

**MINUTES of a MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE held on MONDAY 24<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2020 in the Stable Block, Pondhu House, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, PL25 5DP at 6pm.**

**Present:** Councillors: Brown, Cohen, Colwill, French, Jones (Chair), King, Lanxon, Oxenham, Palmer and Rees

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

**F/19/51) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: Bishop, Styles and Walker.

Councillor Lanxon advised that she needed to leave the meeting at 7.10pm and Councillors French and Oxenham advised that they needed to leave the meeting at 7.30pm.

**F/19/52) Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**F/19/53) Dispensations**

There were no requests for dispensations.

**F/19/54) Minutes of meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019**

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> November 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

**F/19/55) Matters to Note**

The Clerk advised that he had nothing to add.

**F/19/56) Public participation**

There were no members of the public present.

*\*\*Councillor Cohen arrived during the next item\*\**

**F/19/57) Ellis Whittam – Annual Audit**

The Clerk advised that the Town Council's independent Health and Safety advisors had recently reviewed the Town Council's health and safety records/procedures and had identified the following actions:

*Recommendation: Consider installing blue lights to discourage the injection of drugs in the toilets.*

The Clerk advised that Addaction and Safer Cornwall do not recommend the installation of blue lights as it could disadvantage somebody who genuinely needed to inject themselves in the toilets for medical reasons.

*Recommendation: Chainsaw procedures - update of method statement regarding the role of second person.*

Agreed - Operations Manager to action.

*Recommendation: Clarity on mowing arrangements at Penmere Road*

Agreed – Operations Manager to action.

*Recommendation: Label maximum time use on all vibrating tools*

Agreed – Operations Manager to action.

*Recommendation: Recording COSHH reviews on risk assessments*

Agreed – Operations Manager to action.

*Recommendation: Fixed wiring test to be completed for Priory Car Park*

Agreed – Operations Manager to action.

*Recommendation: Ensure that Cornwall Council sign off the condition of asbestos in the library*

This has been outstanding since December and has been escalated to Senior Officers within Cornwall Council. Clerk to chase up.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the report and thank the Operations Manager for his excellent health and safety work.

### **F/19/58) Member/Officer Relations Protocol**

Members reviewed the document and felt that “and/or the mayor” should be added to paragraph 5.5.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Member/Officer Relations Protocol be approved subject to paragraph 5.5 being amended to read as follows:

If a Councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of the Clerk or another employee, the matter should be raised with the Clerk **and/or the Mayor** in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the Council’s disciplinary procedure.

### **F/19/59) Communications Protocol**

The Clerk advised that he had added two paragraphs (viii) and (ix) relating to the Town Council’s website and facebook to the protocol.

During discussion Members agreed that paragraphs D (ii), E (iv) and E (v) should be amended.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Communications Protocol be approved subject to

Paragraph D (ii) being amended to read as follows:

A copy of outgoing correspondence relating to the Council, **Council business** or a Councillor's role within it, **where relevant**, should be sent to the Clerk, and it be noted on the correspondence eg "copy to Clerk" so that the recipient is aware that the Clerk has been advised.

Paragraph E (iv) being amended to read as follows:

E-mails:

- Instant replies should not be expected from the Clerk (reasons for urgency should be stated);
- Information to Councillors should normally be directed via the Clerk;
- E-mails from Councillors to external parties **where relevant** should be copied to the Clerk;
- Councillors should acknowledge their e-mails when requested to do so.

Paragraph E (v) being amended to read as follows:

Meetings with the Clerk or other officers:

- Wherever possible an appointment should be made;
- Meetings should be relevant to the work of that particular officer;
- **Councillors should be clear that all matters are legitimate council business.**

### **F/19/60) Complaints Procedures**

The Town Clerk advised that over the last 10 years very few complaints have been received by the Town Council and that the "Abusive, Persistent or Vexatious, Complaints and Complainants" Policy had never been invoked.

It was **RESOLVED** that the complaints procedures be re-approved.

### **F/19/61) Treasury Management**

The Clerk advised that he had reviewed the Treasury Management Strategy and suggested that the Council's no borrowing and low risk investment approach, as outlined in the Strategy should remain.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Treasury Management Strategy be approved.

### **F/19/62) Risk Management**

Members noted the updated Strategy and Risk Register and suggested that further risks relating to climate change and a pandemic be added.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register be approved subject to the Clerk adding risks relating to climate change and a pandemic.

### **F/19/63) Members' Internal Audit Report**

The Clerk thanked Councillor Jones for carrying out the Members' Internal Audit Report and drew Members attention to the three actions identified:

1. All Stable Block staff to change their computer passwords;
2. The need to progress "cyber essentials";
3. Allotment re-possessed due to non-payment of rent. £45 outstanding invoice to be written off.

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

### **F/19/64) Budget Monitoring Report**

The Clerk advised that the budgets are generally on track and that he had no concerns. He highlighted the grant income which was over budget, an underspend on salaries/wages, and a slight overspend on grounds maintenance supplies/play equipment and contract payments. He added that at least one of the vehicles purchased would be paid for out of reserves at the year end.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the budget monitoring report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020

### **F/19/65) Poltair Park Café**

The Clerk advised that the kitchen had been fitted, the CCTV was due to be installed within the next few days and quotes were being obtained for a hearing loop. Once these items are in place, building control sign off will be sought and the transfer of the café from Cornwall Council to the Town Council completed. He added that the tender documentation had been put on to "contract finder" with a deadline of 14<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and that quality as well as price would be a consideration when determining the tenders. He advised that it would be helpful to have a small panel of Members to open and evaluate the tenders, one of which should be Councillor Bull as the Cornwall Councillor for the area. If the tender process runs smoothly and an operator is found, the café should be open by mid-May.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk in consultation with Councillors Bull, Palmer and Lanxon be authorised to open, evaluate and accept the most economically advantageous tender for the catering provision at Poltair Café.

### **F/19/66) Community Governance Review**

The Clerk advised that Councillors Styles and King had met with representatives of Treverbyn Parish Council and that a mutual agreement of where the boundaries should be had not been reached. He reminded Members that Cornwall Council are holding a Community Governance Review drop in session at 6pm and public meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February in the Council Chamber, St Austell Information Centre and asked that Members attend to support the Town Council's proposals.

### **F/19/67) St Austell Library**

Members noted the Senior Library Manager's February 2020 newsletter. The Deputy Town Clerk added that the wifi had been upgraded in the building and that SALSA are busy putting a programme of events together for the Tour of Britain. She advised that the central book display in the library during February related to climate change and that drop in sessions to speak to the Police/Anti-Social Behaviour Case-worker had commenced. She added that the officers are reviewing the Library Specification with Cornwall Council and that it is hoped to strengthen Cornwall

Council's commitment to maintain the building within the document as some building maintenance works have been outstanding since December.

**F/19/68) Dates of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee is due to take place on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

The meeting closed at 7.19pm.