

## **COWES TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 10 December 2015 at 10am.

Present: Councillors McNeill (Chairman), Banks, Brown, Corby & Ellis (10.04am)

In attendance (Non-Voting): Councillors Bartrum & Wardrop.

### **20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hammond & Jones.

### **21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ellis declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 28 as his children attend 2<sup>nd</sup> Cowes (St Mary's) Sea Scouts.

Councillor McNeill declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 31 as he is Chairman of Destination Cowes.

### **22 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 10 November 2015 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. For record purposes it should be noted that Councillor Corby was against approving the grant application from Cowes Carnival (Min No 17c(ii) refers) and subsequently abstained from the vote.

### **23 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT 2016 / 2017**

The Town Clerk reported that four quotations had been received for grounds maintenance in the following areas: Moorgreen Reservoir, Mornington Green, Park Road Recreation Ground, Arctic Park & St Mary's Park, Princes Green (winter bedding only), Park Road Rose Bed, Northwood Park, Gurnard Green & Venner Avenue Play Area, Northwood. Cowes Town Council were unable to obtain competitive quotes for the Gurnard & Northwood areas so these areas will not be included in the proposed contract. All four quotations were considered and compared and it was:

#### **RECOMMENDED**

1. That Cowes Town Council enter into a grounds maintenance contract for 2016 / 2017, with Contractor 1, being the IW Council contractor, for the following areas: Moorgreen Reservoir, Mornington Green, Park Road Recreation Ground, Arctic Park & St Mary's Park, Princes Green (winter bedding only) & Park Road Rose Bed for the sum of £11,110 plus the rate of inflation in January 2016.
2. That Cowes Town Council enter into a grounds maintenance contract for 2016 / 2017 with Contractor 4, being Andy Butler Sports Ground Specialist, for Northwood Park for the sum of £9,810.

### **24 CLEANING CONTRACT FOR THE PUBLIC TOILETS IN COWES**

Two quotations for cleaning the public toilets in Cowes and Northwood Park, have been received; a further quote will be sought. The Isle of Wight Council are proposing that Cowes Town Council takes over the full running and maintenance costs, including business rates, for the four public toilets in Cowes as from 1 April 2016.

#### **Action**

The Town Clerk will seek a further quotation for the cleaning of the public toilets in Cowes and Northwood Park.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

1. That Cowes Town Council pays for the running costs only for the public toilets in Cowes and does not pay business rates or maintenance costs.
2. That Cowes Town Council considers taking over full management of the toilets during the following 12 month period.

**25 COWES LIBRARY**

Following the recent meeting with IW Council officers on 10 November 2015, an email has been received with the following proposals. That Cowes Town Council supports the running costs **only** for the Library from April 2016 which was £7164.27 in the year 2014/15 and does not include business rates. The IW Council will make no charge for the maintenance of the building. The IW Council will continue to pay for a second member of staff in the short term from 1 April 2016 while the IW Council further investigate Cowes Town Council's ambitions for the library; however this cannot go beyond April 2017. The cost for the year being £14125 (22 hours senior library assistant). It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That Cowes Town Council supports the running costs of Cowes Library (excluding business rates) from 1 April 2016.
2. That a group of Cowes Town Councillors work with the library staff, volunteers and museum staff to ascertain usage, to consider the size and location of the building and to understand the value the Library brings to Cowes.

**26 IW COUNCIL PLANNING ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

Concerns had been raised through IWALC about the capacity within the IW Council Planning Department to deal with enforcement issues across the Island. Currently planning enforcement is covered by one member of staff on a 0.5fte contract covering the whole Island. Town and Parish Councils are being asked to consider funding an IW Council Planning Enforcement Officer with costs being split across all Town & Parish Councils according to the population size. For Cowes Town Council the cost would be £3010 for the financial year 2016/2017. It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

That Cowes Town Council contributes towards the cost of an IW Council Planning Enforcement Officer for 2016 / 2017 in the sum of £3010 on the proviso that all Town & Parish Councils contribute to the scheme.

**27 FINANCIAL SERVICES COMPENSATION SCHEME (FSCS)**

The Town Clerk reported that as from 1 January 2016 the level of protection under the FSCS is reducing from £85,000 to £75,000. This has highlighted concerns about the safety of the Town Council's funds which are currently held in one bank with a current and deposit account.

Action

1. The Town Clerk will seek advice and guidance from NALC to investigate options for the Town Council's funds.
2. The Town Clerk will look at other banks, other deposit accounts and higher interest account options for the future holding of the Town Council funds.

**28 APPLICATION FOR GRANT**

The Town Clerk reported that, subject to former recommendations for grants being approved, that £970.15 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) 2<sup>nd</sup> Cowes (St Mary's) Sea Scouts – Refurbishment of boys toilets - £4481.00

Councillor Ellis left the meeting at 11.03pm.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That a grant be made to the following organisation in accordance with the amount shown:  
a) 2<sup>nd</sup> Cowes (St Mary's) Sea Scouts £4481.00
2. That £5,000 is transferred from the 'Discretionary Services' budget heading to the 'Grants and Special Events' budget heading.
3. That the balance of £1489.15 be kept in reserve pending further applications which may be received.



**29 PAYMENT REVIEW OF 3 YEAR GRANT APPLICATIONS**

Recommendations to Full Council from the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting on 10 November 2015 are that 3 year grants will be made to Cowes Carnival, Cowes Fireworks Committee and the IW Literary Festival, from April 2016, subject to annual ratification. To provide more clarity around this scheme further discussion took place to ensure that measures are put in place which organisations must comply with to access this funding. It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That Cowes Town Council provides a budget for organisations to access under the 3 year funding scheme.
2. That all organisations included in the 3 year funding scheme must annually supply a full set of accounts to Cowes Town Council.
3. That the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee examine each set of annual accounts and request more information / detail, if necessary.
4. That the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee will make recommendations to the Full Council to approve payment of those organisation who have complied with the guidelines of the scheme.
5. That for clarity between the 'Annual Grants and Special Events' budget heading, the budget heading for this scheme will be '3 Year Event Support Funding'.

**30 SUPPLEMENTARY APPLICATION FOR 3 YEAR GRANT FUNDING**

At the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting on 10 November 2015, Cowes Fireworks Committee had applied for £3,000 under the 3 year grant funding scheme. Subsequently an amended application had been received as the organisation had incorrectly made the first application. The amended application is:

- (i) Cowes Fireworks Committee £5,000

Councillors discussed the amended application. Two motions were voted on – one motion to pay £5,000 was voted for by two Councillors, another motion to pay £4,000 was voted for by two Councillors. As the Committee were split, it was:

**RECOMMENDED**

**That the Full Town Council meeting should decide whether the amount of £4,000 or £5,000 be awarded to Cowes Fireworks Committee under the 3 year funding scheme.**

**31 BUDGET**

The draft budget v3 was discussed amongst the Committee and a number of amendments were made which will form the draft budget v4. It was:

**RECOMMENDED**

**That Draft Budget (v4) will require the precept for 2016/17 to be £238,010. The draft budget will be presented to the Full Town Council meeting on 17 December 2015 for consideration, discussion and approval.**

**32 STAFFING**

No staffing matters were raised by Councillors or Clerks.

The proceedings terminated at 11.57am.

**CHAIRMAN**

COWES TOWN COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET 2016/ 2017 v4						
INCOME	Budget 2016/17	Sub Totals	Budget 2015/16	Variation	Sub Total	sub Total Variation
Precept + Grant	£238,010		£177,300	£60,710		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>						
<b>GENERAL ADMINISTRATION</b>						
Town Clerks' salaries/NIC/ Tax	£25,000		£25,000	0		
Office Rent	£6,600		£9,000	-2,400		
Office Cleaner & Sundry Expenses	£1,000		£0	1,000		
Stationary & Office Supplies/Software	£1,000		£2,000	-1,000		
Office Equipment / Photocopier	£2,000		£2,000	0		
Telephone/Broadband / Website	£1,000		£1,300	-300		
Postage	£500		£500	0		
Travelling	£400		£400	0		
Conference fees	£600		£600	0		
Training	£500		£500	0		
Hire of Meeting Rooms	£600		£600	0		
Subscriptions	£1,500		£1,500	0		
Insurance	£1,300		£2,000	-700		
Audit and Accountancy	£1,600		£1,600	0		
Mayor's Allowance	£2,000		£2,000	0		
Newsletter	£4,000		£3,500	500		
Elections / Admin Contingency	£2,500	£52,100	£2,500	0	£55,000	-£2,900
<b>DISCRETIONARY SERVICES</b>						
Northwood Rec Playing Fields Maintenance	£7,500					
Northwood Rec - Skate Park/MUGA Maintenance & Electricity	£7,000		£7,000	0		
Northwood Rec Toilets - Cleaning + other costs	£10,000		£10,000	0		
Northwood House Grounds Maintenance	£10,000					
Northwood House Toilets - Cleaning Only	£4,000					
Northwood House + Cowes area - Dog + Litter bins	£4,500		£4,000	500		
Cowes In Bloom	£4,000		£4,000	0		
Other grounds maintenance	£3,000					
Cowes Library Proposed contribution	£8,000					
4 Public Toilets - Cleaning + other costs	£48,000					
Beach Cleaning	£0					
Planning Enforcement Officer	£3,010					
Community Bus Contribution	£1,500					
Contingencies (5% Disc Services)	£5,600		£4,000	1,600		
Discretionary services		£116,110	£65,300		94,300	£21,810
<b>TOWN IMPROVEMENTS / GRANTS / SPECIAL EVENTS</b>						
Street furniture maintenance	£2,000		£3,000	-1,000		
Civic-Xmas trees/Festive lights	£16,000		£7,000	9,000		
New Projects / Gateway Cowes	£6,000		£4,000	2,000		
Annual Grants & Special Events	£10,000		£14,000	-4,000		
Destination Cowes marketing budget provision	£5,000					
New Event support budget, Shoreside	£10,000					
3 Year Event Support Funding - Cowes Carnival	£3,000					
3 Year Event Support Funding - Cowes Fireworks Committee	£5,000					
3 Year Event Support Funding - IW Literary Festival	£11,300					
Remembrance Sunday & Charity Donations	£1,500	£69,800			£28,000	£41,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	£238,010	£238,010	£177,300		£177,300	£60,710
£1000 increase in precept = £0.25 increase band D Council tax rate = £15.12						