

STAMFORD TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE, PERSONNEL AND ASSETS MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 09 APRIL 2019 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 Miss B Griffin
Councillor Mrs S Sismore
Councillor Mrs G Johnson

ALSO PRESENT The Town Clerk
Mr A. Totten, Kiwanis Club of Stamford & District

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Totten was welcomed to the meeting and invited to present the application for financial assistance towards traffic management for Stamford's Festival of Floats, which celebrates its 40th Anniversary in 2019. It was recognised that historically that the Town Council has been kind enough to support the cost of this expense. This year an application has been submitted for just over £2,000 which is about in line with recent years. This is the most hazardous element of the event when a number of floats drive through the centre of town in procession. There is a clear requirement for a professional management body to marshal the safe movement of traffic and road closures; without this the parade would not be able to go ahead. The event is supported by many organisations that provide their services free or through charity donations. It is also recognised that the Town Council do grant free use of the Recreation Ground and provide additional assistance towards other parts of the Stamford Festival. There is a street collection during the event; however the returns have diminished over the years. Financial assistance is critical and if the Town Council or another commercial body is unable to sponsor the Traffic Management element there is the potential for this traditional pageant to be discontinued. The Kiwanis operate this event and any funds obtained are invested in the function and consequently returned back to the people of Stamford. It was hoped that the Town Council would be able to support this request again as the Kiwanis will be using the Council's preferred traffic management contractor.

Following discussion, it was appreciated that in previous years the Police used to assist with the traffic management but with the pressures on resources this has changed and a professional traffic management body has to be contracted. This was in conjunction with the Town Council as the contractor also covered other Civic Events. TMS was approached by the Kiwanis because they are familiar with the operation, the Town, and have said that this is their most competitive pricing for a charitable organisation. The Town Clerk informed the meeting an added complexity is the end of the Financial Year and also the concluding few weeks of this Council's term of office. The Traffic Management for Council events will need to be tendered and it may be that TMS is the selected contractor. The question was asked whether something special was being organised given it would be the 40th anniversary. Mr Totten stated that although the format would be essentially the same, preparations are still in the early stages. It is very encouraging that there are some new organisations entering floats and a concerted effort is being focused on the content of the show. However securing financial assistance is paramount.

Councillor Mrs S J Sandall thanked Mr Totten for attending and that a recommendation would be made to the Town Council, following which the Town Clerk would inform him of the decision.

Mr A Totten left the meeting at 7.15pm and the formal meeting commenced.

778. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Point 1)

Councillor B Turner submitted his apologies; these were noted.

779. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Point 2)

None made.

780. MINUTES (Agenda Point 3)

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

781. UPDATE ON ACTION POINTS (Agenda Point 4)

a. *Museum Store* – The Town Clerk reported that she will be attending a Workshop this Thursday, 11 April 2019, at the Town Hall, with the Northampton Museum Mentor and the Museum Consultant in respect of the Accreditation Application. Both David Wallington (Curator for Browne’s Hospital) and John Hopson (Archivist for the Town Council) have been invited to attend. The Chairman Councillor Mrs S Sandall advised that a response is awaited from Lincolnshire County Council in respect of the survey conducted on the museum store building on behalf of the Town Council.

b. *Transfer of Open spaces to Town Council* – The Town Clerk reported that the land owner of the open spaces abutting Rockingham Road and Chatsworth Road had agreed to pay the legal fees to transfer the deeds to the Town Council and wished this to be expedited. This was noted with the process of transfer would commence following Town Council ratification.

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

782. FINANCE (Agenda Point 5)

a. *Consider the list of Accounts for Payment Schedule* – Payment Schedule No. 12b & Schedule No. 1 was circulated for consideration. These were discussed and noted.

End of Year Budget Report 2018/19 – The End of Year Budget Report has been circulated for consideration. The report was examined in detail and the Town Clerk confirmed the levels of funds being earmarked for agreed projects which would be carried forward as they had not yet been completed, together with any pending liability against purchase orders awaiting clearance. The Profit and Loss Report was discussed and it was observed that one of the investment schemes had matured with the second investment maturing in June. It was recognised that this would be on the occasion of the first meeting of the new Council’s Finance Committee, when a decision may be taken on the level of the next investment when the first instalment of the Precept is also received. The Town Clerk advised that there would be a residue from the current budget which would, if necessary, be carried forward and assigned either against appropriate cost centres or projects e.g. Age UK Fund, Elections, conservation of the Historic Panel and Neighbourhood Plan. A schedule will be produced identifying all the projects against which there are earmarked reserves.

The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Sage Accounting system was operating well with the Deputy Town Clerk managing the Customer elements of the accounts and the Administration Officer managing the Supplier elements of the system. As Responsible Finance Officer, the Town Clerk would oversee the entire process and will produce quarterly and reconciliation reports. A manual exercise has been initiated by the Town Clerk to ensure that these balance accurately and match the information recorded within Sage, which is currently being overviewed externally by Mr Sismey.

- b. *Year 2018/19 External Audit* – The external auditor PKF Littlejohn has called for documentation to be sent by 30 June 2019, preferably electronically. The Internal Audit will be conducted by Godfrey Parkes Services on 17-18 April 2019, with the final report being issued to the Town Council for approval.
- c. *1st April 2019 / 31 March 2020 Business Rates* – The Town Clerk reported that the Business Rates for the Town Hall and Stamford Cemetery had been received and were £18,044.25 and £3,240.60 respectively. This was noted.
- d. *Energy Renewal for Bandstand* – It was reported that the business contract was due for renewal and on current usage the renewal offer made by Eon is 1 year at £100 or for 3 years £99.94 per year respectively. It was noted that the NPower contract for the gas and electricity usage at the Town Hall is due to be expire in 2020. Following discussion, it was noted that Eon which supplies the Recreation Ground Skatepark and main site lighting was providing a better service. There had been a number of issues with NPower and all invoices were being paid as soon as they were received rather than with a standing monthly payment, which was leading to excessive credits being held by NPower. There was a consensus that the main account for the Town Hall should be investigated but in the interim the Eon fixed price business plan should be accepted.

Proposal 1 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Fixed Business Electricity Plan for three years is accepted at the standing charge of 27p per day on the current usage of 6Kwh with a total cost of £99.94 per annum.

- e. *Floodlighting All Saints Church* -The Town Clerk informed the Committee that a bulb needed to be replaced in the floodlighting unit at All Saints Church. Contact had been made with JEM Electrical and they had provided a quote to supply and fit the replacement bulb at a cost of £60.00. Councillor Mrs S J Sandall declared a Personal Interest as she is acquainted with the owner of JEM Electrical.

Proposal 2 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S Sismore, seconded by Councillor T Story and **RESOLVED** by majority vote to accept the quote. There was one abstention.

783. **MAJOR BUILDING WORKS (Agenda Point 6)**

- a. *Attic Room Flooring* – It was reported that a quote for the installation of roller blinds and durable carpet with good quality underlay was £1,400.00 + VAT. Following discussion it was noted that the window lintel of one of the rooms still required replacement before some of the rooms could be carpeted. Following discussion it was

considered that a good quality underlay was important and the work to the lintel be expedited.

Proposal 3 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs G Johnson, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Sismore and unanimously **RESOLVED** that £1,400.00 +VAT is earmarked for the total cost of carpeting and provision of roller blinds for the attic rooms, commencing with the Music Rooms and as soon as the lintel has been fixed the remaining rooms are to be completed with the carpets being extended to incorporate the stairs.

- b. *Rear Garden Landscaping* – It was reported that the railings to the rear garden are being installed and should be completed by the end of the week. However, with just two weeks before the first Civil Ceremony is held at the Town Hall, it was suggested that the surface of the garden could be graveled rather than partially covered with turf. A quote of 1,780.16 plus VAT had been obtained from Orchard who is installing the railings to assist with digging out and removing the existing soil and gravel to the area adjacent the new handrails. Geo-textile matting would be laid before laying washed gravel to the area. Following discussion there was a suggestion that slabs could be installed instead of gravel or some slabs as stepping stones. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that some of the plants have been planted, but the *gratis* prototype pots from Tarmac were now not going to be supplied as the exercise was proving more challenging than expected. Therefore pots will need to be purchased to complete the landscaping and planting. In addition an appropriate cushion will need to be purchased for the swing chair in the rear garden in readiness for the first function.

Proposal 4 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs G Johnson, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Sismore and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk asks Orchard whether they would be able to slab rather than gravel the area in time. If this is not possible gravel is to be used, with some slabs being installed as stepping stones at a later date. The Town Clerk is delegated to purchase the appropriate pots and cushion to complete the rear garden.

- c. *Conservation to Historic Panel* – The final report is awaited for the second stage of the conservation process. It was hoped all members of the Council have seen the work thus far and the small piece upon which the second stage has been undertaken. There are photos near the panel which show the how the panel can be stabilized and repairs made with minimal loss to the integrity of the panel. This was noted.

784. ASSETS (Agenda Point 7)

- a. *Consideration of Town Hall Bookings*: The list of recent requests received to use the Town Hall was considered:
- i. **Stamford in Bloom** – A request has been made to use the Court Room for the Reception for the announcement of the winner of the Photographic Competition on Monday 29 July 2019 at 7.30pm.
 - ii. **Stamford & District Twinning Association** – Request the use of the Court Room for the Reception of the Czech Twinning visitors to Stamford on Monday 1st July 2019. The reception will be from 6.15pm to 9.30pm.

Proposal 5 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S Sismore, seconded by Councillor J Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the above Town Hall bookings be accepted free of charge under the allocation of the Town Council.

- b. *Civil Ceremony Bookings* – It was noted that two further Civil Ceremony bookings had been scheduled for June 2019 and February 2020, with deposits paid. These were noted.
- c. *No. 4 St. Mary's Place Scaffolding* – The Town Clerk reported that the neighbouring building had requested for scaffolding to be installed on the Town Hall to undertake some roof work. All work has now been completed. This was noted.
- d. *Speed Signs* – The Town Clerk informed the Committee that in light of recent discussions at the Town Meeting, she had been made aware of two speed signs which are being sold. They had been purchased for £4,562.00, powered by battery or mains with four cell chargers and with 2x Lincolnshire Road Safety Partnership fascia plates. Saltfleetby Parish Council which is selling them is open to offers. These could be located at the entrance to the Town by the William Cecil Hotel and along Uffington road. This was noted.
- e. *Lincolnshire Bereavement Guide* - Lincolnshire County Council has enquired as to whether the Town Council wish to advertise in their Bereavement Guide at the cost of £330 for a 90mm X 90mm size advertisement. This will be considered once the new Council has taken office.

785. MAYOR'S CHARITY (Agenda Point 8)

The current status of the Mayor's Charity Account had been circulated. It was noted that the level stood at £1,732.51. The Town Clerk enquired whether any residue of the Mayoral Allowance, which currently was just over £200, could be used to top-up the Mayor's Charity account.

Proposal 6 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S J Sandall, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Johnson and unanimously **RESOLVED** that any residue of the Mayoral Allowance could be directed toward topping up the Mayor's Charity Account.

The Town Clerk advised the Committee that to comply with Local Government Transparency Code 2015, the Mayoral Allowance must be fully accountable. This year the Deputy Mayor has claimed certain expenses against the Mayoral allowance and each claim had been duly authorised by the Town Council. Having consulted with the Internal Auditor, it was confirmed this process is best practice to demonstrate clearly how public funds are utilised. Following discussion, it was the consensus that this procedure is outlined and implemented in future as part of the Civic Protocol.

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

- a. *Stamford Kiwanis* – The Chairman Councillor Mrs Sandall summarised the presentation made earlier by Mr Totten. Following discussion, it was noted that this request would be better allocated from the traffic management cost centre rather than the Grant Fund. It may very well be better to use TMS for the Kiwanis event as they are familiar with the operation. It was recognised that there was urgency for the Kiwanis to

know the outcome of these discussions so they could continue their preparations for the Festival Parade on 22 June 2019. The consensus was to recommend that the Town Council supports the cost for the Festival's Traffic Management operation. However it would need to be with its preferred traffic management operator for all its events.

Proposal 7 – It was proposed by Councillor J Dawson, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Sismore and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Council supports the cost of traffic management operation for the Festival of Floats as part of its contract with its selected Traffic Management Contractor.

The Town Clerk was asked to inform Kiwanis of this recommendation which would be presented to the Town Council at the end of the April.

b. *Stamford & District Twinning Association* - A request has been submitted for financial assistance of £250 towards the catering of the reception for the Kutna Hora Twinning visitors.

Proposal 8 – It was proposed by Councillor Mrs S Sismore, seconded by Councillor J Dawson and unanimously **RESOLVED** to support the grant of £250 towards the reception of the Kutna Hora visitors.

c. *Stamford Brass* – A request had been submitted for financial assistance of £900.00 for the installation of a loft ladder in the club house. Following discussion it was noted that there was no financial information provided with the application and therefore no decision could be taken. However, this organisation provides a service to the town and the request should be considered by the new Council.

d. *Christ Church Day Care Centre* – It was reported that Christ Church Day Care Centre which had submitted an application for assistance from the AGE UK Grant had now completed their project. This was for a grant for £2,000.00, which had been approved in November 2018. All invoices had been submitted and, once checked, the grant will be released. This was noted.

787. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (Agenda Point 10)

It was noted that although the Town Council has earmarked funds towards the delivery of this plan, the Town Clerk is applying for additional grant funds to support potential future costs. It was confirmed that expenditure currently covered the drafting of the plan and the engagement of professional planners to ensure that the policies within Stamford's Neighbourhood Plan are robust. There are two additional supporting pieces of work which have been necessary – a Character Assessment of the Area and an Open Space Plan to ensure that future development would be sympathetic with locations and ensure heights of any new construction does not impact the surroundings. Once the draft document is completed it will need to go out for public consultation. This will no doubt result in some amendments having to be made to accommodate feedback. The final stage will be when the final document goes before the Inspector for approval and, if approved, become a legal document within the planning system.

788. 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 8.40pm

The meeting resumed in Open Session 9.35pm

Following discussion it was agreed that the Town Council supports the reduction in hours of the Administration Officer from the 1st June 2019; the recruiting of an additional full time Administrative Assistant from the 1st June 2019; a trial in the operational hours of the Town Hall - Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm and 2pm till 4pm. Closed between 1pm and 2pm for lunch; Work Experience student should be granted a three week session in May 2019.

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

- a. *Land adjacent to 44 Caithness Road* – The Town Clerk reported that herself and Councillors had received correspondence from the owner of the land adjacent to 44 Caithness Road who wished to maximise the space by constructing a property to accommodate 2xbedsits on each floor of a three-storey building. He is willing to consider an exchange of an area of equivalent land in another location in Lincolnshire. The Town Clerk confirmed that the correspondence had been acknowledged and that any such development would need to be sent to the Planning Authority and in respect of the alternative exchange the Committee believed that this was inconsequential.
- b. *Election Circular* – the Town Clerk drew attention to a recent circular which is being posted through the doors of Stamford residents which has used the Town Logo without permission. It was noted that this matter has been taken up with the Electoral Office.

790. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: (Agenda Point 13) – TBC

Chairman
(The meeting closed at 9.45pm)