walker.

F/16/56) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

F/16/57) Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

F/16/58) Minutes of meeting held on 5th December 2016

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 5th December 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Councillor Lanxon arrived during the next item

F/16/59) Matters to Note

Councillor Brown advised that Dr Joanie Willett was still willing to talk to the Town Council about social media but that it would now probably be after the May election.

The Town Clerk advised that further to minute number **F/16/47** the cost of the second ride on mower was £15,205.

F/16/60) Public participation

There were no Members of the public present.

F/16/61) Standing Orders

The Clerk advised that following a number of test cases and experience in other areas the Cornwall Association of Local Councils (CALC) has issued guidance on suggested amendments to Sections 13 and 14 of the Model Standing Orders which the Town Council has adopted.

The Clerk explained that at the present time the Standing Orders suggest that any Code of Conduct complaint received from Cornwall Council should be reported immediately to the full Council. CALC now recommend that the Standing Orders should be amended to reflect that any Code of Conduct complaint received should remain confidential to the Proper Officer of the Council until such time as the matter has been concluded and then reported to the full Council.

The revised Standing Orders have also made it clearer that where a non-registerable interest arises, a Councillor may remain in the room to address the meeting, provide a short statement and answer questions for no more than three minutes before leaving the room at the request of the Chairman.

The Clerk stressed that any Member with a pecuniary interest must declare their interest and leave the meeting before the item that they have declared an interest in is discussed and must not return until a decision has been made.

Members made the following comments/observations:

- Whether the Appeal period of a Code of Conduct complaint needs to be taken into consideration before notifying the Town Council;
- The need for Code of Conduct Training for all Members within the first six months after an Election;
- The need for Members to regularly update their Register of Interests;
- The need to publicise the Code of Conduct interactive quiz on Cornwall Council's website to all Members.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the amendments proposed by the Cornwall Association of Local Councils be incorporated into the Town Council's Standing Orders.

It was **FURTHER RECOMMENDED** that the Clerk should:

1. Put suitable arrangements in place for all Members to have Code of Conduct Training within six months of an election;
2. Put suitable arrangements in place to regularly remind Members to update their Register of Interests;
3. Bring Members' attention to the Code of Conduct interactive quiz on Cornwall Council's website.

F/16/62) Budget Monitoring Report

The Clerk drew Members' attention to the variances identified in the Budget Monitoring Report 2016/17 – April to January including:

- Staffing costs down due to later recruitment of the grounds maintenance staff;
- Savings on legal fees;
- An increase in insurance costs due to the expansion of the Town Council;
- An increase in subscriptions due to the approved Health & Safety and HR consultancy support;
- A slight increase in car park set up costs;
- A backlog of repairs and maintenance in the parks.

Arising from a question, the Clerk confirmed that although Cornwall Council are still responsible for bus shelters, the Town Council appoints a contractor to clean them periodically.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

F/16/63) Health and Safety Policy and Procedures

The Town Clerk explained that in conjunction with the Council's consultants, Ellis Whittam, a Health and Safety Policy and handbook has been produced and handed to the four Grounds Maintenance staff. In addition, the Council's Operations Manager has instigated a comprehensive system of risk assessments and safe working practices and has completed almost all of the actions identified in the recent Ellis Whittam Health and Safety assessment.

Members made the following comments/observations:

- The reference to Chief Executive/Managing Director be changed to Town Clerk within the Policy Statements;
- The requirement for all contractors to be advised of their Health and Safety responsibilities;
- All staff should receive an induction including Health and Safety training;
- All Members should be made aware of their Health and Safety responsibilities.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. The draft Health and Safety Policy statement be approved;
2. The draft environmental policy statement be approved;
3. The Town Clerk be authorised to approve and issue an employees' handbook to staff covering appropriate health and safety issues;
4. Health and Safety matters be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at least annually;
5. Members note their responsibility with regard to Health and Safety.

It was further **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. Any reference to Chief Executive/Managing Director be changed to Town Clerk and Company be changed to Council within the Policy Statements;
2. All new staff receive an induction including health and safety training.

F/16/64) Risk Management

The Clerk explained that the documentation before Members related to the Strategic Risk Management of the Town Council and that the operational risks were covered within the Operation Manager's regime of risk assessments and safe working practices.

It was **RESOLVED** that the updated Risk Management Strategy, Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategic Risk Register be approved.

F/16/65) Treasury Management

The Clerk advised that the Treasury Management Strategy remains cautious. The Town Council has no borrowing, but the principles of borrowing are contained within the Strategy should the Town Council wish to do so in the future. It was noted that the Town Council has investment accounts with Cornwall Council and NatWest Bank.

Arising from a question, the Clerk explained the financial controls with regard to the movement of monies between the Bank Accounts and the on-line banking recently set up.

The Clerk **AGREED** to check the maximum amount of funds which could be transferred out of the Town Council's Bank Account in any single transaction.

It was **RESOLVED** that the report be noted and the Treasury Management Strategy be approved for a further year.

F/16/66) Insurance Review

The Town Clerk advised that he had reviewed and updated the asset register as at 8th February 2017 and explained that all items of either high value or of operational importance are insured. He also recommended that due to the increase in the Council's turnover the fidelity guarantee cover should be increased from £500,000 to £1,000,000.

Councillor Bull advised that the Gaynor Ralph, Cornish Mine painting was a past Mayor's gift from herself in 2009.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The asset register and the level of the insurance provided in relation to each asset be noted;
2. The fidelity guarantee cover be increased from £500,000 to £1,000,000.
3. The words "Past Mayor's gift from Councillor Bull – 2009" be inserted at Asset Number 41.

F/16/67) Car Park Service

The Town Clerk updated Members on the work to date to enable the transfer of the Priory Car Park and Tregonissey Lane End car parks to the Town Council with effect from 1st April 2017. The Clerk explained that a number of contracts had been put in place including:

- Car Park Enforcement
- Cash Collection
- Maintenance of the car park machines
- Mobile phone payments
- Season tickets
- Pay and display tickets

In addition, car park signage has been designed reflecting the Town Council's details and arrangements have been put in place for the car park machines to be re-programmed with effect from the 1st April 2017.

The Car Park Order will be signed shortly and statutory notices published. The order will provide for a reduction of car park charges for 3 and 4 hour periods and will permit the trial concessions approved by the Council.

Members made the following comments/observations:

- Support for the work so far;
- The need to monitor the enforcement service level agreement.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The measures adopted to date be noted and endorsed;
2. The Town Clerk be authorised to sign the Service Level Agreement with Cornwall Council for enforcement services;
3. The Town Clerk be authorised to proceed with the signage as outlined in the report.

F/16/68) Library Service Devolution update

The Town Clerk explained that due to technical reasons, he was not able to use the same Solicitor that was used for the parks transfers for the library negotiations but that he was hoping to appoint the Solicitor that Falmouth Town Council had used for their library transfer. The draft contract, lease, specification and Heads of Terms have all been forwarded to the proposed Solicitor and a price was awaited.

The timescales for the library transfer appear to have slipped a little and, although not formally confirmed by Cornwall Council, it is anticipated that the transfer will now take place around May/June time.

F/16/69) Pondhu House and Stable Block

The Clerk advised that he had met with one of Cornwall Council's Property Officers to discuss the lease arrangements for the Stable Block. It was noted that at the present time Pondhu House is excluded from the lease, but will be re-visited within the next two years when hopefully suitable feasibility studies will have been completed and a potential use for the property established.

Members asked that the full Council be briefed on the lease arrangements for the Stable Block and that a Working Group be set up to progress feasibility work and develop plans for Pondhu House.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- Note the verbal report;
- Authorise the Town Clerk to sign a Tenancy at Will for the Stable Block;
- Communicate the full details of the final lease arrangements for the Stable Block to the Town Council once known;
- Set up a Working Group after the May election to commission feasibility work and develop plans for the future use of Pondhu House possibly utilising the Devolution Fund monies.

F/16/70) Public Conveniences

The Clerk advised that following a change in management, the cleaning contract with CORMAC for the public conveniences was working much better, and suggested that the Town Council should enter into a further 12-month contract with CORMAC.

The Clerk also explained that since April 2016 there had been 2-3 complaints about the 20p coin mechanism system on the disabled toilets and officers had been considering whether the RADAR key system should be re-introduced. However, due to the regular occurrence of blockages at the toilets and the need for the disabled toilets to be made available to other users, he felt that on balance the existing coin mechanism system should remain in place.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council appoint CORMAC for a further 12 months for the cleaning of the Priory Car Park toilets with effect from April 2017.

F/16/71) New National Audit Arrangements

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

F/16/72) Internal Audit update

The Town Clerk advised that Councillor Murtagh had met with him recently to go through the six-monthly internal audit Member check list and that a clean bill of health had been given.

Councillor Brown thanked Councillor Murtagh for carrying out the audit on his own as he was unable to attend due to an unforeseen commitment.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and the comments contained therein.

F/16/73) Dates of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on Monday 24th April 2017.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.