

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 21st FEBRUARY 2022 in the Council Chamber, 39 Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DR (Cornwall Council Offices) at 6pm.

Present: Councillors Brown, Bull, Clemo, French (Chair), Lanxon, Nott, Pearce and Rowse.

Also Present: Councillors Hamilton and Thompson.

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

F/21/56) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors George, Pears and Young.

F/21/57) Declarations of Interest

None.

F/21/58) Dispensations

None.

F/21/59) Minutes of meeting held on 8th November 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 8th November 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F/21/60) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that the "Find, Park, Pay" car park app is trialling well and that if usage remains good, he will review the Phone and Pay mobile phone payment system and possibly recommend to Members that in due course it is terminated. He added that on the back of the Town Council's trial, "Find, Park, Pay" has obtained a second contract and confirmed that the G4S cash collection contract is back on track and working reasonably well.

Councillor Brown referred to minute number F/21/53 and advised that following an informal conversation with Simon Mould, it is clear that Cornwall Council's budget cuts will have a considerable impact on the localism service. Councillor Brown expressed concern that the cuts might affect the service currently provided to Town and Parish Councils and suggested that an agenda item should be put on the next Finance and General Purposes Committee for the Cornwall Councillors to provide an update on the Localism Service.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would liaise with the Cornwall Councillors and arrange for an update to be provided on the Localism Service at the next Finance and General Purposes Committee.

F/21/61) Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

The Chair advised that to allow the Library Manager to leave the meeting in good time, he would like to bring agenda item 15 (St Austell Library) forward to the next item.

F/21/62) St Austell Library

Mrs Terry Shaw, Library Manager, provided a comprehensive presentation to Members and listed the following services carried out from St Austell Library:

- Click and collect service (during the pandemic)
- Administration of the performing arts collection
- Support for the Home Library Services (RVS volunteers)
- Support for the Hospital Car Service (RVS volunteers)
- Craft displays for local people to sell their products
- Student Work Experience for year 10 students
- Duke of Edinburgh work experience for under 16's
- School class visits (6 confirmed for March)
- Sale of seagull sacks

The library has 10 access computers and facilitates 3 reading groups, 2 creative writing groups and hosts a 6 week Summer Reading Challenge servicing 19 junior schools in the locality.

She added that the support association (SALSA) continues to support the library and outlined past and present projects such as dementia workshops, childrens' craft projects, WW1 centenary play (Tommy's suitcase) and the very successful Shire Horse visit to the library garden. Mrs Shaw explained that during the pandemic SALSA distributed funding to unpaid carers to allow unpaid carers to have a treat which gave carers some valued "me" time which they ordinarily were unable to have. SALSA has recently set up a veterans' gardening club and organised many cycle related projects in conjunction with Halfords in the run up to and during the Tour of Britain in September 2021.

Mrs Shaw advised that the forthcoming events at the library include a health and wellbeing drop in and a trading standards drop in. A photography exhibition, tea dance and early evening music events in the garden are planned for the Jubilee celebrations.

F/21/63) Budget Monitoring Report

The Clerk advised that car park income is healthier than anticipated and should meet the budget projections at the end of the financial year. The Town Council has received a number of grants during the year and there is an under spend on payroll due to two grounds maintenance staff vacancies. There is a pay award pending. He advised that there is likely to be a surplus at the year-end although the Operations Manager is currently working on playground safety surface repairs and the tarmacking of a section of the car park which will reduce the projected surplus. He added that the old toilet block in Poltair Park cannot be demolished until the results of a further bat survey has been carried out in May.

Arising from a question, the Clerk confirmed that a budget of up to £5,000 had been secured for the Community Governance Review but there are no commitments yet against this budget.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the Budget Monitoring Report.

F/21/64) Ride on Mower – Replacement

The Clerk advised that the lease for the first ride-on mower acquired by the Town Council in November 2016 is due end in November 2022 and that it is in need of replacement. The Clerk added that in the early years of devolution, it was felt prudent to lease rather than purchase outright due to budget uncertainties and the possibility of unforeseen expenses association with the transfer of assets. It has however become clear that an outright purchase is better value for money than leasing and recommended that a budget of up to £19,000 is identified to purchase a replacement mower to a standard required for commercial grass cutting and which adheres to highways and health and safety regulations.

It was **RESOLVED** to authorise the Town Clerk to negotiate the purchase of a new ride-on mower with a budget of up to £19,000.

F/21/65) Treasury Management

The Clerk advised that the Treasury Management Strategy once again assumed a low risk approach to investments and that all excess funds at the present time are with Cornwall Council in a variable rate deposit account which offers flexibility and instant access. Members noted the investment income of approximately £3,000 per annum.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and approve the Treasury Management Strategy.

F/21/66) Risk Management

The Clerk advised that it is a legal requirement to have a robust risk management register and that he had reviewed the current register in detail and identified the following areas as high risk:

- 2.1: Inadequate staffing resource
- 2.3: Loss of Key Staff
- 9.12: Physical and verbal abuse of staff
- 9.23: Non-renewal of lease of premises

During discussion, Councillor Brown identified an additional six risks that he felt should be considered and incorporated into the register:

1. The Town Council ceasing to have access to venues suitable for committees and smaller meetings;
2. The Town Council ceasing to have access to venues for large scale meetings;
3. The Town Council required to locate to a more expensive location;
4. The risks associated with the potential re-location of the library;
5. Deterioration of relationships with Cornwall Council;
6. Insufficient funding being made available from public sector sources in relation to the town centre revitalisation.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the updated Risk Management Strategy and Strategic Risk Register.

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the six additional risks identified be considered at the next meeting and if appropriate, consolidated into the existing Risk Register.

Councillor Thompson left the meeting

F/21/67) Insurance Tenders

The Clerk apologised for the lack of a report but advised that due to the collapse of the insurance market he is struggling to obtain quotations for the renewal of the Town Council's insurance which is due for renewal with effect 1st April 2022. He advised that two major insurance companies have declined to quote and that the only quotation received so far is approximately three times the current premium. He advised that he is expecting one further quotation.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair be authorised to evaluate the quotations received and appoint an appropriate insurer that best suits the Council's needs.

F/21/68) WorkNest Health and Safety Audit

The Clerk referred to the Health and Safety Audit and confirmed that the issues identified had all been addressed with the exception of the First Aid Training which is due to take place soon.

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

F/21/69) CCTV

Members reviewed a report setting out CCTV activity in Newquay and St Austell in 2021.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the January to December 2021 statistics.

F/21/70) CIL Levy

The Clerk advised that to date, the Town Council has received approximately £4,000 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money and suggested to Members that it be earmarked to assist with pump prime funding for an improvement scheme at Bethel Park.

Arising from the above, it was suggested that the Town Council should consider the potential benefits of producing a neighbourhood plan and the resources required to produce one.

It was **RESOLVED** to earmark the CIL monies received to date for pump prime funding for a Bethel Park improvement scheme.

F/21/71) Dates of Next Meetings

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on the 4th April 2022.

The meeting closed at 7.38pm.

