

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 26th FEBRUARY 2018 in the Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP at 6pm.

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

Also Present: Councillor: King

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

F/17/61) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rees.

F/17/62) Declarations of Interest

None.

F/17/63) Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

F/17/64) Minutes of meeting held on 13th November 2017

It was noted that on page one, Weal Northy should be spelt Wheal Northey.

It was **RESOLVED** that subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on the 13th November 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F/17/65) Matters to Note

The Clerk advised that further to minute number **F/17/52** he was due to attend Cornwall Council GDPR training with the Deputy Town Clerk at the end of next week.

F/17/66) Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

Councillor Lanxon arrived during the next item

Three members of the public arrived during the next item

F/17/67) St Austell Library

The Town Clerk provided an update on the library. He advised that the legal position and staffing arrangements remained the same except that one member of staff has asked to take flexible retirement and reduce her hours. It is anticipated that the hours lost will be taken up by an existing member of staff which would result in no additional cost to the Town Council.

Some of the building compliance works are still outstanding but should be completed by Cornwall Council shortly. Quotations are being obtained for the new sliding door in to the garden including a ramp for disabled access.

The Clerk drew Members' attention to the statistical information and advised that apart from Truro, St Austell Library was the busiest library in Cornwall.

Members raised the following issues/concerns:

- The damp patches on the carpet in the main library building
- The cleaning costs for the library

The Clerk advised that the damp patches are more than likely a structural fault with the building which under the terms of the lease is the responsibility of Cornwall Council. He confirmed that at the present time they had dried out and were not causing any issues apart from staining on the carpet. Following a question, the Clerk advised that the cleaning costs appeared high in the library budget monitoring report due to an anomaly in the coding of cleaning supplies and contract payments.

The Town Clerk advised Members that an approach has been made by a father and daughter about siting their "moo moo" van on the grass at the library premises to sell light refreshments. He advised that in usual circumstances, a tender process would have to be adopted but if Members were mindful to grant permission to trade for a very short term, an exception might be able to be made. He advised that Members needed to be mindful of:

- The effect the van could have on the trading of the Poltair Park Café;
- An appropriate level of rent;
- Cornwall Council permissions to sub-let the premises;
- The health and safety implications of siting the van next to a busy road.

Members raised the following issues/concerns:

- The types of trading licences obtained from Cornwall Council;
- The potential to grant a licence on a profit sharing basis;
- Concern about the van being permanently parked on the grass outside of the library;
- The risk of vandalism to the van if left overnight;
- The trading effect on the impending café at Poltair Park;
- The safety of pedestrians crossing the busy road from Poltair Park to access the van;
- The lack of toilet facilities for the occupants of the van;
- The potential for litter to be generated;
- Whether the van needed electricity or could be run from a generator.

Mr St James, the owner of the moo moo van advised that he was in the process of obtaining a Street Trading Licence from Cornwall Council and that he had recently received a 5* rating for food hygiene. He suggested that the occupants of the van could use the toilet facilities at the library and would prefer to tap in to the electricity supply at the library rather than use the van's generator which can be noisy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should enter into negotiations for the siting of the Moo Moo Van at St Austell library subject to resolving practicalities and suitable permissions being obtained.

F/17/68) Health and Safety Policy

Members reviewed the Health and Safety Policy Statement, Environmental Policy Statement and the Ellis Whittam General Risk Assessment Report. The Town Clerk advised that the Operations Manager takes health and safety very seriously and has a number of risk assessments, checklists, procedures, training and action plans in place which are reviewed regularly and assessed by Ellis Whittam, the Town Council's independent Health and Safety Advisors. The Town Clerk drew Members attention to the SWOT Analysis which highlighted the excellent progress so far and the good record keeping. Members noted one of the outstanding areas in the Action Plan related to the compliance works at the library.

Members raised the following issues/concerns:

- The need to delete reference to office staff under the comments section on page 28 of the General Risk Assessment Report;
- The need to refer to Cornwall Council's Environmental Growth Strategy within the Environmental Policy Statement;
- The need to produce a procedure on lone working in the Stable Block;
- The procedures for checking driving licences.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve:

1. The Health and Safety Policy Statement;
2. The Environmental Policy Statement, subject to including reference to Cornwall Council's Environmental Growth Strategy document;

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the contents of the General Risk Assessment Report and delete reference to office staff under the comments section on page 28 of the report;
2. Note the latest Action Plan;
3. Produce a Lone Worker procedure document for The Stable Block;
4. Formally thank the Operations Manager for his excellent work with regard to health and safety at St Austell Town Council.

F/17/69) Risk Management

Members reviewed the Risk Management Strategy, Risk Management Policy Statement and Strategic Risk Register.

Members raised the following issues/concerns:

1. The need to add "reputational risk" as a new 2.3.5 within the Risk Management Strategy;
2. Strategic Risk Register – Risk 1. Delete "Consider refreshing Town Plan" and replace it with "Consider developing a suite of Policy Statements"
3. Strategic Risk Register – Risk 7. Add "Playing an active role within CALC"
4. Strategic Risk Register – Add a new risk. "Future financial constraints"

It was **RESOLVED** to approve:

1. The Risk Management Strategy subject to the amendment identified above;
2. The Risk Management Policy Statement;

3. The Strategic Risk Register subject to the amendments identified above.

F/17/70) Asset Register and Insurance

Members reviewed the Asset Register and level of insurance provided in relation to each asset.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the asset register and property insurance levels and to approve the liability insurance levels proposed.

In addition, the Clerk advised that Zurich have offered "Key Personnel" Insurance which would insure against the loss of key personnel during an extended absence and help fund the costs of employing cover whilst a designated key personnel member of staff was away.

It was **RESOLVED** to approve Key Personnel insurance for the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Operations Manager in the sum of £16.80 per person.

Councillor Lanxon left the meeting

F/17/71) Social Media Strategy

The Town Clerk advised that in order to progress the Town Council's desire to start utilising social media, a draft Social Media Strategy had been produced for Members' consideration. He advised that if Members were mindful to proceed, it would be advisable to create a Social Media Steering Group to work out the detail.

Members reviewed the draft Social Media Strategy and discussed the benefits and dis-benefits of utilising social media. Concern was expressed about the need to control what is put on social media by both the Town Council and members of the public and to ensure that the Town Council's security arrangements are not compromised. Members agreed that it would be helpful for a Member with no knowledge of social media to sit on the Steering Group.

It was suggested that the following amendment should be made to the Strategy:

Social Media Guidelines, bullet point 4. "Staff and Members must not include contact details or photographs of service users, staff **or Councillors** without their permission or unless appropriate"

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Approve the draft Social Media Strategy subject to the amendment outlined above;
2. Create a Social Media Steering Group comprising Councillors: Cohen, King, Palmer, Styles, Walker and 1 Conservative representative to be confirmed;
3. Earmark a budget of £1100 to appoint a suitable consultant to help the Town Council progress the initiative.

Councillor King left the meeting

F/17/72) Treasury Management

The Clerk updated Members on the Town Council's Treasury Management arrangements including an investment with Cornwall Council. Members noted the interest received for the past two financial years and the low risk approach taken.

Arising from the above, Members stressed a desire for the Town Council to be investing money as ethically as possible.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and to seek to invest ethically where possible.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should write to Cornwall Council to ask what their current ethical policy is with regard to Treasury Management.

F/17/73) Budget Monitoring Report

Members considered budget monitoring reports and a bank reconciliation statement for the period to the end of January 2018 and noted that overall, the Town Council's finances are well within budget.

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

F/17/74) Members' Internal Audit

The Clerk advised that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had carried out the Internal Audit checks and had made the following recommendations:

- Check the quality of the computer back-up processes;
- Increase the frequency at which passwords are changed.

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

It was **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should investigate the quality of the computer back up processes for Microsoft Office and Xero.

F/17/75) 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 commercially sensitive nature of the business to be transacted.

F/17/76) The House

The Town Clerk updated Members on the latest position with regard to The House. He advised that a Licence has been obtained from Cornwall Council to carry out the works which are due to be completed in time for the DIY SOS day planned in March. The roof of the building is not fit for purpose and Cornwall Council have verbally agreed to find a budget for its repair.

Young People Cornwall are hoping to move into the building in May which will bring 30 to 40 jobs in to St Austell. A rental figure has been negotiated on the basis that the Town Council will continue its annual grant funding in the sum of £20,000.

Arising from discussion, the Town Clerk confirmed that the lease from Cornwall Council would be for a period of 7 years, Young People Cornwall would provide the caretaking requirements and bookings for the meeting rooms and that Cornwall Council would help facilitate alternative accommodation should they wish to take back the building as part of redevelopment of the area. As part of the refurbishment works improved wi-fi will be installed.

Members expressed their support for the proposals and agreed to proceed on the basis outlined.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

1. The Town Clerk should negotiate and employ a solicitor to enter into a lease for The House from Cornwall Council;
2. The Town Clerk should negotiate and employ a solicitor to enter into a lease for the House to Young People Cornwall;
3. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should sign such leases on behalf of the Town Council.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that:

1. Annual funding in the sum of £20,000 to Young People Cornwall should continue until 2020/21 subject to satisfactory performance.

F/17/77) 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 16th April 2018.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm.