

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND ASSETS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 12 MARCH 2019 AT 7.00PM IN THE TOWN HALL, STAMFORD

PRESENT Councillor Mrs S J Sandall (Chairman)
Councillor J Dawson
Councillor T Story
Councillor Miss B Griffin
Councillor Mrs S Sismore
Councillor B Turner
Councillor Mrs G Johnson

ALSO PRESENT The Town Clerk

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

709. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 1)

Councillor B C Sumner submitted his apologies; these were noted.

710. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 2)

None made.

711. MINUTES (Agenda Point 3)

The Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 12 February 2019 were confirmed and signed as a true record of the meeting.

712. UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS (Agenda Point 4)

a. *Rear Garden* – The Chairman stated that the flowers for this location had been ordered. It was noted that the order had included the flowers for the Recreation Ground and Cemetery planting to obtain a more cost effective price. The pots being provided by Tarmac at Tallington had been designed and images circulated. Following discussion a selection of styles were made. The location of these prototype precast concrete containers would be in the rear garden, Recreation Ground and by St. Michael's Churchyard. It is anticipated that the railings will be installed by the end of March. In addition to the flowers some compost, turf and plant feed will also be required.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Johnson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Sismore and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk proceeds with the purchase of the compost turf and plant feed for the rear garden.

All other items would be discussed later on as they were associated with the agenda.

713. FINANCE (Agenda Point 5)

a. *Consider the list of Accounts for Payment Schedule* – Payment Schedule No. 12 was still being prepared and would be circulated shortly.

- b. *Budget Report 2018/19* – This was examined and noted. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the contractor for the watering of the plants on the Town Hall terrace, Town Bridge and Red Lion Square had maintained his 2018 cost for 2019.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor B Turner, seconded by Councillor J Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that Glorious Garden is contracted to irrigate the flowers on the Town Hall terrace, Town Bridge and Red Lion Square at the cost of £1.715.00.

- c. *Investment programme* – The schedule illustrating the position of investments was circulated and it was noted that the short-term investment is due to mature on the 18th March 2019. Following discussion it was considered that due to the forthcoming elections the reinvestment of these funds should be reviewed by the new Council in June. It was noted that the long-term investment would mature on 27 June 2019.
- d. *Card Payment System* – The Chairman Councillor Mrs Sandall stated that following investigation there were a number of different types of card payment systems available. However, it was recognised that although the machines may be free, a percentage is charged on the value of the sales taken. Following discussion it was considered that that offering this method of payment could be an advantage. However, the use of BACs may be preferable as it doesn't carry a charge. It was also acknowledged that card payments are preferred by many. It was agreed that the situation should be monitored and reviewed in June
- e. *Internal Audit* -The Town Clerk informed the Committee that an Internal Audit had been arranged 21-22 March 2019. This would lead towards the End of Year Report in preparation for the External Audit. This was noted.
- f. *Lincolnshire County Council Grass Cutting* – The Chairman Councillor Mrs Sandall explained that last year the Town Council provided three cuts to support the two cuts LCC had scheduled, upon which the precept submission was based. However, communication had recently been received from LCC offering an increased support payment but the Town Council would have to undertake a minimum of three cuts with LCC providing none. Following discussion it was noted that in the previous year there were five cuts of which two were provided by LCC. This coming year no cuts would be done by LCC if the Town Council take on this support. The Town Council would be required to undertake the minimum of three cuts. On examination of the budget and the support payment offered, there are sufficient funds to continue to undertake this task. However, the Committee recognised that this may eventually lead to the support payment diminishing over coming years.

7.40pm – Councillor Miss B Griffin joined the meeting.

There was debate as to how this should be managed for the benefit of the Town. It was appreciated that there were some members of the Town Council who did not agree with the Town Council undertaking this task. However, the Town Council has budgeted for this and can commit to this agreement to ensure the Town's relevant grass areas continue to be maintained.

Proposal 3 – It was proposed by Councillor J Dawson, seconded by Councillor B Turner and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Council continue to support LCC with their

grass cutting and undertake the minimum of three cuts and, if required, implement additional cuts.

- g. *Wittering View* – The Chairman observed that the cost of advertising that the Town Council undertakes in the Wittering View magazine had been covered by the Events Committee. However as the advertising covers more items relating to the Town Hall, it was suggested that the Finance Committee cover the cost. There are four issues each costing £150.00.

Proposal 4 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S Sismore, seconded by Mrs G Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Finance Committee covers the cost of advertising in the Wittering View magazine.

- h. *Zurich Insurance* – The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the insurance renewal is due on the 1st April 2019. Following discussion it was noted that previously the Town Council had a three-year agreement in place. Zurich had offered a one year term at £5,219.20 or a three year term at £4,733.65 these included all taxes. It was the consensus to continue the Town Council cover with Zurich.

Proposal 5 – It was proposed by Councillor B Turner, seconded by Councillor J Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the insurance cover for a three-year term is accepted with Zurich Insurance at a cost of £4,733.65.

- i. *Mayoral Allowance* – The Town Clerk reported that at a recent Finance Training session it was advised that all details of this cost should be open, transparent and fully accountable. It was recognised that this allowance is routinely offered to the incumbent Mayor and is used to cover their duties. The Town Clerk will be discussing this matter with the Internal Auditor so the procedure in place complies in being open, transparent and accountable to the Town Council as best practice requires.

714. MAJOR BUILDING WORKS (Agenda Point 6)

- a. *Historic Panel* - Conservation of the panel is progressing well and it is understood that this conservation work has excited many academics at Lincoln University.
- b. *Attic Room Flooring* – A initial quote had been obtained for flooring cover for the attic rooms. Debate ensued in respect of whether the floors should be boarded and covered with carpet tiles or standard carpet. It was recognized that the traffic in these areas will be low. In addition it was debated whether to have either roller blinds or vertical blinds. The Town Clerk was asked to obtain further quotes but for roller blinds and carpet with underlay rather than boarding.

715. ASSETS (Agenda Point 7)

- a. *Consideration of Town Hall Bookings*: The list of requests received to use the Town Hall was considered:
 - i. **Citizens Advice** – Three sessions for staff and volunteer training had been requested during the daytime on a Tuesday in July, August and September between 9.30am – 4pm. These training sessions would be held in the Malcolm Sargent Room.

Proposal 6 – It was proposed by Councillor B Turner, seconded by Councillor J Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the above Town Hall bookings be accepted and be free of charge in line accordance with the Town Council’s Policy for Charity Organisations.

- b. *Town Hall Eight Day Clock* - The Town Clerk reported that the clock had been inspected by a local resident who had offered to undertake the work free of charge. Following discussion the Committee appreciated the kind offer but the clock was of historical value it would be preferred that the work was guaranteed. The Town Clerk was instructed to obtain a quote for the work.
- c. *Historic Chest* – It was noted that this had now been moved down from the Court Room to the Entrance Hall and would be included as part of the Town Hall tours. Grateful thanks were extended to RAF Wittering for their kind assistance.
- d. *Museum Store* – The building survey report had been examined and a meeting is scheduled this week to discuss the findings and recommendations. It was noted that Lincolnshire County Council was consulting on the Discover Stamford element attached to the Library. Should the Town Council wish to pursue this matter it would be asking that this is considered as a unit that is the Museum Store and Discover Stamford together, so that the items are retained in Stamford. It was recognised that this is a very important matter for the Town and has greater priority than the recent publicity regarding Red Lion Square.

716. MAYOR’S CHARITY (Agenda Point 8)

It was advised that the current balance of the Mayor’s Charity fund stood at £981.50. This was noted. The schedule of costs of the Civic Events held to date were examined. There was discussion over the £80.00 charge for the use of the kitchen for Civic Events. There was debate as to whether the kitchen was utilised for the Georgian Tea Party held in the Mayor’s Parlour. There was mixed opinion over this matter and whether a tiered pricing should be implemented. The Town Clerk stated that matter is continually revisited when it applies to the incumbent Mayor. It is understood the Town Council’s decision is that the £80 charge is applied to all bookings and has been charged to all previous Mayors. The cost of the use of the kitchen facility should be always considered whether it is for hot or cold use. The Chairman confirmed that the £80 charge is used by the Town Council to maintain the facility. It was also reconfirmed that the Civic Officer is the only member of staff who should be engaged in Mayoral events. However, if evening events are held at the Town Hall there is the mandatory requirement to have one member of staff who is a key holder and another person on duty for insurance and safety requirements. If any additional staff are engaged the staffing costs must be embraced within the event costs.

There was further discussion as to how free places should be accounted for in respect of Civic Events. Committee members considered that all Civic Events must be cost neutral, and the cost of free places allocated be calculated within the ticket pricing or recouped by a raffle, or paid for by the Mayor personally. However there was the view that as all Civic Events are charity events, all those attending should pay for their tickets and no places should be given away free of charge.

Proposal 7 – It was proposed by Councillor T Story, seconded by Councillor Miss B Griffin that there should be a tier pricing for cold (£40) and hot use (£80) of the kitchen. Two votes in Favour, four votes Against and one Abstention. The resolution fell.

Proposal 8 – It was proposed by Councillor J Dawson, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Sismore and **RESOLVED** by majority vote that the status quo remains. Five votes in Favour and two votes Against.

717. GRANT/DONATION REQUEST TO BE CONSIDERED (Agenda Point 9)

a. *Stamford Kiwanis* – The Chairman Councillor Mrs Sandall informed the Committee that the Town Council offered support towards the cost of the road closure for the Float Festival Parade. However, the Town Council has not yet decided who it will be appointing for traffic management. However the Kiwanis have obtained a quote from TMS. Following consideration of the low level of the grant fund available, it was agreed that the organisation must submit an application which could be examined at the next meeting.

718. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (Agenda Point 10)

The Town Clerk reported that the grant fund of £9,000 had now been exhausted and any expenditure would be covered from allocated Town Council funds. However, a Lottery Application had been submitted to ‘Awards For All’ for a grant of £10K. The outcome of the application is awaited. It was also reported that an invoice had been received for the management of the Stamford First website. Following discussion it had been believed that this was to be managed in-house and should be investigated.

719. PERSONNEL (Agenda Point 11)

The Chairman confirmed in pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is resolved that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the meeting would continue in closed session during consideration of the next item which relates to personnel matters.

It was resolved to exclude the public and press.

The meeting proceeded in Closed Session 8.30pm

The meeting resumed in Open Session 8.45pm

Following discussion it was agreed that a recommendation would be made to the Town Council in respect of the new appointment for the Amenities Operative and the duties related to Health & Safety responsibility would be included within staff job descriptions.

720. ANY OTHER MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION (Agenda Point 12)

a. *Assistance* – Councillor Sismore offered her time if required, should she not be elected in the forthcoming elections. This was noted and appreciated.

721. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: (Agenda Point 13) – Tuesday, 09 April 2019 at 7pm

Chairman
(The meeting closed at 8.50pm)