

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 12 January 2016 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors McNeill (Chairman), Banks, Bartrum, Corby & Jones.

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown & Hammond.

34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

35 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 10 December 2015 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2015

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the third quarter of the financial year giving details of income and expenditure. Details of balances in the Town Council bank accounts, including petty cash, were also given. As at 31 December 2015 this figure totals 361,165.71, the Town Council has 'ring fenced' £200,783.07, the remaining budget for 2015/2016 is £72,786.54 which leaves reserves of £87,596.10. Councillors discussed the balances in the bank accounts and the recently lowered Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) limit of £75,000.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will investigate opening 5 additional deposit accounts to secure the Town Council's finances under the FSCS.

37 APPLICATION FOR GRANT

The Town Clerk reported that £1489.15 remains in the budget for 2015 / 2016 for grants and special events. The Town Council has been asked to consider the following application for grant:

- (i) Cowes Medina Bowling Club – Refurbishment, purchase of equipment and disabled access - £900.00.

RECOMMENDED

1. That a grant be made to the following organisation in accordance with the amount shown:
 - (i) **Cowes Medina Bowling Club** **£750.00**
2. That the balance of £739.15 be kept in reserve pending further applications which may be received.

38 3 YEAR EVENT SUPPORT FUNDING PROCESS

At the Town Council meeting on 17 December 2015, the Finance, Acquisitions & Finance Committee were asked to re-consider the proposed process for supporting events under a three year scheme. Councillors discussed the current format of applying for grants and the criteria currently used for consideration of grants. Councillors have discussed that any 3 year event support funding should be ring fenced in the Town Council budget but should be applied for in the same way as all other grant applications are made. It was agreed that more information is required from applicants to substantiate the grant application being considered. Consideration was also given as to how organisations could be included in the 3 year

support funding process and it was agreed that organisations should hold an annual event, with a large public involvement or opportunity for the public to get involved and generate visitor numbers to Cowes.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will review the current criteria / guidelines for **all** grant applications and circulate a draft amendment to all members of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee for consideration prior to the next Committee meeting.

39 TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

The Town Clerk reported that there had been problems uploading documents on to the Town Council website before Christmas. The problem has been partially resolved and a permanent fix to the problem is in hand. However, the Town Clerk informed Councillors that this may be the time to start looking at a more user friendly website and this is currently being investigated.

40 DEVOLUTION OF IW COUNCIL SERVICES

The Town Clerk reported that an email had been received from the Chief Executive of the IW Council setting out proposals to deal with public conveniences, parks, open spaces and concessions.

a) Public Toilets

The proposal made to town and parish councils is that they take ownership of the facilities within their area and full responsibility for the use and costs associated with the asset by the end of March 2016. In return for transferring the freehold ownership of each asset the Isle of Wight Council would require covenants from the town & parish council as set out below:

1. It will only use the building as a public convenience and for no other purpose.
2. It will not dispose of the building by leasehold or freehold without the Isle of Wight Council's written permission.
3. Where the Isle of Wight Council permits the disposal of an asset then it will be entitled to receive a share of the net capital receipt (after allowing for the costs of disposal and any improvements made by the town or parish council).
4. If a building is unused and falls into a state of repair that renders it unusable as a public convenience then the town or parish council will transfer the freehold back to the Isle of Wight Council.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to the IW Council to inform that:

1. Cowes Town Council have included the running costs of public conveniences in their budget for 2016 / 2017.
2. Cowes Town Council are prepared to enter into negotiations about taking ownership of the facilities but not by the end of March 2016.
3. Cowes Town Council will negotiate with the IW Council over the next 12 months with a possible transfer of assets in April 2017, subject to condition surveys of each public convenience.

b) Parks, Open Spaces & Concessions

The Isle of Wight Council are proposing to transfer the freehold of these areas to town & parish councils who would then be responsible for setting and paying for the standard of maintenance of the areas. The income from the concessions in an area would help to offset these costs. The proposal is to allow until the end of September 2016 to negotiate the terms and timings of any agreed transfers with town & parish councils with a view to implementation from April 2017.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to the IW Council to inform them that Cowes Town Council are happy to negotiate the terms and timings of any agreed freehold transfers with a possible implementation date of April 2017.

41 BLUE FLAG / SEASIDE AWARD COWES BEACH

The Town Clerk received details from the IW Council regarding bathing water classifications and beach awards for 2016. Cowes Town Council were asked to consider applying for a blue flag and / or seaside award at a cost of £510. Depending on the category of seaside award there may be requirements that will increase services such as beach cleaning as well as beach safety management. Councillors discussed the strict criteria set to achieve the awards and expressed concerns about being able to meet the criteria. Councillors agreed that Cowes is not necessarily seen as a beach destination on the Island.

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council does not apply for a blue flag and / or seaside award.

42 STAFFING

The Town Clerk reported that staff appraisals are taking place in January and the outcomes will be reported to Committee in due course.

The proceedings terminated at 7.45pm.

CHAIRMAN