

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND ASSETS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 14 AUGUST 2018 AT 7.00PM IN THE TOWN HALL, STAMFORD

PRESENT Councillor Mrs S J Sandall (Chairman)
Councillor J Dawson
Councillor B C Sumner
Councillor T Story
Councillor Mrs S Sismore
Councillor Mrs G Johnson

ALSO PRESENT The Town Clerk
Councillor H Bisnauthsing
Councillor M Exton
Mr Simon Harris, Harris McCormack Architects
Mr Tom Ramsden, Harris McCormack Architects

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

230. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 1)

Councillor B Turner submitted his apologies. These were noted and accepted.

231. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs S J Sandall declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest in Voucher No. 159 on the payment schedule as it related to her family business and also for the application for financial assistance from Friends of Stamford and Rutland Theatre as her daughter was involved with this group.

232. MINUTES (Agenda Point 3)

The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 10 July 2018 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

233. UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS (Agenda Point 4)

- a. *Bottle Lodge Verge Agreement* – It was noted that this matter remains pending on the result of Lincolnshire County Council’s consultation.
- b. *Outstanding payment in respect of Civic Dinner use of kitchen* – The Town Clerk advised that the Civic Officer and Councillor Story had been reminded of the outstanding invoice. Councillor Story recognised that there is a charge for the use of the kitchen but considered that this charge should not apply to Mayoral events such as the annual civic charity dinner. Councillors Bisnauthsing and Councillor Exton both stated during their mayoral term no such charge had applied to the mayoral events. The Chairman Councillor Mrs S J Sandall appreciated the comments offered, but reminded the Councillors that the kitchen facilities had been significantly upgraded during the recent renovation phases and consequently it was in the ratepayers interest that the energy costs

must be recouped. All civic events have always been, and must continue to be, cost neutral with any expenses covered through ticket sales or from the Mayoral allowance. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the Town Council had agreed a Civic Protocol which has been applied to previous mayors' events and who have covered the cost of the use of the kitchen. It was confirmed the £80 charge is for the cleaning of the new facility following usage plus any associated energy costs. It was confirmed that the charges for the use of the kitchen is applied to all users.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Story that charging for mayoral events should be revisited by the Scrutiny and Audit Committee. The proposal was not seconded and therefore fell.

- c. *Mayoral Charity Account* – It was noted that this would not be transferred to Lloyds Bank until next year following the election.

All other items were within the agenda.

234. **FINANCE**

- a. *Consider the list of Accounts for Payment Schedule* – Schedule No. 5 had been circulated for examination. The entries were examined and there were no queries. Schedule No. 5 would be presented to the Town Council for ratification.
- b. *Budget 2018 / 19* – There were no queries raised on the status of the accounts circulated previously. It was noted that the Sec. 106 funds are still awaited. The budget and reserves were examined and it was confirmed that sufficient funds were earmarked for the renovation projects on hand.
- c. *To receive the report on queries on CGM invoices and outstanding remittance to Town Council* – The Town Clerk reported that she remains in communication with CGM's solicitor and reaffirmed that there were no outstanding invoices due to CGM, the only payment being a remittance due to the Town Council. All evidence of invoice payments and bank debits have been submitted. The Town Clerk has requested that the outstanding sum due to the Town Council is paid within the next two weeks otherwise action will be taken to recover the funds. The Committee noted the current status of affairs.
- d. *Feedback on Glendale grass cutting contract* – The Town Clerk reported that she had been contacted by a resident in respect of some former Jelson sites, which were now in private ownership, being cut by this contractor and then charged back to the Council. This matter was investigated and following discussion with Glendale's Contract Manager it was confirmed the sites were in private ownership and therefore not chargeable to the Council. The Contract manager would ensure the Glendale operatives were clearly aware of these locations.

Councillor Story wished it recorded that any private sites being cut by the contractor on behalf of Town Council were being invoiced to the private owner and these invoices were being paid. The Town Clerk confirmed that this indeed is the case. Councillor Story further wished it recorded that the Council was not using funds from Reserves in supporting Lincolnshire's grass cutting responsibilities. The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that the Town Council initially agreed to earmark £30K, which was brought forward. However, following negotiations with Glendale this expenditure was reduced to £25K. It was confirmed that if the Town Council decides to continue supporting LCC

in this activity, it will be necessary to obtain tenders for next year. It was noted that Councillors Mrs Johnson and Sismore had recently completed mapping all the areas for cutting identified by LCC and it is questionable as to whether they are all grass areas. It will be necessary for all the locations to be physically inspected to ensure the sites are all grassed. It was also noted that SKDC was creating its own in-house grass cutting operation and it may be possible to collaborate with them in future in respect of grass cutting contracts.

The Chairman Councillor Mrs Sandall informed the Committee that one of the private owners had wished to gift their three open-space locations to the Town Council without charge. Following discussion it was considered that the sites need to be visited to establish any liability to the Council should they agree to accept responsibility for said sites.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Johnson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Sismore and unanimously **RESOLVED** to instruct the Town Clerk to undertake a survey of the locations and report back to the Committee at their next meeting on the full liabilities to the Town Council in regard to taking on these sites. **Action:** Town Clerk

e. *Any other urgent items for consideration:*

- i. **Stamford Brass request for financial assistance towards a loft ladder** – This matter was discussed and it was considered this item was part of maintenance and was outside the conditions of the grant funding programme. However the Committee considered that it may be useful for Stamford Brass to submit an application form for consideration by the Finance Committee.
- ii. **Mayoral Allowance and support allowance to Deputy Mayor** – The Chairman Councillor Mrs Sandall confirmed that the former Mayor Max Sawyer's expenses had been examined and some costs disallowed as these costs could not be supported. Following discussion with the Town Clerk it was suggested that the fairest allocation of the allowance would be a pro-rata allocation for the months of the Mayoral term of office served. The three months pro-rata allowance was £550, which was sufficient to cover valid expenses. In a similar manner the travel expenses were allocated on a pro-rata basis towards the engagements attended which was £120.15. Following a meeting with Max Sawyer a refund of £1529.85 had been received by the Council. Following discussion, it was suggested that the Deputy Mayor could be allocated the balance of the Mayoral allowance of £1650.00 towards any engagements or fund-raising costs. The remainder of the travel expenses of £379.85 would be managed in the same way.
- iii. **Feedback on meeting with Registration Services** – The Chairman, Councillor Mrs Sandall informed the Committee that the Council's application had been acknowledged and is following due process. It is anticipated that the licence could be issued in October 2018 following the legal notices being posted.

235. MAJOR BUILDING WORKS

- a. *Renovation Works* – Simon Harris and Tom Ramsden provided a report on the results of the tender process. The Town Clerk advised that these papers were sensitive working

papers relating to Tender information, and only for Committee members to examine at this stage. All members of the Council would receive the final copy with the agenda pack for consideration. Councillor Exton disagreed as in his opinion all papers should be available to all attending the meeting. The Town Clerk reminded the Committee that neither Councillor Exton nor Bisnauthsing were on the Committee and although they may be present as observers, they were only allowed to speak with the permission of the Chairman. Simon Harris confirmed that the tender had gone to four local companies, one of which withdrew their interest due to their current commitments. The other three had submitted their pricing, but as indicated on the Schedule of Works, all three quotes have been analysed to ensure they include all aspects of the project; however aspects of the pricing have been presented differently. However, overall the quoted pricings were very comparable. Quote A - £69,739.91; Quote B - £72,034.19 and Quote C - £68,604.35. These prices include the installation of the special shelving in the archive by the specialist firm Rotadex; making the attic rooms secure and safe with a basic decoration which includes electrical points, standalone heating, lighting and the renovation of the Minstrels Gallery historic feature. The work also includes the installation of handrails at the entrance to the main door to the Town Hall. It was noted that a special report is anticipated from structural engineers Messrs. Smithers Purslow on the crack to the top step; vehicular damage that had been caused to the corner of the building, together with the method to address potential damp ingress arising from the lack of proper drainage at the West wall of the archive. A full report is awaited and any recommendations therein would be extra to the above quotes. However, the condition of the archive and the structural walls are relatively sound and dry. It is anticipated that repairs which are being considered are modest considering the budget, but will assist and improve the drainage conditions helping to remove the potential of damp issues. All contractors have quoted with a September start date in mind. The Town Clerk advised that arrangements were in hand for the locations in the Town Hall to be cleared by early September. It was recognized that the Town Council has worked successfully with two of the contractors but it is up to the Council to appoint the contractor and sign the contract. There is a contingency of £5,000 within the costs to protect against unexpected situations. The Town Clerk stated that areas within the attic rooms will have small viewing areas to allow visitors to see how the walls and ceilings are constructed within this Listed Building. It is anticipated that one JCT contract is issued for all elements within the project and will be prepared as soon as the Town Council has decided the preferred contractor. The work should take between 8 to 10 weeks and following an inspection by Harris McCormack to ensure all aspects have been completed as per contract. Staged payments be released on approved valuation invoices. Therefore all payments are made in arrears but remittances should be made within two weeks to allow the contractor to manage cash flow. There was discussion in respect of access to the site and there was concern expressed over the potential damage that could occur to the newly laid carpet. Simon Harris confirmed that there was discussion needed to set the boundaries as to how the site is to be used by the Contractor and to avoid any crossover with public for Health and Safety reasons. It would be better that no access is permitted through the main entrance and access is restricted to the external spiral stair case. It was confirmed that no extension of the current fire alarm system is expected.

However, if Building Control determines adjustments may be necessary, contact will be made with the Britannia Fire and Security Services who provide the Town Council's system. To enable the rooms to be cleared in readiness for renovation, it was suggested that the Town Hall is closed on the Thursday afternoon of 16 August and all day on Wednesday 29 August 2018. A skip will be necessary to dispose of the rubbish. Quotes had been obtained which includes a Licence for placing it on the roadside these are in the region of £200 + VAT with an additional fee of £60 for the Licence which is non-refundable should it be refused by LCC. It was anticipated that the duration of the skip use could be for a week, but hopefully less.

Mr Harris and Mr Ramsden left the meeting.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor J Dawson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Hall is closed on the Thursday afternoon of 16 August and all day on Wednesday 29 August for the rooms to be cleared in readiness for the renovation. A skip should also be ordered on Wednesday 29 August to allow for the rubbish to be disposed of.

The Committee discussed the tenders Schedule of Works and considered the details of the two contractors who had worked for the Town Council on previous occasions. It was that important that all aspects of the contract are tackled at the same time to deliver completion at the earliest point. The Town Clerk will verify with Harris McCormack that access will be permitted via the external staircase only to avoid any contact with public.

Proposal 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Dawson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Sismore that it was unanimously **RESOLVED** the preferred contractor should be Orchard and the contractor does not use the lift and all access is via the external staircase with a shute to dispose of any debris. All aspects of the contract are tackled at the same time to deliver an earliest completion date.

b. *Update on the painting of the Malcolm Sargent Room* - The Town Clerk informed the meeting that three contractors were expected to view the Malcolm Sargent Room next week. This was noted.

236. ASSETS

- a. *Consideration of Town Hall Bookings*: The list of requests received to use the Town Hall was considered:
- i. **No.4 Group Training Course** – 30 July 2018 to 10 August 2018 (9pm-5pm) Invoice was issued based on the standard rate of hire £165.00 x 10 days= £1650.00.
 - ii. **Wake for David Nalson** – Friday 24 August 2018 (2pm–5pm). Following discussion it was agreed that the Court Room should be granted free of charge but the use of the kitchen be charged at £80.00.
 - iii. **Stamford Friends of Whizz Kids** – Friday 28 September 2018 (4pm–11pm) The Chairman confirmed that the Civic Officer confirmed that he had informed the organiser that the potential cost was £360.00. Following discussion it was agreed to retain this charge level.

- iv. **Lakeside PPG Mental Health Education** – Friday 02 November 2018 (12pm – 4.30pm) Councillor Bisnauthsing was invited to speak on this subject by the Chairman. He advised that this Patient Participation Group has been in existence for some time. The Group has run two educational days over the past three years on the subject of Diabetes and Dementia. Future events are also booked on Alzheimer and Parkinson Disease. These are being led by Dr Dan Petri and a number of health professionals. It is hoped that the meeting which is scheduled on 02 November could be provided free of charge. It was noted that the Court Room and the Malcolm Sargent Room could be used FOC. Following discussion it was noted that the requested date is on Friday when Town Hall tours are conducted. It was noted that Lakeside does not offer any support to the PPG as this is a patient group and the request is for a one off session. It was observed that this event would be during the renovation programme and the Town Hall may not be the correct venue for such a subject. The use of the kitchen may not be required.

Proposal 4 – It was proposed by Councillor Story, seconded by Councillor Dawson that it was **RESOLVED** by majority vote to offer a one off-use of the Court Room and Malcolm Sargent room free of charge subject to availability.

- v. **Indoor Christmas Market** – The Town Clerk informed the meeting that a request had been received for an indoor market to be held on the same Sunday as the Christmas Festival, 25 November between 9am – 5pm in the Town Hall, with a coffee shop operating in the Malcolm Sargent Room. Following discussion it was considered that this venture should be explored in principle and a cost considered for the use of the Court Room, Malcolm Sargent Room and the Entrance Hall. Following discussion it was considered that the sleigh could visit the Town Hall to collect the Deputy Mayor.

Proposal 5 – It was proposed by Councillor B C Sumner, seconded by Councillor Mrs Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the indoor Christmas market is explored further.

Councillor Exton raised a query that a booking for training for LALC was FOC but a charge is being levied on SKDC. This was noted.

The Chairman Councillor Mrs Sandall informed the Committee that the Civic Officer had been informed by the Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce that they would be prepared to offer Stamford Town Council one-year honorary membership subject to them using the Town Hall at no cost to run an event or hold a meeting there. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would be acceptable on the condition that it would be for one event.

Proposal 6 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Johnson, seconded by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the offer of one-year honorary membership with Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce is accepted on the proviso that only one event is booked at the Town Hall free of charge. This event should be during Town Hall working hours Monday to Friday. An evening event would need to be by special arrangement.

- b. *To provide an update on the Museum Store* – Simon Harris had reported that during their inspection there was no extensive internal damage, however externally there was indication of historic movement. There were four crack indicators installed and questions need to be asked as to when these were installed and what recent monitoring had indicated. There is also a very large retaining wall to the rear of the building which will carry some liability and it was strongly suggested that a full survey is conducted by a structural engineer, such as Smithers Purslow. However before engaging them more information should be obtained from LCC on the crack indicators. Following discussion it was noted that the Town Council should proceed with caution. The Town Clerk informed the meeting that she had a meeting with the newly appointed Curator of Browne’s Hospital and that he would be very happy to work collaboratively with the Town Council to obtain accreditation for Browne’s and the Town Hall. He was very familiar with the accreditation application as he had acquired accreditation for Litchfield Museum. Following discussion it was the consensus that this should be progressed and all Town Council representatives on Browne’s Hospital Board should encourage the Trustees to see the benefits of collaborative action.

Proposal 7 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Johnson, seconded by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the support from the Browne’s Curator is welcome and the collaborative application for accreditation with Browne’s Hospital should be supported. There were two abstentions.

- c. *Feedback on the renovation of the Historic Plaques* – The Chairman informed the meeting that two specialists had been identified for the cleaning of the first historic plaque in the Court Room. These had been contacted and quotes were being obtained. Historic England would be contacted to ascertain whether any permission would be required prior to any commencement of work.

237. MAYOR’S CHARITY - It was noted that the Charity Account still held residual funds of the former Mayor Councillor Tony Story’s charities, which should be distributed in the coming weeks. This was noted.

238. GRANT/DONATION REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED

- a. *Friends of Stamford & Rutland Theatre* – The Chairman Councillor Mrs S J Sandall declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest and left the room during these discussions. The Vice Chairman Councillor J Dawson took the Chair. The application was circulated for consideration. Following debate it was considered that more detail was required in respect of the funds which had been raised by the organisation and the status of their bank account. It was noted that the organisation provided valuable support during the Christmas Festival and involved a number of local members.

Proposal 8 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Sismore, seconded by Councillor Mrs Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that more details are required in respect of the membership, the value of the funds which have been raised by the organisation and constitution upon which it operates.

Councillor Mrs S J Sandall rejoined the meeting and took the Chair.

239. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN** – No further updates available.

240. **PERSONNEL MATTERS**

- a. *To consider applicants for the Amenities Operative* – The Town Clerk reported that the recently appointed Amenities Operative had submitted his resignation. A fresh advertisement was placed on the website and social media to identify a new candidate to fill the vacancy.
- b. *Review of Salary Payments* – The Chairman advised that during the absence of the Town Clerk a query had arisen in respect of the dates of the salary payments. Following discussion it was noted that payments had been issued on the 24th of the month and the Town Clerk wished to confirm that this continued to be the wish of the Council. The consensus was that usually salaries were paid at the end of the month on a set day but if there were no objections, the *status quo* should remain with salary payments continuing to be made the 24th of each month.
- c. *Armed Forces Reservist Leave* – The Town Clerk reported that the Administration Officer's application to join the Reservist Military band had been accepted. He was required to report for training between 4 and 14 September 2018. It was noted that he would be paid by the Armed Forces for this period and it appeared that the Town Council could receive a compensation payment for the disturbance. It was recognised that support would be required during this period and a volunteer to assist should be identified.

Proposal 9 – It was proposed by Councillor T Story, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Administration Officer's request to attend the training course is granted.

241. **ANY OTHER MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION (Agenda Point)**

- a. *Lapel Pins* – The Town Clerk informed that with the Council term swiftly coming to a close, she asked whether the Council would consider purchasing lapel pins for Councillors as a token memento of their service on the Council. Initial costs for 50 badges is £132.50 + VAT. This could be considered at the next meeting but the consensus was that this would be a very positive gesture.
- b. *Council Vacancy* – The Town Clerk confirmed that the Notice of Vacancy had been posted and the closing date is 21 August 2018. If no By-Election is called the Council would be able to fill the vacancy by Co-option.

242. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING: (Agenda Point)** – Tuesday, 11 September 2018 at 7pm

Chairman
(The meeting closed at 9.55pm)