

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the FINANCE, ACQUISITIONS & STAFFING COMMITTEE meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 7 July 2015 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors Banks, Brown, Corby, Jones & McNeill
In attendance (non-voting): Councillor Wardrop (6.30pm) & three members of the public.

1 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

As this is the first meeting of the new Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee, nominations were requested for a Chairman. Councillor McNeill was nominated, seconded and duly voted into the position.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Hammond.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 12 May 2015, the Acquisitions Committee meeting held on 22 April 2015 and the Staffing & Development Committee meetings held on 29 July 2014 & 11 August 2014 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 FINANCE

a) Financial Statement as at 30 June 2015

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the first quarter of the financial year giving details of income and expenditure. Details of balances in the Town Council bank accounts, including petty cash, was also given. As at 30 June 2015 the figure is £439,954, the Town Council have 'ring fenced' £202,075 which leaves a usable balance of £237,879.

It was noted that that the budget heading 'Dog / litter bin emptying' was overspent. This is due to a 6 monthly invoice relating to the last financial year being received late and paid in this financial year, along with paying the full charges for the current financial year.

b) Cheque signatories for Cowes Town Council Bank Accounts

The Town Clerk reported that due to resignations of Councillors who were cheque signatories on the Town Council bank accounts additional signatories are required. Currently there are three Councillor signatories.

RECOMMENDED

That Councillors McNeill & Corby be added to the list of signatories for Cowes Town Council bank accounts.

c) Funding for Organisations outside of the Grant Application Process

Councillors discussed whether larger organisations, who make a significant contribution to the community of Cowes, and make an annual request for grants, should be funded annually via another process. Three organisations under consideration being Cowes Carnival Committee, Fireworks Committee and Isle of Wight Literary Festival.

ACTION

That the Town Clerk produces a draft process / procedure for this proposal for discussion at the next Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting.

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council make an annual payment to Cowes Carnival Committee, Fireworks Committee and Isle of Wight Literary Festival.

d) Review of budget heading 'Grants & Special Events' for 2015 / 2016

The budget for 'Grants & Special Events' for 2015 / 2016 was set at £14,000. To date £8,100 is remaining. Councillors discussed whether this was sufficient to enable grants to be made to worthwhile causes.

RECOMMENDED

That the budget for 2015 / 2016 be re-adjusted and £10,000 be transferred from the 'Discretionary Services' budget heading and placed in the 'Grants & Special Events' budget heading.

e) Applications for Grants

The Town Council has been asked to consider the following applications for grant:

- (i) Isle of Wight Literary Festival – Youth Zone Marquee - £2,000
- (ii) Isle of Wight Literary Festival – Lighting, stages, sound system & advertising - £6,300
- (iii) Cowes Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society – Defibrillator & staff training - £1,295
- (iv) Cowes Town Regatta Committee – Trophy – cost unknown

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That grants be made to the following organisations in accordance with the amounts shown:**
 - (i) Isle of Wight Literary Festival – Youth Zone Marquee - £2,000
 - (ii) Isle of Wight Literary Festival – Lighting, stages, sound system & advertising £6,300
- 2. That the grant application for Cowes Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society be put on hold until the Town Clerk has established existing locations of defibrillators in the area of Cowes town and whether this would be an appropriate location.**
- 3. That the grant application for Cowes Town Regatta Committee is not considered as the application form did not arrive in time for the meeting.**

6 ACQUISITIONS

a) Park Road Rose Bed

A draft lease agreement has been received from the Isle of Wight Council. On close inspection it showed that a small part of the Rose bed is owned by Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd. The condition of the Rose Bed was discussed, having been weeded by volunteers in May the weeds have grown back and the area is looking very untidy again.

ACTION

1. That Cowes Town Council write to the Isle of Wight Council requesting that they donate the Rose Bed to Northwood House and Cowes Town Council will undertake the maintenance.
2. That Cowes Town Council, in the interim, and up to December 2015, request three quotations from contractors to undertake the maintenance of the Rose Bed and outer grassed area.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Town Clerk is authorised to spend up to a maximum of £1,000 for payment to the approved contractor.**

b) Princes Green – Annual Bedding

Complaints had been received from members of the public about the poor condition of the flower beds in Princes Green. As from 1 April 2015 Cowes Town Council were made aware the Isle of Wight Council will continue to maintain this area with summer bedding only, not winter bedding.

ACTION

That Cowes Town Council request three quotations from contractors for winter bedding at Princes Green for discussion at the next Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee.

c) Moorgreen Road Allotment Society

The Town Clerk reported that contact had been made by the Secretary of Moorgreen Road Allotment Society requesting to meet with Cowes Town Council. A copy of the License that the Society have agreed with the Isle of Wight Council had been received and discussed. The License commenced in July 2012 for a 10 year period; either party can break on service of 3 months' notice at any time.

ACTION

1. The Town Clerk will speak to Isle of Wight Council Officers to ascertain if they intend to break on service.
2. When information has been received the Town Clerk will organise a meeting with representatives from the Moorgreen Road Allotment Society and representatives from Cowes Town Council.

d) Grounds Maintenance 2016 / 2017

It was agreed that plans for grounds maintenance for 2016 / 2017 need to be looked into and considered in a timely manner before the start of the next financial year. Cowes Town Council will consider going out to tender for all grounds maintenance work currently undertaken by contractors on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council.

ACTION

1. That Cowes Town Council request copies of tender documents, specifications and costings of grounds maintenance work undertaken by contractors, on behalf of the Isle of Wight Council, in the Cowes area.
2. That the Town Clerks speaks to other town and parish councils who are managing grounds maintenance contracts in their areas.
3. That Cowes Town Council, through comments and complaints received, continue to monitor areas in Cowes which have had reduced specifications for grounds maintenance work in 2015 /2016.

7 STAFFING

The Town Clerk underwent a three month probationary review, with the then Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor, on 16/1/15 and a successful completion of the probationary period was recorded. During the meeting the Town Clerk explained that she was contracted to work 18 hours per week but this was not proving sufficient to undertake the volume of work involved and had been regularly working additional hours since starting the role on 1/10/14. It was agreed at that meeting, with the then Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor, that the Town Clerk would be paid for any additional hours worked and this would be claimed for on a monthly basis. It was also agreed that any additional hours worked, while undertaking training towards the CiLCA qualification, would also be paid and claimed for on a monthly basis. The amount of hours actually worked by the Town Clerk has been working out, on average, 22 hours

per week. It was agreed to consider formalising this arrangement at the next appropriate Committee meeting.

The Assistant Town Clerk underwent an Annual Appraisal on 16/2/15. At the Appraisal it was agreed that an additional 2 hours a week would be worked on a 3 month trial basis as from 16/2/15. It was agreed that a review would take place in 3 months to ascertain if the additional hours had enabled Sue to reduce mistakes made and keep other areas of work up to date i.e. website and filing etc. A review was undertaken on 18/5/15 and it was agreed with the then Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor that the additional two hours per week had improved capacity and should continue, especially as the newly formed Projects Committee, which meets monthly, is generating a huge additional workload for the Assistant Town Clerk. It was agreed to consider formalising this arrangement at the next appropriate Committee meeting. Therefore this would increase the hours of the Assistant Town Clerk from 10 hours per week to 12 hours per week.

It should be noted that even with the additional hours being worked by both members of staff i.e. approx. 34 hours per week this does still not constitute 1 FTE as full time hours are 37 hours per week. Working hours will continue to be discussed at each annual appraisal as the workload of the Town Council will no doubt grow as more and more services are devolved to the local level.

The budget heading for salaries for this financial year was set at £25,000. At the end of Quarter 1 (30/6/15) there is a salary spend of £5182 so there is not a predicted overspend at the end of the year based on the current hours being paid.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Town Clerk continues to be paid for any additional hours worked, on a monthly basis, to be reviewed at the annual appraisal in January 2016.**
- 2. That the Town Clerk continues to be paid for any additional hours worked in obtaining the CiLCA qualification.**
- 3. That the Assistant Town Clerk continues to be paid an additional 2 hours per week on an informal basis, to be reviewed at the annual appraisal in February 2016.**

(The proceedings terminated at 7.18pm)

CHAIRMAN