

MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 25th FEBRUARY 2019 in the Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP at 6pm.

Present: Councillors: Brown, Bishop, Cohen, French, Jones, King, Lanxon, Oxenham, Rees and Walker.

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

F/18/52) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Palmer and Styles.

F/18/53) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

F/18/54) Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

F/18/55) Minutes of meeting held on 12th November 2018

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th November 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

Councillor King abstained from voting on this item as he was not present at the meeting

Councillors Cohen and Lanxon arrived during the next item

F/18/56) Matters to Note

The Town Clerk advised that the Cornwall Council pilot scheme for pay on exit car parks was due to commence at Penzance very shortly and that the scheme would be rolled out to two car parks in Newquay and one in Padstow in the near future. It is hoped to learn from these trials.

In response to a question, the Clerk advised that the test case had been settled out of court but that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) was negotiating with the Information Commissioners' Office to remove the need for individual Councillors to be registered as Data Controllers. These negotiations appear to be nearing fruition so there is no need at present to register Councillors individually.

F/18/57) Public participation

There were no members of the public present.

Councillor Brown arrived during the next item

F/18/58) Risk Management

The Clerk introduced a report incorporating an updated Risk Management Strategy, a Risk Management Policy Statement and a Strategic Risk Register. He highlighted the areas which he thought were highest risk which included:

- Complying with all legislation/regulations
- Pressure to grow and accept continued devolution of services
- Loss of key staff
- Health and safety issues, in particular associated with horticultural work
- Loss of data and key assets
- Negative media coverage
- Events

Members discussed the relative levels of risk and mentioned the need to safeguard equipment and vehicles given the spate of vehicle crimes in recent months.

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

F/18/59) Community Governance Review

The Clerk advised that the Council at its last meeting agreed that it should request a Community Governance Review of the Parish to review the Parish Boundary, the number of Councillors and the Ward arrangements. The Clerk recommended the creation of a Working Group consisting of the Mayor, the Chair of each of the Standing Committees, Councillor Oxenham and Councillor Pearce. He advised that he hoped to arrange a special Council meeting to review and agree the submission to be made to Cornwall Council. The Clerk advised that he is trying to get information from Cornwall Council which might help the process and that the timescales are very tight with a submission being required by the end of May.

Councillor Brown advised that Cornwall Council would be issuing advice shortly on Members' interests for both Cornwall Councillors and Town and Parish Councillors and that a new lawyer was being recruited to support the process. He advised that the Electoral Review Panel is due to meet on the 9th May and report to Council on the 21st May and again on the 18th June, reporting to Council on the 19th June. He suggested that Cornwall Council might require an ongoing dialogue after a submission has been made which might require the Working Group to consider a delegation procedure for dealing with questions raised by Cornwall Council.

Members discussed the review process and the importance of talking to other Parishes and, where possible, seeking agreement to proposals for change.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Create a Working Group as set out in the report to consider the Community Governance guidance and draft a submission to Cornwall Council with the recommended changes for the St Austell Parish for approval by the full Council;
2. Draft a response to a separate consultation on Polling stations and Polling areas.

F/18/60) Annual Mayor Making Event

Members considered a report on the Mayor Making event which had been produced at the request of the Mayor. It was noted that St Austell Town Council is the only Town Council in Cornwall to charge for the buffet at annual Mayor Making events. It was suggested that if Members wish to continue to hold the ceremonial event but not charge for food, that the numbers attending would have to be limited and a budget of in the order of £700 be approved to cover the costs involved.

Arising from discussion, concern was expressed about using taxpayers money to fund a buffet and a suggestion was put forward to scrap it altogether. Other suggestions included continuing to charge for the buffet or combining it with a Citizens Award event. It was agreed that if the event was to continue, the provision of alcohol should be at the discretion of the incoming Mayor.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Mayor Making event should continue but that no buffet should be provided.

Councillors King and Walker asked that it be recorded that they voted against this proposal

F/18/61) Budget Monitoring Report

The Town Clerk advised that overall the Town Council remains within budget for the period April to January 2019.

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

F/18/62) Treasury Management

The Clerk introduced a report setting out the Council's Treasury Management activity during the 2018/19 financial year and asked Members to re-confirm the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. Arising from a question he advised that the Bank Reserve Account was being reduced gradually as interest rates on monies in the account were very low. He also undertook to circulate the ethical investment policy of Cornwall Council.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Note the report;
2. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy for a further year;
3. Close the NatWest Business Reserve Account and;
4. Seek to invest ethically where possible.

F/18/63) St Austell Library

The Deputy Town Clerk circulated a report from the Library Manager and drew attention to the planned retirement of a long serving library assistant, the improving footfall and the impending installation of a coffee machine.

F/18/64) To consider excluding the press and public.

It was **RESOLVED** to exclude the press and public under Section 1 (2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

Councillor Lanxon left and returned to the meeting during the next item

F/18/65) Work Vehicles

The Clerk outlined proposals to trade in two of the Council's vans for a new tipper truck and large van. He explained that the Council's existing large van was now at the end of its life and that the smaller van was proving too small and unsuitable for many of the tasks required within the growing remit of the Grounds Maintenance Team. The Grounds Maintenance Staff are strongly of the opinion that a tipper truck and large van would increase productivity and help them work more efficiently.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Clerk be authorised to negotiate the trade in of the Council's existing vans and the acquisition of a new tipper truck and a second-hand large van in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

F/18/66) Insurances

The Clerk introduced a report setting out details of the quotations received for insurances and explained that the quotation received from WPS had been accepted for a three-year term in accordance with the delegated authority approved at the last committee meeting. He explained that the price obtained would obtain a saving on the current costs of approximately £1,000 per annum.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and endorse the actions taken.

F/18/67) Car Park

The Clerk advised that Priory Car Park was showing signs of wear in places and that some potholes had been filled on a number of occasions. He explained that it was the officers' view that it was time to completely resurface some parts of the car park. Quotations had been obtained for the resurfacing of three areas within the car park. The best quotations received were as follows:

| | |
|---------|-------------------|
| Area 1. | £ 5,830.10 |
| Area 2. | £ 2,207.35 |
| Area 3. | £ 4,937.05 |
| Total | £12,974.50 |

The Clerk reassured Members that every effort would be made to try to keep as much of the car park open as possible during the works and that where necessary re-lining would be undertaken. A Member raised a concern with regard to the quality of the lines in some of the disabled bays. The Clerk agreed to look at this issue.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk be authorised to appoint D A Thomas & Son Ltd to undertake the resurfacing of the areas suggested for the sums set out above with the aim of completing the work in the current financial year if possible.

F/18/68) Priory Car Park – Wall Repair

The Clerk advised that there was an opportunity to negotiate with the neighbouring landowner to get repairs undertaken to the damaged wall in return for temporary access to a building site.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk should be authorised to negotiate and enter in to a licence with the neighbouring land owner for temporary access to the building site in return for a contribution towards the repair of the wall.

F/18/69) Dates of next meeting

It was noted that the next meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee are due to take place on Monday 8th April 2019 and 1st July 2019.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.