

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND ASSETS COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 20 FEBRUARY 2018 AT 7 PM. AT THE TOWN HALL

PRESENT Councillor Mrs S J Sandall (Chairman)
Councillor T Story (Town Mayor)
Councillor J Dawson
Councillor B C Sumner
Councillor B Turner
Councillor D Taylor

ALSO PRESENT Town Clerk

598. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported the reasons for absence from Councillor Mrs S Sismore. The reasons were noted and accepted.

599. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor B Turner declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in respect of any discussion relating to the Royal British Legion application for financial assistance as he is leading this project on behalf of the British Legion.

600. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2018, were signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting.

601. UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS

The Town Clerk provided a verbal update on the following items:

- a. *Section 106 Funding* – The Town Clerk circulated the schedule with the final updated costs for all three projects with the anticipated start dates. The schedule would be forwarded to the District Council with details of the projects. This was noted.
- b. *Red Lion Square Shrubs* – Contact had been made with the garden centre which had provided the shrubs. It was observed that the same shrubs had been sold to other customers without any issues. However, the Garden Centre was due to receive a new batch of shrubs soon and a visit to the garden centre would be undertaken by Councillor Story and the Town Clerk to discuss possible replacements. **Action:** Councillor Story/ Town Clerk
- c. *Refreshing the Regalia display* – It was noted that this activity remains in hand. The Town Clerk was requested to approach the relevant Councillors to expedite completion of this project soonest. **Action:** Town Clerk

602. FINANCE

- a. *To examine the Accounts for Payment* – Schedule No. 10 had been circulated for examination. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that there would be an additional

£7,500 in value of invoices which had been received since the schedule had been produced. These will need to be paid immediately as they reflect work both approved and completed.

The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that the Town Council had agreed to replace the bulbs in the Court Room with LED bulbs to save on electricity costs. It was noted that the first set of 50 bulbs of warm white light had been purchased.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Johnson, seconded by Councillor Taylor and unanimously **RESOLVED** that schedule No. 10 is submitted to the Town Council for approval and the Town Clerk is authorised to pay the additional invoices identified for completed work which would appear in schedule No. 11.

- b. *To consider the position of the budget 2017/18* – The Budget Report was circulated to members of the Committee and was noted. It was noted the adjustments requested could be made to the reports to enable easier comprehension of the report. These will be incorporated in the next issue. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that an Internal Audit is scheduled on Wednesday 14 March by the Council's appointed internal auditor. It was also suggested that at the April meeting there should be consideration regarding the investment of some funds. By the next meeting any surplus funds will be identified for earmarking towards future projects.
- i. *Hire Levy for Charities, Societies and Clubs* - The committee was circulated with the costs of hire rates approved by the Town Council for the use of Town Hall Facilities from 01 April 2018. Discussion ensued with the focus on trying to offer the best possible rates to charities, societies and clubs. It was recognised that these groups were likely to have limited budgets and resources. However, it is essential the Town Council covers its overheads, especially in respect of staff costs.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor Taylor and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the following concessionary tariff applies to charities, societies and clubs wishing to use the Town Hall facilities, subject to availability:

- Any room Monday - Friday between 09.00 - 16.00hrs - Free of Charge
 - Specific Tuesdays until 9pm (no extensions allowed) - Free of charge. Immediately after 9pm a charge of £180.00 will be applied.
 - Any other evening until 9pm (no extensions permitted) will be charged at £180.00
 - No concessions will apply for any other evenings nor for weekend hire.
- ii. *Town Hall Cleaning Contract* – Councillor Mrs S Sandall informed the Committee that Beeby's had been approached in respect of the renewal of the cleaning contract. They are very keen to retain the contract. The chairman suggested that due to contract confidentiality this item is discussed in closed session.

The Chairman confirmed pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is **RESOLVED** that due to confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press were requested to leave the meeting during consideration of item relating to contract confidentiality.

7.15pm – Meeting proceeded in Closed Session

7.30pm – Meeting resumed in Open Session

During the discussions in Closed Session the following proposals were resolved.

Proposal 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the meeting with the Town Clerk and Beebys should proceed, together with the retention of the current contract with Beebys subject to the 2018 contract being frozen for the next twelve months.

Proposal 4 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Johnson, seconded by Councillor Turner and unanimously **RESOLVED** that one deep clean session is agreed at £490.00 which includes the cleaning of the windows inside and out, together with the changing of all light bulbs.

- iii. *Lincolnshire Grass Cutting* - The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that the issue of the County Council grass cutting of verges had given concern. At the Town Meeting in 2017 it had been highlighted that this subject may resurface in 2018. Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) has written to advise all Town and Parish Councils that South Kesteven Council (SKDC) will not continue undertaking urban grass cutting on behalf of LCC from 1st April 2018. SKDC had cut urban grass areas a minimum of five times during the grass cutting season (April – October). Due to LCC's severe financial restrictions, it has agreed to cut the urban verges twice a year only. Should the Town Council decide to authorise additional cuts, LCC would then anticipate that the Town Council would also wish to take on the 62,417m² of highway verge on behalf of LCC, which would be cut on a basis of twice a year at suitable intervals. It is understood that the latter highway verge cutting would attract an annual payment to STC by LCC of £2,746.35. However, it is anticipated that like other parish councils, Stamford Town Council would wish to increase the number of cuts in both locations. Additionally, there is a further area of grass of 17,869m² of highway verge being cut by 'others'. LCC would pay a further £786.24 for the year for this area to be cut on the same basis and standard as all others areas taken on by the Council. Should Stamford Town Council take on an agreement to cut the urban and highway verges on behalf of the County Council, LCC would not carry out any urban grass cutting in Stamford. It must also be understood that LCC cannot enter into any agreement where another Council supplements County grass cutting and, in the absence of an agreement, any work undertaken on the highway without permission would be illegal. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that when this subject was investigated last year the anticipated cost then was approx. £1,850.00 per cut per occasion. Following discussion it was noted that it had been confirmed at a recent Cluster meeting that LCC was considering the extent of their grass cutting regime. It is disappointing to receive this notification so late, as the Town Council had to set its Precept in January. It was also appreciated that residents need to be aware of this situation and it is important to highlight this matter at the forthcoming Town Meeting in March. It was further observed that with new building developments, management fees should be an essential requirement for the maintenance of urban highway verges associated with new estates.

Proposal 5 – It was proposed by Councillor Turner, seconded by Councillor Mrs Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk investigates the potential costs for six cut of the urban highway verges per season, as outlined by LCC.

603. **MAJOR BUILDING WORKS**

- i. *Renovation of internal stairs* – The Chairman Councillor Mrs S Sandall observed that the project to renovate the internal staircase and lay carpet has been completed. All feedback had been positive and it was confirmed that it enhanced the entrance to the Town Hall.
- ii. *Archive and Attic Rooms* – The Town Clerk confirmed that planning approval is awaited. It was anticipated that work could commence possibly towards the end of May. Both locations need to be cleared in readiness for work to commence. The Town Clerk reminded members that clear time needs to be scheduled specifically for this task to be completed within the time available for normal Town Council operations.
- iii. *Purchase of new table and chairs* - The Chairman Councillor Mrs S Sandall outlined the outcome from the site visit to examine the style and quality of the tables and chairs on offer. It was the consensus that this had been a very productive and positive meeting as it was evident that the chairs initially quoted were not of the quality required. Also it was recognised that the table storage trolley was not suitable for the Town Hall. Following discussion it was suggested that the current ‘Map Room’ is relocated to the Skells Room to free-up storage space and enable the tables and chairs to be located on the same floor for ease of management. The Chairman confirmed she had discussed with the Town Clerk that the total cost of £3,395.00 could be identified within the Town Hall Cleaning and Town Hall furnishing cost centres. If the order was placed this week the items could be delivered in time for the Civic Dinner.

Proposal 6 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Johnson, seconded by Councillor Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that 15 oblong tables (6’x2’6”) at £38.95 each; 100 steel diamond chair silver vein with black fabric (2.5” density cushion) at £17.45 each; 80 removable linking clips at £1.00; 15 white polyester table cloths at £15.95 each 1 stacking chair truck at £74.95 and 2 white polyester chair covers at £5.45each are ordered. A purchase order for £3,395.22 is approved.

604. **ASSETS**

- a. *Handling of all Town Hall collections* – The Town Clerk reported that there had been discussion regarding reorganising and refreshing the collections in the Malcolm Sargent Room. With this in mind, it was critical that the appointed person is working alongside an assigned officer. This would ensure that any exposure of liability is protected and safety measures are in place. Following discussion it was noted that Mrs Penny Rowley has offered to work with the Town Clerk / Deputy Town Clerk on this project.

Proposal 7 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Johnson, seconded by Councillor Dawson and agreed **RESOLVED** that Mrs Penny Rowley works with Town Clerk / Deputy Town

Clerk to refresh and reorganise the displays in the Malcolm Sargent Room. There was one abstention.

- b. Civil Ceremonies at Town Hall* – The Chairman Councillor Mrs S Sandall suggested that the Town Council considers reinvestigating the potential for holding Civil Ceremonies at the Town Hall. Initial investigations have indicated the fee for obtaining a licence for one room is £1,500.00 valid for three years. Any additional room would be at a supplement of £50.00. It was recognised that there was no budget set-aside for this initiative but it is anticipated that there could be a positive return on such an investment. However, it is also appreciated that this project will need to be considered outside of the current administration staffing, although it will clearly need to be supported by the current infrastructure to a certain degree. Following debate it was acknowledged that the Town Hall offered an excellent venue for Civil Ceremonies only. The Chairman has assigned the Civic Officer to examine and report on the various options to promote the Town Hall facilities. There consensus that due to the small Town Hall administration staff, the candidate identified for the promotion of Civil Ceremonies element worked in partnership with the Town Council and is not employed by the Town Council.

Proposal 8 – It was proposed by Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor Taylor that £1,500.00 is ring fenced from the 2017/18 budget for the application of the Civil Ceremonies licence and that the Civic Officer produces a report by the April Finance meeting on the various options to promote the Town Hall facilities. **Action:** Civic Officer

- c. Section 106 Projects* – The Town Clerk circulated the schedule identifying the final costs and apportionment of the Sec. 106 resource. This was noted and would be circulated to all members of the Town Council before being forwarded to SKDC.

605. MAYOR'S CHARITY

The financial position as at 25 January 2018 was circulated and noted.

606. GRANT/DONATION REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED

- a. The Royal British Legion* – A request for a grant for £200-£300 had been received from the Royal British Legion to support an element of their WWI Armistice Centenary programme.

8.20pm – Councillor Turner declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest in respect of this item and left the meeting.

Following discussion it was agreed that a formal application was required. The event was not until 14 June 2018. There was consensus that in principal that Committee supported the request for £300 towards the Children's Peace Party but it wished an application to be completed and submitted with the necessary paperwork. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that a request is also being investigated with the next Mayor as to whether the Town Hall could be used for an evening concert during a weekend. A meeting is scheduled with the Deputy Mayor and the Town Clerk to obtain further details. **Action:** Town Clerk.

8.25pm – Councillor Turner returned to the meeting

- b. Twinning Reception* - The Committee noted that there was an application in the pipeline for support funding for the cost of the food towards this reception. The Committee agreed that the Twinning Association should submit two applications one for the room hire and another for financial assistance. **Action:** Civic Officer
- c. Darby and Joan Funding* – The Town Clerk informed the Committee that she had advised a number of local organisations of the grant funding available under this resource, as agreed by the Town Council. There had been interest expressed by the Evergreen Care Trust and Priory Court Care Home. Following discussion it was agreed that both projects submitted did not fit the criteria and should be rejected. The fund should be opened up to include a wider scope to embrace both churches and charitable bodies in Stamford.

Proposal 9 - It was proposed by Councillor Taylor, seconded by Councillor Mrs Johnson and RESOLVED by majority vote that both submissions be rejected as they did not fit the criteria. There was 1 Against and 1 Abstention.

607. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Councillor Taylor presented the Committee with the 2018/19 budget for the Stamford Neighbourhood Plan. Quotes were circulated for the engagement of a professional body to take the data currently held, and produce the Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that it was legally robust and withstand planning scrutiny. The budget was examined and it was appreciated that this was an anticipated budget, based on current rates. However it was considered that the estimated rate for printing was not realistic: even if a basic number were printed in-house, with the majority available on-line. It was noted that an additional £7,000.00 has been requested towards the Neighbourhood Plan and this should be based on realistic figures. Councillor Taylor anticipated additional grants will need to be sourced but it is expected that the total cost of the production of the final Neighbourhood Plan would be £23,870.00. There was extensive debate and concern was expressed on the level of additional contribution requested from the Town Council as this had not been allowed within the 2018/19 budget. It was appreciated that the production of this document was important and the budget will require recalculation.

Proposal 10 – It was proposed by Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor Turner that the Quote for L.A.B Planning services in principal is accepted but needs to be renegotiated. A quote for printing 250 copies of a 75page A4 colour document printed in-house is calculated. Action: Town Clerk / Cllr Taylor

608. PERSONNEL MATTERS

- a. Lone Working* - Councillor Mrs S Sandall informed the Committee that as the Community Cleaner is operating as a lone worker, it was suggested that he wears a camera for his safety. The Community Cleaner is willing and comfortable with this proposal if agreed by the Town Council. Councillor David Dorson had kindly offered a portable camera for the Community Cleaner to wear.

- b. CiLCA Qualification* – The Town Clerk reported that the Deputy Town Clerk had successfully achieved her CiLCA Qualification and should obtain her certificate within six weeks.
- c. Legal Assistance* – The Town Clerk advised the Committee that there had been a number of areas in which she is seeking legal advice. It was noted.

609. ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

- a. Civic Protocol* – The Town Clerk circulated the current document which had been updated and requested feedback and suggested adjustments from the Committee as the paper would need approval at the next meeting.
- b. Express Elevators Ltd* – The Town Clerk reported that Express Elevator Ltd maintains the lift within the Town Hall. All Express Elevator business has been transferred to Kone plc from June 2018. This was noted.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting.

Chairman
Closed the meeting at 9.40pm