

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> JULY 2017 in the Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP at 6pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Bishop, Brown, Cohen, French, Jones, Lanxon, Oxenham, Palmer, Rees, Styles and Walker

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

**F/17/01) Election of Chairman**

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Jones be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the 2017/18 civic year.

**F/17/02) Election of Vice-Chairman**

It was **RESOLVED** that Councillor Palmer be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the 2017/18 civic year.

**F/17/03) Apologies for absence**

Councillor Palmer advised that he needed to leave the meeting at 6.40pm.  
Councillor Bishop advised that he needed to leave the meeting at 7pm.  
Councillor Lanxon advised that she needed to leave the meeting at 7.10pm.

**F/17/04) Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**F/17/05) Dispensations**

There were no requests for dispensations.

**F/17/06) Minutes of meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**F/17/07) Matters to Note**

The Clerk advised that there were no matters to note.

Arising from a question, the Town Clerk confirmed that all of the actions identified in the recent Ellis Whittam Health and Safety assessment had been completed.

**F/17/08) Public participation**

There were no members of the public present.

**F/17/09) Budget Monitoring Report**

The Clerk explained that the Town Council had procured a new financial management system and that the budget monitoring information produced by the new system analysed the information in a different format.

He drew Members attention to the old style budget monitoring report and Members confirmed that for the time being they would like both reporting formats presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The Clerk drew Members' attention to the variances identified in the Budget Monitoring Report 2017/18 – April to May including:

- Staffing costs below budget due to the delay in transferring the library to the Town Council;
- One-off purchases against the grounds maintenance budget (litter bins/replacement tree for Truro Road Park);
- Front loading payments for office accommodation rental and insurance premium;
- Purchases against the printing and stationery budget for car park tickets and business/name badges for Members following the May election;
- A slight shortfall against budget for car park income.

The Clerk advised that overall, the Town Council's budget was in a healthy position but that he was monitoring the car park income closely due to the slight shortfall in income against budget for the year to date.

Arising from a question, the Clerk advised that the Town Council's Internal Auditor had confirmed in his recent report that the Council's reserves were deemed to be within acceptable parameters.

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

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should produce two formats of the budget monitoring report for the Finance and General Purposes Committee for the time being.

### **F/17/10) Members Scheme of Allowances**

The Clerk advised that it was good practice for the Members Scheme of Allowances to be reviewed annually and that following review, he felt that no changes were required although a Member had asked if consideration could be given to car parking passes being provided to Members for Priory Car Park.

A proposal for Town Councillors to be provided with a car park pass for Priory Car Park was lost by 3 votes to 5.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Scheme of Allowances be re-confirmed for the 2017/18 civic year;
2. The existing budgets for the Mayor's allowances and members' travel expenses be noted.

### **F/17/11) Car Parking – Review**

The Town Clerk drew Members attention to the previously circulated report providing a general update on the transfer Priory Car Park to the Town Council. He explained the legal transfer to date, the contracts that have been put in place and the enforcement contract with Cornwall Council.

The Clerk expressed his gratitude to Cornwall Council's car park team who had been extremely helpful during the transition which included the drafting of the Car Park Order and providing the car park machines at no cost to the Town Council.

The Clerk drew Members' attention to the Car Park budget monitoring report where it was noted that the income was 10% down on budget for the year to date. The Clerk explained that it is usual to have seasonal variances with car park income and that a better picture of the position would be known towards the end of September.

Members raised the following concerns/issues:

- The number of enforcement visits to the car park each day;
- The procurement of the telephone payment system;
- The validity of Cornwall's Council Rover ticket in Priory Car Park.

The Clerk advised that consultation needed to start shortly with regard to the car parking charges for the 2018/19 financial year and recommended that a small working group should be formed to consult the business sector and then make a recommendation to the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Members felt that it would be appropriate for the whole Finance & General Purposes Committee to consult the business community and that a special meeting of the Committee should be convened for this purpose.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the progress to date and the car park budget monitoring report for the year to date.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Clerk should arrange an extraordinary Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting to discuss car parking charges with the business sector for the 2018/19 financial year.

*\*\* Councillor Palmer left the meeting \*\**

### **F/17/12) Photocopier**

The Clerk advised that there was an opportunity to upgrade the Town Council's photocopier/printer at a cost of £5,500 less a trade in for the existing photocopier of £500 with the existing supplier. The proposal suggests that the annual savings on the print costs would be in the region of £400-£500 based on current usage, a postage franking facility, better colour quality and quicker processing of jobs.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the replacement of the existing photocopier/printer in accordance with the quotation received from the existing supplier.

### **F/17/13) Website**

The Clerk advised that the Town Council's website was in need of an upgrade to make it visually more appealing, more user friendly and to improve functionality. The Council's existing website provider has offered to provide the required upgrade at a cost of £1500 and a meeting/demonstration has been arranged to discuss this further on the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017.

During discussion, Members felt that an upgrade of the website was due and that consideration should be given to a private section for Members only, social media and compatibility with the new SABEF website.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman and Vice-Chairman should meet with the Town Council's existing provider to discuss the upgrade and subject to their agreement the Clerk be authorised to upgrade the Council's website.

*\*\* Councillor Bishop left the meeting \*\**

#### **F/17/14) Hudson Accounting Ltd – Internal Audit**

The Clerk drew Members' attention to the Internal Audit report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and the recommendations contained therein. During discussion, the Town Clerk confirmed that:

- The miscoded VAT payment had now been adjusted;
- The Deputy Clerk was now involved with internet banking payments to provide additional authority for each transaction;
- Post payment checking procedures have been put in place for each internet banking payment by two Councillors;
- A scheme of delegation is due to be drafted as recommended;
- Procedure manuals are due to be drafted as recommended;
- The Transparency Code would be reviewed in accordance with the recommendations.

The Clerk advised that Mr Hudson had provided an Internal Audit proposal for the Town Council for the 2017/18 to 2019/20 financial years for consideration. He explained that for the sum of £800 per annum a comprehensive internal audit process would be carried out by a qualified Accountant to include two visits per annum and appropriate reports.

Arising from discussions Members asked that the Town Clerk draft appropriate procedures for the authorisation of BACS payments, electronic payments and transfers between Bank Accounts including a list of payments for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee to review at appropriate intervals.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Audit report be noted;
2. The Clerk address the recommendations contained in the year end annual report;
3. The Clerk be authorised to appoint Hudson Accounting to undertake internal audit work for a period of three years at a cost of £800 per annum.

#### **F/17/15) To consider excluding the press and public**

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business of the meeting in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

### **F/17/16) Library Devolution update**

The Town Clerk provided an update on the transfer of St Austell Library from Cornwall Council to the Town Council which included the negotiations to date, the staffing implications and the maintenance works required.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Authorise the Town Clerk to continue the negotiations as outlined in the report;
2. Undertake the external repairs/re-decoration to the Library Building subject to a contribution of £2,000 towards the cost of these works from Cornwall Council.

### **F/17/17) 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 11<sup>th</sup> September 2017 and 13<sup>th</sup> November 2017.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.