

MINUTES of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on Tuesday 15th February, 2022 at 5.30pm in **THE COURTROOM, THE GUILDHALL, TAVISTOCK**

PRESENT

Councillor H Smith – (Chairman)

Councillor Mrs U Mann – (Vice Chairman & Deputy Mayor)

Councillor A Hutton (Mayor)

Councillor Mrs A Johnson (Immediate Past Mayor)

Councillors J Ellis, *Mrs M Ewings, Mrs G Parker

Ward Members – Councillors B Smith, P Squire, P Williamson (Observers)

*Arrived late to the Meeting

IN ATTENDANCE Town Clerk, General Manager

307. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for late arrival had been received from Councillor Mrs M Ewings.

308. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

RESOLVED THAT The Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 4th January, 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

309. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

310. COUNCIL INSURANCE

The Committee received and considered the Report of the Town Clerk providing an update in relation to arrangements in respect of the Council's Insurance and seeking agreement on future arrangements.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to the time pressures arising from the circumstances associated with the existing insurer withdrawing from the market place, pressures within the insurance market and the level of information being sought by prospective providers.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council: -

- a) Review, receive and endorse as appropriate the Schedule outlining existing levels of cover (Confidential Appendix 2 refers) to form the basis (subject to availability and professional advice from insurers) for future arrangements:
- b) Councillor H Smith be nominated to attend the opening of tenders for the provision of insurance services to the Council at 12 noon on Monday 28th March, 2022:
- c) Endorse that, in view of the circumstances and the specialist nature of the services being sought, the procurement of insurance services be from a select list of specialists' insurers/brokers (Financial Regulation 11.1(a)(ii) refers) without public advertisement:
- d) In view of the schedule of meetings, authority be granted to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and immediate past Mayor to put in place all necessary arrangements to secure the provision of insurance cover with effect from 1st April, 2022, including to accept the tender representing best value.

Noted That:

- A copy of the tender document was available for inspection by Members, by prior appointment, at the Council Offices:
- It was acknowledged that, whilst every effort would be made to secure cover equivalent to that currently in place there was the possibility that (subject to the normal operating terms and conditions of individual insurers) different levels of cover might be necessary.

311. QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE/PARTNERSHIP WORKING

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk and an associated proposal from the Tavistock Business Improvement District Co Ltd and Partners (Appendix 3) setting out existing and proposed arrangements to celebrate the occasion of the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Council currently had in place anticipated spend of in the order of £5,000 for the conduct of a Beacon on Whitchurch Down, together with the planting of seven semi-mature trees to celebrate each decade of the reign in accordance with the national arrangements set out by the Palace.

The BID Company proposal added to the celebration through a range of activities, principally focused upon Thursday 2nd June, 2022. These

would be led/organised by the BID Co which would be contributing £5,000, together with support from other partners (£5,000). In addition, a financial contribution (direct and/or in kind) was invited from the Town Council.

In the ensuing discussion the significance of the remarkable achievement of, and contribution by Her Majesty to, the national and civic life of the nation was acknowledged. As such the BID proposal represented a complimentary offer alongside existing arrangements to celebrate/commemorate the occasion and was warmly welcomed.

It was acknowledged the Council's contribution to this additional strand of activities (which also linked in timing with that of the official Beacon) would appropriately be primarily in the form of financial assistance (direct and/or in kind), with due regard to organisational capacity post pandemic. However, the Event Organiser indicated she was confident that where needed any additional (to BID) staffing resource/professional expertise could be accessed through the range of other partners and as such this did not disadvantage delivery if a Council financial contribution were made.

In the ensuing discussion the quantum of support was discussed, with figures of £7,000 and £5,000 respectively reviewed.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- a) Welcome in principle the proposal from the BID Company to partner with them, and others, and enter into discussions in connection with those elements which relate to Council funding and/or resources or property usage;
- b) Make available a budget of £5,000 (on the basis set out in the report) to support the initiative subject to equivalent match funding being committed from the BID Company Ltd (£5,000) and other Partners (£5,000);
- c) Nominate:
 - Councillor Mrs U Mann; together with:
 - One other Councillor;to attend any Meetings to enable the project, as convened by the BID, and requiring Member representation.

Noted That:

- i) The Lions Club of Tavistock was considering the possibility of arrangements for a Jubilee Picnic in the Park in The Meadows on Sunday 5th June, alongside the Robey Trust Steam Fair;

- ii) Councillor Mrs M Ewings arrived during consideration of the above item.

312. TOWN MARKETING

The Committee considered the Report of the Town Clerk, together with a proposal from Tavistock Heritage Trust (Appendix 4 refers), in connection with the potential to develop a co-ordinated Destination Marketing Strategy for the Town and associated activities.

The proposal was considered to be worthy of exploration, and with the potential to develop an integrated approach to promotion, arising from which it was: -

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council:

- a) Welcome and endorse the proposal in principle, subject to more detailed work being carried out regarding its prospective operation and Partner contributions as submitted:
- b) Nominate representatives (number to be notified to the Council) to serve on the proposed Marketing Group and assist in the further development of the proposal.

Noted That the proposal itself was for: -

- i. Formation of a Town Marketing Board with representation from the Town Council, Business Improvement District and Tavistock Heritage Trust and support from the Borough Council;
- ii. To support and then deliver the Marketing Strategy creation of a Town Marketing fund with contributions from the above organisations suggested amounts would be £5,000 each from BID and TTC, with £3,000 from THT (which formed part of the NLHF funding designated for publicity):
- iii. Engagement of a freelance social media assistant to develop an online presence for the Town.

313. OFFER TO DONATE PAINTING

The Committee considered the Report of the Town Clerk (Appendix 5 refers) in connection with a kind offer of a donation of a painting to the Council.

It was noted, in particular, that the Council did not appear to have a policy to address this situation. Consideration was accordingly given to the arrangements which might suitably apply when considering offers of art or similar.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council adopt a policy to apply to offers of donations of art or artefacts i.e.

- a) such should only be considered for acceptance when: -
- i. In some way the donation has a unique historic and artistic significance for the Town, no other avenues for safekeeping are available, and a failure to preserve it represents a material loss to the cultural heritage of the Town; and
 - ii. Accordingly, that where a work of art is offered and considered potentially suitable, it can be accepted where it is anticipated the value of the piece is in excess of £2,000, as supported by an independent professional appraisal and of sufficient artistic and cultural merit and it meets the other criteria in this policy; and
 - iii. More generally that the threshold for the acceptance of donations shall be set at a level sufficient to avoid the Council becoming a repository for items of interest as opposed to those of intrinsic artistic and cultural significance; and
 - iv. The donation gives no rise to any material conflict of interest;
 - v. Where a donation is accepted a suitable donor agreement shall be entered into; and
 - vi. That in circumstances where the Council is unable to accept a donation and, as/if appropriate, the donor be signposted to other organisations which might be in a position to accept the donation.
- b) As regards the offer made, the Council acknowledge with thanks the kind offer of the donation but, in view of the applicable policy, decline same.

Noted That para (ii above) has been reworked from that listed in the Report to reflect concerns expressed by the Committee regarding the cost to the Council of a professional appraisal. Accordingly, both the value threshold has been amended and provision made for appraisal to be commissioned other than by the Council.

314. TAVISTOCK MUSEUM – TRUSTEES

Consideration of the foregoing item was deferred pending a Meeting of the Tavistock Museum Trust to consider the matter of membership and Trustee appointments anticipated to be held in March.

ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

315. INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee received and noted the Interim Report of the Council's Internal Auditor (Appendix 6):

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

316. 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.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL

317. STREET FURNITURE

(**CONFIDENTIAL** - by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee considered the report of the General Manager (Appendix 7) in connection with the above, alongside an oral update in relation to past and current practice.

In the ensuing discussion reference was made, in particular, to the importance attached to any agreement being on the basis that the Town Council did not take on responsibility "in perpetuity" but that it should be able to maintain bench stock as circumstances required.

RECOMMENDED THAT the Council accept the without prejudice lump sum offer in the identified amount for the maintenance of the applicable bench stock subject to the agreement including that:

- i. TTC will continue to maintain its established practice as covered by its "memorial benches-guidance and rules";
- ii. Any replacement benches due to dilapidation will in part at least attempt to be funded by the memorial bench application process;
- iii. Any maintenance approach will be in line with applicable current practice i.e. make safe and schedule in repair/replacement works within the seasonal window (usually December – March), unless deemed essential;
- iv. The agreement above only covers the existing bench stock. Any additional benches should be considered on a case by case basis, with no expectation that TTC will be required to cover costs;

- v. TTC reserve the right to modify/amend the existing bench stock on a case by case basis e.g. if it is deemed that there is no longer a demand in a certain location/or the situation has changed that is no longer practical to maintain (for instance frequent vandalism etc). In other words, the term "perpetuity" does not apply.
- vi. The Council establish an earmarked reserve for monies allocated as identified.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

318. STAFFING

(**CONFIDENTIAL** -by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee received an oral report from the General Manager and Town Clerk in connection with appointments recently made in the staffing establishment and other related matters.

In particular, attention was drawn to

- a) Minute No. 270 - the response of the employees' side to the proposed increase of the 'out of hours' allowance from £150 to £175 was considered. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that the Council was not in a position to increase the offer available at the current time in view of budget constraints. However, it was the consensus that it would be appropriate to agree whilst the Council was unable to offer more than £175 per session at the current time it would, in 12 months' time, review both the amount and the duties associated with the role.

Noted That Councillor Mrs M Ewings Declared an Interest in the above item by virtue of a personal association and left the room during consideration thereof.

- b) The post of Community and Compliance Officer had recently been filled through an internal appointment. Arrangements were being made for the advertisement of the Financial Administrator role anticipated to be at Grade 5;
- c) Following the appointment to the post of Town Hall & Events Manager there would be discussions with Partner Organisations as to how best to phase the transition to same.

319. INSURANCE

(**CONFIDENTIAL** -by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee received, for information, the confidential Appendix (Appendix 8) relating to Minute No 310.

The Meeting closed at 7.17pm

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN