

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 25 August 2016 at 6.15pm.

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

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk.

98 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bartrum, Ellis & Slade.

99 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

100 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 14 June 2016 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

101 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 30 JUNE 2016

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the first quarter of the financial year giving details of income and expenditure. The balances in the Town Council bank accounts and petty cash as at 30 June 2016 are £542,442.55 of which £214,874.82 is 'ring fenced'. The balance of the budget for 2016 / 2017 is £192,262.11; Reserves are £135,305.62.

102 CONCLUSION OF EXTERNAL AUDIT

At the time of the meeting the conclusion of the external audit had not been received. This item has been carried over to the Town Council Meeting on 1 September when it is hoped that this information will be available.

103 TRANSFER OF TITLE FOR THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN COWES

The Isle of Wight Council have issued 'Transfer of Title' documents for the public conveniences at The Cut & Mornington Road. Councillors discussed these documents at length and agreed that they are unhappy with the clauses within the documents and would seek full ownership of the buildings and possibly the surrounding areas. This would enable Cowes Town Council, if they wish, to sell or develop the areas, whilst ensuring toilet provision continues. Cowes Town Council may agree to the claw back clause if they were to be fully recompensed for any costs relating to upgrading or developing the properties. 'Transfer of Title' documents for Medina Road and The Parade have not yet been received. It was agreed that a qualified Property Lawyer should be engaged to work on behalf of Cowes Town Council, to negotiate a suitable agreement with the Isle of Wight Council, for full ownership of the toilet blocks and possibly the surrounding areas.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will obtain three quotations from Property Lawyers requesting their hourly rate, estimate of the amount of time this work could take and the name and qualifications of the Lawyer who would undertake the work.

104 ADDITIONAL GROUNDS MAINTENANCE WORK AT MOORGREEN RESERVOIR

Cowes Town Council have received complaints from residents local to Moorgreen Reservoir about the lack of maintenance in the area and the length of the grass. Cowes Town Council have asked for a quotation to undertake this work but this has not yet been received. Councillors discussed whose responsibility it is to cut the grass and keep the area tidy as this work had formerly been undertaken by Moorgreen Road Allotment Society; Councillors also queried who actually owns this land.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to the Isle of Wight Council to ascertain the ownership and 'Title' of the land and ask for a copy of the Isle of Wight Council Lease with the Moorgreen Road Allotment Society.

105 REPLACEMENT PRINTER / SCANNER / PHOTOCOPIER FOR THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with four options to replace the existing office printer which is obsolete and no longer fit for purpose. A number of options were considered, whether to purchase new, purchase second hand or lease the device. It was agreed to lease as this enables the device to be upgraded as and when better models become available or the device becomes obsolete. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Company 4 is offered the lease contract for the multi-functional device at a cost of £135 per quarter with a maximum rental term of 3 months.

106 APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK

Cowes Town Council received thirteen applications for the post of Assistant Town Clerk. Four strong candidates were shortlisted for interview on 26 July 2016; two subsequently withdrew. The interview panel comprising of Councillors McNeill, Jones and Bartrum and the Town Clerk decided to interview the two remaining candidates and not re-visit the shortlist. Under delegated powers (Min No 7294 refers) the interview panel appointed Mrs Kathryn Gibbs who will join the Town Council on Monday 5 September 2016.

107 COWES TOWN COUNCIL PENSION SCHEME

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with four options to consider for enrolling into a pension scheme by the staging date of 1 April 2017. The options discussed were NEST, Now: Pensions, The People Pension and the Local Government Pension Scheme. The costs of employer and employee contributions for all four schemes was discussed. Councillors agreed that the Local Government Pension Scheme was their preferred scheme for Cowes Town Council staff. It was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council enrolls on to the Local Government Pension Scheme.**
- 2. That enrolment to the scheme for the Town Clerk, Debbie Faulkner, starts on 1 October 2016.**
- 3. That enrolment to the scheme for the Assistant Town Clerk, Kathryn Gibbs, starts on 1 January 2017, subject to the successful conclusion of her probationary period.**

108 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Review of Ring Fenced Balances – January 2017

The proceedings terminated at 7.43pm