

FINANCE, ASSET & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee held in Ellesmere Town Hall on
Monday 16th December, 2019 at 3pm

PRESENT: Councillors: Cllr G Hutchinson (Chair), Cllr P Goulbourne, R Hartley, G Elner, N Cull, D Lunn, Mrs A Wignall
Jo Butterworth – Town Clerk

FAR-17/19 To Receive Apologies for Absence

No apologies had been received.

FAR-18/19 Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda

Cllrs declared personal interests in some of the groups who had applied for grant funding, item 8C on the Agenda.

Cllr P Goulbourne is a member of Men in Sheds and Ellesmere Sculpture Initiative.

Cllr Mrs A Wignall is a member of Ellesmere Sculpture Initiative.

Cllr R Hartley is a member of Ellesmere Bowling Club.

FAR-19/19 Grant Dispensations

None received.

FAR-20/19 Minutes

It was moved by Councillor Mrs A Wignall, seconded by Cllr N Cull and

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th October, 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

FAR- 21/19 Public Participation Session.

No members of the public present.

FAR-22/19 Interim Internal Audit

The Clerk reported that there were only 5 areas for concern these being:

- 1) An inconsistency between the award of contracts figure in terms of reference and the delegated figure in the Financial Regulations.
Councillors discussed the financial threshold that they as a committee would be happy to approve and they decided to recommend to full council that they have delegation to award contracts up to the value of £5,000. Anything over that amount should be agreed by full council.

- 2) Where council decisions are based on procurement clauses in the Financial Regulations, the actual clauses in the FR's relied upon should be stated in the minutes.

The Clerk will ensure that this is actioned going forward.

- 3) The Gardening/Grounds maintenance contracts are subject to the procurement requirements in the Financial Regulations, so all records of tender invitations should be kept. The Clerk reported that the Gardening Contract due for renewal in 2020 is currently out to tender.
- 4) The Chair, not the RFO, should sign all forms notifying payroll of internal changes to staff pay.
- 5) The Clerk's mobile phone contract was signed and setup by the previous Clerk and the Town Council currently had no access to the account to download the phone bills. The Clerk will contact the previous Clerk to obtain access to the required authorisation to access the account.

RESOLVED:

(a) to **RECOMMEND** to full Council that the terms of reference & Financial Regulations should both be amended to reflect that the Finance Asset & Resources Committee have delegated powers to award contracts to up to £5,000 and to review both documents together at a future meeting to ensure that the delegated powers and Financial Regulations are consistent.

(b) that Financial Regulation clauses should be included in the minutes when decisions have been made.

(c) that records of all tender invitations subject to the procurement requirements be kept for audit purposes.

(d) That the Mayor will, from now on, sign all notification to payroll forms relating to changes in staff pay.

FAR -23/19

All Together Ellesmere CIC, Financial Statements for the year ended 31.7.2019
Councillors considered the financial statements and agreed to recommend to council to continue supporting ATE by including £2,000 in the 2020/21 budget to cover the Tuesday market costs. It was further agreed that the Tuesday Market Task and Finish Group look into the intended future of the Market Hall beyond the lease expiry date.

It was moved by Cllr G Elner, seconded by Cllr R Hartley and

RESOLVED:

(a) to **RECOMMEND** to full Council that £2,000 be included in the 2020/21 Budget for the Tuesday Market costs.

(b) that the Tuesday Market Task and Finish Group be requested to explore the intended future of the Market beyond the lease expiry.

Budget Deliberations 2020/21

(a) an up to date 2019/2020 budget report up to the 30th November was circulated to all members prior to the meeting.

(b) First Draft Expenditure Budget 2020/21

The Clerk reported that she was still awaiting additional figures before she was able to produce the draft 2020/21 expenditure budget. It will be available in January.

(c) Grant Applications

Cllr N Cull commented that in future he would like to see 'date received' stamped on the grant awarding applications. He asked if we advertise that the Town Council offer grants. The Clerk reported that the awards were advertised through local social media, online and on noticeboards. Finally Cllr Cull enquired if any evaluation is completed by the Town Council following the award of grants to successful applicants, to which the answer was no.

The Clerk reported that she would like the whole grant awarding process to be reviewed during 2020 to make the process for smaller grants simpler. Councillors felt that in the future once the policy and procedure has been reviewed, a blanket amount be agreed for community grants.

The Committee looked through the applications and agreed that a sum of £2,050 should be recommended to full council for the 2020/21 budget. Each application considered on individual merit, locality and need. All applications were successful except one, which the committee felt due to the current economic climate, was beyond their remit to award.

Grant Applications	Amount Requested	Amount Agreed
Men In Sheds	NAS	200
Ellesmere Youth Project	100.00	100
Ellesmere Sculpture Initiative	250.00	100
Ellesmere Bowling Club	NAS	200
Xavier Management	250.00	250
Fizzgigs	500.00	200
Ellesmere Brownies	250.00	250
Ellesmere In Bloom	250.00	250
Ellesmere Sailing Club	NAS	0
Qube	NAS	250
Ellesmere Scout Group	NAS	250
Total	Total	2,050

(NAS = No amount specified)

RESOLVED: to **RECOMMEND** to full Council that £2,050 be included in the 2020/21 budget for community grants.

(d) Other considerations for 2020/21 budget.Salaries

The Clerk reported that advice had been given by SALC and at budget setting training to budget for a 8-10% increase to the current NJC scales. Current salary scale negotiations were underway and the outcome would be reported as soon as a decision had been reached. With this in mind the Clerk had prepared a breakdown of

current Town Council and Town Hall Salaries/wages and also including figures of an additional 10%. The Committee agreed that in light of the 10% recommendation and the need for a staffing review, to recommend to full council to budget £80,000 for Town Council Salaries and £30,000 for the Town Hall Salaries and Wages. The Clerk reported that the Cemetery salary needs to be recouped from the Cemetery Working group account, as it had been paid from the Town Council account, since April 2018. The salary costs for the running of the Cemetery were approximately £5,000 per annum, which need to be recouped from the Cemetery Working Group account for 2018/2019 and for 2019/2020.

It was moved by Cllr G Elner, seconded by Cllr R Hartley and

RESOLVED: to RECOMMEND to full Council that £80,000 be included for Town Council Staffing and £30,000 be included for Town Hall Staffing in the 2020/21 budget estimates and that the Cemetery staffing costs be recouped from the Cemetery Working Group account for 2018/2019 & 2019/20.

VE Day

At the December Town Council meeting (minute number 176/19), it was agreed to include £300 for planned VE Day celebrations in the 2020/21 budget.

Staff Training Costs

The Clerk reported that RBS provide accounts and bookings software training for a cost of £550 to train up to 4 employees on site, which in view of the system upgrade and also the imminent staffing review, was recommended to be budgeted for along with the £350 CiLCA costs, plus additional costs of £350 for SALC and SLCC training throughout the year. During the Town Hall staff appraisals staff training needs were also identified, so it was suggested that £200 also be included in the budget to cover the associated costs.

It was moved by Cllr Mrs A Wignall, seconded by Cllr N Cull and

RESOLVED: to RECOMMEND to full Council to include £1,450 in the 2020/21 budget for staff training.

Councillor Training Costs

A discussion took place and following recommendations, fed back from the Clerk's recent training course, it was felt that members of committees should receive relevant training and as there is a number of new councillors.

It was moved by Cllr G Elner, seconded by Cllr Mrs A Wignall and

RESOLVED: to RECOMMEND to full Council to include £500 in the 2020/21 budget for Councillor training.

Town Promotion

The Chamber of Commerce had now withdrawn their request for £2,000 towards town promotion. They will do some more research and would like to work with the Council during 2020 to promote Ellesmere in the future, however they have requested that the Town Council contributes towards the annual Ellesmere leaflet

again for 2020. Cllrs expressed the view that if they were to contribute towards the leaflet again, they would like more of an input into the design process.

It was moved by Cllr R Hartley, seconded by Cllr D Lunn and

RESOLVED: to **RECOMMEND** to full Council that £1,000 should be budgeted for Town Promotion and that further discussions should take place during 2020 as to how this will be spent.

Professional Fees

The Clerk reported that the bar lease at the town hall is due for renewal in May 2020, which will incur solicitor fees of approximately £300. She also reported that there may be some legal fees associated with drawing up an agreement for the Birch Road Local Nature Reserve and that once the Town Hall Maintenance Task & Finish Group have met and draw up a future phased plan for the Town Hall, specialist VAT advice will need to be sought (previously agreed in minute numbers 130(ix) and 59/19(iv) -VAT Specialist Fees - £800.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr A Wignall and

RESOLVED: to **RECOMMEND** to full Council that an additional £1,400 be included in the Professional Fees budget for 2020/21.

New Earmarked Reserves

Elections - full cost approximately £4,200.00. The Town Council had never set any money aside for Election costs, however the next elections were due in 2021, so consideration was given as to whether we budget for the full costs in 2020/21 or spread the cost over 2020/21 & 2021/2022. It also needed to be borne in mind that in the event of a casual vacancy a by-election could potentially be called.

It was moved by moved by Cllr Mrs A Wignall, seconded by P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED: to **RECOMMEND** to full Council to Earmark Reserves of £2,250 in the 2020/21 budget and to Earmark another £2,250 in the 2021/22 budget for election costs.

Youth Provision

The Clerk reported that Shropshire Council had asked the Town Council to take over the funding that they currently provided to the Rural Youth Activity Fund of £4,000 to enable them to fund their new model of youth support. If the Town Council did not take over this funding, Shropshire Council would only commit to continue supporting the Rural Youth Activity Fund until March 2021. Following discussions it was felt that the new youth support model proposed by Shropshire Council would not really be of benefit to Ellesmere. Councillors were in agreement to let Shropshire Council continue supporting the Rural Youth Activity Fund until March 2021, but to suggest ear marking £2,000 of the Town Council reserves for future Local Youth Provision.

It was moved by Cllr Mrs A Wignall, seconded by Cllr G Elner and

RESOLVED: to **RECOMMEND** to full Council to earmark Reserves of £2,000 in the 2020/21 budget for future Youth Provision for the town.

Current Earmarked Reserves

Earmarked Reserves	
Town Hall Roof No 3 A/c	40,000.00
TH Maintenance No 3 A/c	25,000.00
Bench Refurb No 1 A/c	300.00
TH Toilets - Water Damage No.3 Account	8,000.00

The Clerk reported that the bench refurbishment had now been completed and paid in full with a remaining balance left in the ear marked reserves of £300 which would be transferred back to the general reserves. She also reported that the work to repair the water damage in the Town Hall toilets would take place in the New Year.

The Clerk reported that she is awaiting a quotation for 3 CCTV cameras so that Council could decide if they would like them added to the current CCTV circuit. PC Crump had identified black spots in the current circuit and funding was currently being looked into to aid the finance of said cameras. It was also reported that the current CCTV contract will be due for renewal in May 2020, it was currently out to tender and figures would be received before the next FAR meeting in January.

There was a discussion as to whether the Town Council should look into funding the provision of dog poo bag dispensers in the town following a suggestion by a member of the public and previously discussed in minute number 128/19. It was decided not to pursue this issue due to limited resources but to chase up Shropshire Council on the progress of their appointment of a new Dog Warden.

Further consideration would be given to earmarked reserves at the next meeting of the Finance, Asset and Resources Committee in January.

FAR – 25/19

Exclusion of Press and Public

It was moved by Cllr R Hartley, seconded by Cllr N Cull and

RESOLVED: that in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1992, the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Acts.

FAR-26/19

Minutes

Draft exempt minutes of the Finance, Asset and Resources Committee held on 17th October, 2019 were tabled.

It was moved by Cllr R Hartley , seconded by Cllr G Elner and

RESOLVED: that the, exempt minutes of the meeting held on 17th October, 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

The meeting closed at 5pm.

Chair: L. Hutchison

Date: 15/01/2020