

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 26 January 2016 at 10am.

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

43 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Brown. After the meeting apologies were received from Councillors Ellis & Hammond.

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

45 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee held on 12 January 2016 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

46 CHEQUE AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE QUARTER OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015

The Town Clerk presented the list of payments for the quarter October – December 2015. Cheque payments totalling £53,820.23; petty cash payments totalling £469.21.

RECOMMENDED

That the cheque and petty cash payments for the quarter October – December 2015 are accepted and approved.

47 PREPARATION OF ACCOUNTS 2015/2016

The subject of internal auditors was discussed to undertake the Town Council final accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2016.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will seek three quotations for auditing of the Town Council final accounts for the financial year ending 31/3/17.

RECOMMENDED

That Bright Brown Chartered Accountants be appointed to undertake the preparation of the final accounts for the year 2015/2016.

48 COWES TOWN COUNCIL RESERVES

The matter of the Town Council reserves was discussed and the recommendation that reserves should equal half of the Town Council precept. At 31/12/15 the reserves were £87,596.10. The remaining budget for 2015/2016 at the end of the financial year is expected to be around £30,000 and putting this figure into reserves will increase the total to around half of the 2016/2017 precept.

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council place into reserves the remaining unspent budget at the end of the financial year 2015/2016.

49 SOLITAIRE DU FIGARO

At the Cowes Town Council meeting on 3 September 2015 it was resolved to support the Solitaire Du Figaro sailing event for an amount of £10,000 (Min No 7137d refers). Discussion took place to identify a budget heading to support this commitment.

RECOMMENDED

That £10,000 is transferred from the 'Discretionary Services' budget heading to the 'Grants & Special Events' budget heading.

50 APPLICATION FOR GRANT

The Town Clerk reported that £739.15 remains in the budget should the former recommendation (12/1/16) to award £750.00 to Cowes Medina Bowling Club be approved. The Town Council re-considered the following application for grant.

- (i) Cowes Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society – Defibrillator & Training - £1295.00

Following receipt of this grant application, detailed research was undertaken by Cowes Town Council to establish the locations of defibrillators that are available for community use in Cowes. Councillors discussed community use defibrillators and those that are located close to the Trinity Theatre i.e. Royal London Yacht Club & Island Sailing Club, which could be accessed in the event of an emergency in the Trinity Theatre. Due to the limited opening hours of Trinity Theatre a defibrillator would not be widely available for community use and therefore a grant for this purpose cannot be justified.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council does not award a grant to Cowes Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society.**
- 2. That the Town Clerk writes to Cowes Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society explaining the reasons behind this decision.**

51 COWES TOWN COUNCIL GRANT APPLICATION FORM

At the Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee meeting held on 12 January 2016 the Town Clerk was instructed to review the current criteria / guidelines for all grant applications and prepare an amended draft document for consideration. Councillors discussed the proposed amendments and it was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council adopts the amended draft grant application form for use in all future grant applications.

52 COWES TOWN COUNCIL FUNDS

At the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 12 January 2016 the Town Clerk was instructed to investigate opening 5 additional deposit accounts to secure the Town Council's funds under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) which had reduced to £75,000. However, guidance now received from the Society of Local Council Clerks has proven that local authorities are not covered under the FSCS. Councillors discussed options for placing funds into other banks to reduce the risk of loss and to earn interest on balances.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council opens a Nationwide Business 1 Year Saver Account to hold the Town Council Reserves.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council opens a Santander Business Reward Saver Account with a sum of £100,000.**
- 3. That the same signatories and authorisations will be applied to each account as currently exists with Lloyds Banks i.e. two councillors plus one clerk must authorise any transactions.**

53 CLEANING OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN COWES AND NORTHWOOD PARK FOR 2016/2017

The Town Clerk received one quotation for the cleaning of the public conveniences in Cowes and Northwood Park toilets. Two other quotations were sought but no quotations were received. The contract for cleaning will start from 1/4/16.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will request quotations from a further two contractors for consideration at the next Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting.

54 IW COUNCIL DEVOLUTION OF SERVICES – PUBLIC CONVENIENCES / PARKS, OPEN SPACES & CONCESSIONS

- i) Public Conveniences – Prior to the start of the meeting, Councillors met with Simon Dennis who is the IW Council officer responsible for devolving the responsibility of public conveniences to town and parish councils. The IW Council have offered the freehold of the public conveniences from 1/4/16 at a cost of £1 per block. Cowes Town Council will negotiate the freehold over the next 12 months which will include a condition survey of each toilet block. In the interim a ‘Tenancy at Will’ has been offered from 1/4/16 while freehold negotiations are taking place.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council enter into a ‘Tenancy at Will’ agreement as from 1/4/16 for the public conveniences in Cowes.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council will negotiate the freehold of the public conveniences in Cowes, with the IW Council, over the next 12 months.**

- ii) Parks, Open Spaces & Concessions – The Town Clerk has written 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. Councillors want information about which areas are being considered for a freehold transfer.

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to the IW Council requesting information about which areas in Cowes they are considering for a freehold transfer to Cowes Town Council.

55 TOWN CLERK’S ANNUAL APPRAISAL

The Town Clerk had a successful appraisal with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on 19/1/16. Achievements were acknowledged and objectives set for the coming year. It was noted that due to time constraints and a heavy workload limited progress had been made in obtaining the CiLCA qualification. The Town Clerk is working towards a deadline for completion of the CiLCA qualification by September 2016. The Mayor acknowledged the Town Clerk’s support for his role and Councillors agreed the clerks are a good team.

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Town Clerk continues to be paid for any additional hours worked, over and above the 18 hour per week contract, to fulfil the duties of the Town Clerk.**
- 2. That the Town Clerk is paid an additional 4 hours per week for the next six months, to be worked outside of normal working hours, to obtain the CiLCA qualification by the deadline of September 2016.**

The proceedings terminated at 11.23am

CHAIRMAN