

AGENDA ITEM

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at the Council Chamber, Drake Road, Tavistock on **TUESDAY the 2nd September, 2014 at 7:35pm.**

PRESENT Councillor P Sanders (in the Chair)

Councillors D Eberlie, Mrs J Metcalf, J Sheldon, J Moody, D Whitcomb.

Councillor H Smith (Mayor)
Councillor Mrs S Bailey (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor Mrs M Ewings (Chairman - Properties Committee)

IN ATTENDANCE Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk

170. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Mrs A Johnson (Chairman).

171. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs M Ewings declared a personal and prejudicial interest in connection with Minute No. 178 by virtue of membership, in a management capacity, of the organisation concerned.

172. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 8th July, 2014 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

173. MEETING OF THE PROPERTIES COMMITTEE HELD EARLIER THAT EVENING

The Chairman of the Properties Committee advised of those items arising from that meeting with a potentially significant financial implication. Namely:- grant application to Biffa and estimates in respect of the prospective insulation of the Pannier Market roof.

174. GENERAL FINANCE

a) Schedule of Payments

The Committee considered the monthly accounts, as at 30th June and 31st July, 2014 for submission to the next Council Meeting (Appendix 1).

b) Budget Monitoring Report

The Committee received and considered a copy of the Budget Monitoring Report as at 30th June and 31st July 2014 (Appendix 2).

c) Capital Programme

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk/RFO (Appendix 3) providing an update in relation to the Council's Capital Programme over the next 3/4 years, the availability of Reserves, anticipated additional capital requirements and to put in place future funding arrangements.

In the discussion arising from consideration of the above particular reference was made to a range of issues including

- the criteria for applications to the Public Works Loan Board,
- organisational capacity and delivery issues,
- responses given to matters raised previously by the Chairman,
- the nature of a challenging yet manageable programme - skills, resources, programming and
- the significance attached to the prudent use of public monies and development of alternative funding streams.

Following consideration of the matter it was

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council, at its meeting on 9th September, 2014:-

- a. Endorse an application by the Town Council for the sum of £500,000 from the Public Works Loan Board in the current financial year to provide the means to deliver the Tavistock Townscape Heritage Initiative Scheme (subject to receiving a Stage 2 pass).
- b. The Forward Planning, Policy and Programme Sub-Committee be designated to oversee and recommend arrangements for the co-ordination and delivery of the

Capital Programme of the Council and related matters
so as:

- i. To maximise efficiency, economy and effectiveness and promote best value;
 - ii. Ensure appropriate levels of capacity to deliver and promote a managed approach to the delivery of Council projects;
 - iii. Review existing priorities and make recommendations as to the priority to be attached to those projects not already subject to the earmarking of funds.
- c. Affirm that no significant new capital (beyond those previously listed) or other resource heavy projects be progressed without putting in place compensatory capacity and other resources to facilitate delivery.
- d. That, at the succeeding Council meeting, the Clerk offer a preliminary view on the potential for the engagement of a Grants Officer for a fixed term of 12 months after which any continuation of the contract should be self funding.

Noted that :-

- a. Appendix 1 had not been included for circulation with the Agenda and would be duly circulated prior to the Council Meeting.
- b. An amended page 5 of the Report had been circulated to all Members.
- c. Councillor Mrs M Ewings left the Meeting during consideration of the above item and thereafter.

d) Audit 2013-2014

The Committee was advised that the Council had received a clear (unqualified) report from its external auditor, Grant Thornton. One observation which had been made – regarding the accounting treatment for fixed assets which had been passed to the Council's Accountant to progress in due course. The Responsible Finance Officer and Finance Team were commended for a positive audit outcome.

175. REQUESTS/OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING A DECISION

The Committee proceeded to consider the following requests/items requiring a decision.

a. Request from the Town Crier

A request had been received from the Town Crier for financial support towards an opportunity to represent the Council in an international competition (Appendix 4).

RECOMMENDED THAT the Town Council offer the Town Crier and his consort the sum of £300 toward travel expenses.

b. Southern Parishes Link

A vacancy had occurred on the above body following the resignation of Councillor J Sheldon therefrom.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council, at its Meeting on 9th September 2014 appoint a representative to serve upon the Southern Parishes link.

c. Staff Handbook – Draft Communications and Media Protocol

The Committee considered a draft Communications and Media Protocol (Appendix 5) which had been subject to consultation with the staff side.

Arising from consideration of the above concern was expressed that the Protocol included provisions relating to elected Members as well as staff arising from which it was:

RECOMMENDED THAT consideration of a Communications and Media Protocol for the Town Council be deferred pending development of separate provisions to apply to Officers and elected Members.

Noted That

i) at the invitation of the Chairman a Member offered to provide suggestions in relation to provisions regarding elected Members;
ii) the importance of elected Members making it clear in all communications with other parties including the media as to whether they were formally authorised to represent the Council, or presenting their individual views, was stressed.

d. **TAP Funding**

The Committee noted the dates for submission of applications for TAP funding.

e. **Statutory Instrument 2095 - 2014**

The Committee considered how best to proceed in relation to the above Statutory Instrument – “The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014” (a draft of which had previously been circulated).

RECOMMENDED THAT the Town Clerk

- i. Provide a report into the application of part 3 ss7-8 (Recording of Decisions) together with an overview of matters in relation to the recording of Meetings (part 2); and
- ii. Undertake any essential consequential changes to Procedural Standing Orders arising from the provisions of Part 2 (Reporting Arrangements).

Noted That with regard to para ii above the main impact related to the amendment of Standing Order 3(l) to reflect the changed legislation and request (as opposed to require) prospective photographers/recorders or broadcasters etc to notify the Chairman.

176. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

The following items had been circulated for information only:-

- a. Industrial action – anticipated proceedings on 14th, October 2014 were noted
- b. Report of the Assistant to the Town Clerk (Appendix 6)
Noted That in connection with item 6 of the above report it was further

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council express its support to the Friends of Plymouth Airport Group in their efforts to have Plymouth Airport re-opened.

- c. Invitation to Council for the Protection of Rural England Devon Seminar – 19th September 2014 (Appendix 7)

- d. Chamber of Commerce – Minutes of the Meeting held on the 7th July, 2014 (Appendix 8)
- e. Tavistock Matters – Notes of the Meeting held on 30th June 2014 (Appendix 9)
- f. Tavistock BID Company – Minutes of the Meeting held on 17th July 2014 (Appendix 10)
- g. West Devon / Tavistock Consultative Liaison Group – Notes of the Meeting held on 11th June, 2014 (Appendix 11)
- h. Connecting Devon & Somerset (Parish Briefing) (Appendix 12)
- i. Future agendas
 - i. Southern Link Parishes Committee – no items were suggested.
 - ii. West Devon / Tavistock Consultative Group the consensus was that consideration should be given to
 - long leases from the Town Council to the Borough Council and;
 - the consultation in connection with the application of Section 106 monies arising from development off Plymouth and Callington Roads.
- j. Updates received from Council representatives serving on other Council bodies – there were none.

Noted That in particular concerns were expressed by a former representative of the Council upon the local Citizens' Advice Bureau (subsequently re-constituted and no longer including local representation). Recent issues affecting the delivery of the service were outlined and the importance of the CAB to local persons emphasised.

Arising from the foregoing the Leader of the Borough Council extended an invitation to Members of the Town Council to attend at the forthcoming meeting of the Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee which was reviewing the operation of the Citizens' Advice Bureau within the Borough.

177. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was:

RESOLVED THAT the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business.

178. TAVISTOCK YOUTH CAFE

(**Confidential** by virtue of relating to commercially sensitive information)

The Committee received copy correspondence from the Tavistock Youth Cafe, received that day, in connection with a request to underwrite aspects of future delivery.

It was recognised that Members had not had the opportunity to review the information in full and therefore the Committee was requested to identify any further or additional information that it might wish to receive prior to consideration by Council.

Reference was further made to a wide range of issues including the nature of the request, options available to the Council, potential issues and implications etc. In order to be able to provide a suitably informed response it was therefore:-

RECOMMENDED THAT this matter be referred to the Meeting of the Forward Planning, Policy and Programme Sub-Committee scheduled to be held on 30th September, 2014.

179. DEBTORS

(**Confidential** – By virtue of relating to commercially sensitive information).

The Committee considered and noted the list of all those with debts to the Council dating from earlier than the last quarter day and received updates, where appropriate, in respect of same.

Noted that in connection with Debtor E it was further;

RECOMMENDED THAT

- a) the Debtor be granted an extension of two weeks, in accordance with the request received, to make settlement in full of all outstanding monies.
- b) In the event that settlement was not received within the foregoing time period the Town Clerk be authorised to bring

proceedings against the tenant for recovery of the premises
on the basis of non-payment of rent.

The Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed.....

Dated.....

CHAIRMAN