

MINUTES of a REMOTE MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 6TH APRIL 2021 at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Bishop, Brown, Cohen, Colwill, French, Jones, Lanxon, Oxenham, Palmer, Rees, Styles (Mayor) and Walker.

In attendance: David Pooley (Town Clerk), Sara Gwilliams (Deputy Town Clerk), Terry Shaw (Library Manager).

F/19/126) Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

F/19/127) Declarations of Interest

None.

F/19/128) Dispensations

None.

F/19/129) Minutes of meeting held on 22nd February 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd February 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F/19/130) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that the legislation permitting virtual meetings was not renewed by the Secretary of State and this has been placed as an agenda item for discussion at the Council meeting on Monday 12th April 2021. Councillor Brown advised that Hertfordshire County Council, in conjunction with Local Government Lawyers, is seeking a ruling in the High Court that could still allow meetings to continue virtually.

F/19/131) Public participation

None.

F/19/132) St Austell Library

The Deputy Town Clerk updated Members on the break in at the library on Wednesday 31st March 2021 and the security measures put in place whilst the replacement glass is awaited. The Police have confirmed that the 2 people arrested for the break-in have been charged.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the library closed on 23rd March 2020 at the start of the pandemic and all staff were put on furlough. On 6th July 2020 a click and collect service was introduced and staff were brought back to work utilizing the flexible furlough scheme which has worked well. At the present time St Austell Library remains one of the busiest libraries in Cornwall with approximately 4000 books supplied and issued each month. She advised that according to the Government roadmap, libraries can re-open with effect from Monday 12th April as long as they are Covid19 secure and discussions have taken place with the Library Manager and Cornwall Council to agree a proposed way forward.

Terry Shaw, Library Manager advised that a survey has been run on-line and in the library lobby to try to gauge from library users how they would like to see the library operating after 12th April and out of 74 participants, the majority favoured a return to limited customer browsing and the continuation of the click and collect service.

In order to manage the hybrid model favoured by users, Mrs Shaw suggested that a click and collect service could be operated from the lobby on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and the library open for browsing on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. In order to be Covid19 secure, there would be a limit of 6 customers (plus 4 staff) allowed into the building at any one time, plus 1 family in the childrens' area. Two public computers would be open on a bookable basis. As circumstances change, the browsing offer could be increased by 1 day, reducing the click and collect to 2 days. The staffing hours will be increased slightly to accommodate the additional work and Saturday mornings, but staff will remain on flexible furlough. It is suggested that fines are reinstated with effect from 1st May 2021.

The building will be made Covid19 secure by:

- Limiting the numbers permitted in to the building;
- Masks to be worn by all persons entering the building
- Hand sanitiser used by all persons entering the building
- One way routes set up and managed around the building
- Separate entry and exits to and from the building

Mrs Shaw added that Cornwall Council libraries are implementing a model referred to internally as a "drive through", with the emphasis on quick visits. The Home Library Service will continue to be supported by the library staff and the hospital car service hope to resume their service from the work room in May. All being well, seagull sacks will be available for the public to purchase at £4 per bag within the next few weeks.

The Deputy Clerk summarise the recommendations for the operation of the library with effect from 12th April 2021 as follows:

1. Customer browsing - Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday morning
2. Click and Collect – Monday, Wednesday and Friday
3. 2 public access computers to be made available on a bookable basis
4. Resume charging with effect from 1st May 2021
5. All staff to remain on flexible furlough with an adjustment to hours to accommodate the hybrid arrangement.

Arising from discussions, the Library Manager confirmed that each computer session will be for 45 minutes and that the installation of the library door had made a huge difference to the circulation of air in the building. The Clerk advised that the Town Council has registered to join the Work Place Lateral Flow Testing Scheme and lateral flow tests have been purchased by the Town Council which have been used on occasions. The Library Manager confirmed that the summer reading challenge is going ahead this year but on a paired down basis. Further details are awaited from Cornwall Council.

It was **RESOLVED** that with effect from the 12th April 2021, the Library should operate as follows:

1. A limited customer browsing service on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday;
2. A click and collect service on Monday, Wednesday and Friday;
3. 2 public computers open, on a bookable basis with a time limit of 45 minute per session;
4. The commencement of fees and charges with effect from 1st May 2021;
5. All staff to remain on flexible furlough with hours adjusted in line with operational requirements.

F/19/133) Budget Monitoring Report

The Clerk outlined the loss of car park and library income, furlough/hardship payments and savings to date. He advised that that the Town Council is in a healthy position and has come through the 2020/21 financial year reasonably well.

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

F/19/134) Financial Accounts – 2020/21

The Clerk advised that he is due to start the final accounts shortly with a view to a draft being ready for the Annual Parish Meeting and Internal Auditor's visit on the 19th and 20th April respectively. Early projections indicate a surplus as at 31st March 2021.

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

F/19/135) Asset Register

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Asset Register and Reconciliation of Assets as at 31st March 2021.

F/19/136) To consider excluding the press and public

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1 (ii) 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/19/137) Priory Car Park – Public Conveniences

The Clerk outlined the current cleaning contract for the Public Conveniences at Priory Car Park and the quotations received for cleaning services with effect from 13th June 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** to enter into a contract with APS Construction Services Limited for the cleaning services of Priory Car Park Public Conveniences with effect from 13th June 2021.

F/19/138) Dates of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on 28th June 2021.

The meeting closed at 6.43pm.