

MINUTES (subject to agreement at the next Committee meeting)
Of a meeting of THE FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 3 APRIL
2017 AT 7PM IN THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, STONEHOUSE

Present:

Jo Byrne (Committee Convenor)
Paul Stephens (Deputy Convenor)
John Callinan
Pam Swain (Vice Chairman/Deputy Town Mayor)
Theresa Watt (Chairman/Town Mayor)

Also Present: Gill Jennings Town Clerk/RFO

Attendees are reminded that the Proceedings of this meeting may be recorded, filmed or photographed but that any person requiring such a record is asked to give polite notice at the start of the meeting.

K1/366 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

There were no apologies

K1/367 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are reminded of their obligation within the requirements of the Adopted Model Code of Conduct to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests where applicable.

There were no declarations of interest

K1/368 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An adjournment of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to raise questions on items on the agenda (3 minutes per person max)

No adjournment was called

K1/369 TO FORMALLY APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20th FEBRUARY 2017

Proposed Cllr Stephens, Seconded Cllr Swain that the Minutes be agreed as a true record. All in favour.

K1/370 TO CONSIDER THE STATEMENTS 1,2 & 8 IN THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND AGREE ANY APPROPRIATE ACTION

The clerk reported that in order to have effective management (1) it would be wise to outsource the payroll as she did not have sufficient time to keep up to date with all HMRC/NEST requirements. Cllr Stephens/seconded Cllr Watt that PATA should be appointed to deal with the payroll at a cost of £49.50 per month which would be deducted from the Administration budget. All in favour.

The clerk reported that in order to demonstrate an adequate system of internal control (2) an immediate audit should take place with a new panel as the existing

appointees had not had an opportunity to meet. The Committee appointed Cllr Byrne and Cllr Callinan to carry out an immediate audit of financial matters. The clerk drew attention to the requirements in (8) that the council must consider which impacted on the year end accounting statements. A creditor was identified and agreed. The Committee also agreed that costs associated with the Post Office should be set aside in earmarked reserves and that the earmarked reserves would require review when the year end balances to hand.

K1/371 TO RECEIVE A PROGRESS REPORT FROM HIGH STREET EVENTS WORKING GROUP AND CONSIDER EVENTS MANAGEMENT POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

The clerk advised the Committee to identify the purpose of events and the benefits, costs and liabilities. The Committee agreed that the General Policy Working Group should draw up a management policy and consider the scope of council administration.

K1/372 TO CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE GENERAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

1. Consider amendments to the Co-option Policy and Council Strategy

The Co-option Policy was discussed. Cllr Swain expressed disappointment that whatever policy was adopted it seemed to be the intention of at least one councillor to call an election whenever possible. The Policy was proposed by Cllr Swain, seconded by Cllr Byrne. Carried by 4 votes For/1 Against.

The Council Strategy as amended, was proposed by Cllr Watt, seconded by Cllr Stephens. Carried by 4 votes For/1 Abstention.

K1/373 FINANCE

2. To check and agree expenditure/receipts totals against budget headings February

February Expenditure £12875.70 Receipts £256 were checked and agreed. Proposed by Cllr Byrne, Seconded Cllr Callinan, all in favour

3. To agree the bank reconciliation February - The bank reconciliation £142139.75 was proposed by Cllr Stephens, seconded Cllr Swain, all in favour

4. To agree payments to date March

Payments to chq 8474 were proposed by Cllr Callinan, seconded Cllr Watt, all in favour

5. Update on investments and required action

The clerk advised the committee that a further investment fund was needed and provided 3 options to consider. Proposed Cllr Stephens, seconded Cllr Callinan that funds of £75000 be invested in Aldermore Business Savings for a term of 1 year

6. VAT Inspection Report

The report not yet received.

7. Consider a grant request from Hazelwood Social & Activity Club £324 for food counter

Proposed by Cllr Watt, seconded Cllr Swain that a grant of £324 be awarded from the 2016-17 budget as the request was dated 23rd March 2017. All in favour

8. Consider a grant request from Sharpness Lifeboat Station (any donation) towards keeping the station operational

The applicant's accounts were not available. The Committee were minded to award a donation of £100 provided there was evidenced need. Cllr Watt and the Clerk appointed to check the accounts before a donation was made.

K1/373 TOWN HALL/POST OFFICE PREMISES

1. Receive a report from the Building Facilities Working Group and new rate demands for Post Office £407 per month, Town Hall £400 per month

The Building Facilities working group reported a more positive meeting with the County Council in that a reasonable lease term might be acceptable and costs might be met from savings in current maintenance costs approx. £10,000. **The Committee considered the minutes and agreed that their expectation was for something more definite by mid-May in terms of a design layout of the building, lease term and rent proposal. The Committee noted the rising business rates.**

K1/374 FUTURE OF TOWN CENTRES

To receive input to the SWOT analysis and suggestions from the Committee in advance of the meeting on the 10th April.

The Committee agreed the content of the SWOT and the following suggestions from councillors:

- There is a need for a core centre to the parish
- There is a need for local shops which are accessible to all
- There is a need for better community liaison through a Chamber of Commerce and/or Town Centre Manager, business advice (particularly for failing businesses) and grants from District/County Council for shop front improvements, events etc.

K1/375 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th May 2017

Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960. The Committee will pass a resolution excluding the public from Item K1/376 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and publicity of the item would be prejudicial to the public interest

K1/376 To receive Minutes from the Staffing Committee Meeting of the 27th March 2017 and consider any recommendations

The Committee noted the new staff appointments and suggested commencement dates. Acceptance of the roles had yet to be confirmed in writing.