

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in The Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 22 February 2022 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors Walters (Chair), Bertie (6.17pm), Brown, Carter, Ellis, Hollis, Nicholson (6.20pm) & Rafferty.

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Gibbs, Assistant Town Clerk; two representatives from the Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society.

625 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jones.

626 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Councillor Walters declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 629.1 as he is a member of Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club.
Councillor Rafferty declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 629.1 as he is an employee of Shepards Wharf who are launching the boats for the Flying Fifteen Regatta.
Councillor Bertie declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No. 629.1 as his company is supplying the clothing for the volunteers at the Flying Fifteen event.
Councillor Walters declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 629.3 as he is the auditor for the Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society.
Councillor Bertie declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 629.3 as he is Cowes Town Council's deputy representative on the Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society Executive Committee.
Councillor Nicholson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 629.3 as he has attended Committee meetings with the Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society in regard to the historic walks in Cowes.
- b) A written request for dispensation was received, and granted, from Councillor Hollis in respect of Minute No. 629.1 as he is a member of Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club and his wife is on their general Committee.

627 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 23 November 2021 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

628 FINANCIAL STATEMENT AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

The Town Clerk submitted a financial statement for the quarter ending 31 December 2021 giving details of income and expenditure. Councillors looked at the ear marked balances which will be reviewed before the end of the financial year. The balances in the Town Council's bank accounts and petty cash as at 31 December 2021 were £665,740.01 of which £211,731.66 is ring fenced / ear marked expenditure. The Reserves as at 31 December 2021 were £287,900.45 which represents approximately 11 months operating costs, this falls within the recommended 3 to 12 months reserves as set by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) .

Councillors noted that the balance of any funds being held for The Cut project could soon be released for other capital projects. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 31 December 2021.

629 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT

The Town Clerk advised that £14,220 remained in the budget heading for 'Grants'.

The Town Council have been asked to consider the following Applications for Grant:

1. Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club – Flying Fifteen Regatta Costs - £2,000
2. Cowes Sailability Club – Charter Wetwheels Hamble for three days - £1,100
3. Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society – Request to underwrite the 80th Anniversary event - £5,000
4. Storeroom 2010 – The Cowes Men's Shed Community Project - £1,000
5. Uffa Fox 2022 (UF50) Celebration – Cost of forty parking spaces on The Parade for four days - £1,250

Councillor Bertie left the meeting while the Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club grant application was discussed.

After a full discussion about each Grant Application it was:

RECOMMENDED

1. That a grant be made to Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club in the sum of £2,000.
2. That a grant be made to Cowes Sailability Club in the sum of £1,100
3. That, in view of the value of this community event to Cowes, Cowes Town Council will underwrite the Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society's 80th Anniversary event up to the sum of £5,000.
4. That Cowes Town Council does not make a grant to Storeroom 2010.
5. That a grant be made to the Uffa Fox 2022 (UF50) Celebration for the provision of forty parking spaces on The Parade for four days in the sum of £1,250.

Councillor Hollis left the meeting at 7.13pm.

630 OVERVIEW OF GUIDELINES / CRITERIA FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS TO COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Councillors discussed the current criteria for applying for grants. It was felt that professional fund raisers pitch their applications at a level which will normally be passed straight through. The current form may deter the smaller organisations that the grants are really designed for. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillors will review the current guidelines / criteria for applying for grants, linking this to the Town Councils Key Service Objectives and the Place Plan.

631 RESPONSE FROM GURNARD PARISH COUNCIL IN RESPECT OF COWES LIBRARY (MINUTE NO. 616 REFERS)

Cowes Town Council wrote to Gurnard and Northwood Parish Councils on 30 November 2021 asking if they would be prepared to make a contribution towards the running costs of Cowes Library; Gurnard Parish Council have responded to say that they will contribute £1,000. Northwood Parish Council have yet to make a decision. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to Gurnard Parish Council to thank them for their financial contribution of £1,000.

632 TOWN CLERK'S APPRAISAL

The Mayor reported that the Town Clerk had a successful appraisal with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor on 3 February 2022. Achievements were acknowledged which included a successful conclusion of the 2020 / 2021 external audit with no matters of concern raised and supporting the Assistant Town Clerk to achieve her CiLCA qualification. Objectives for the following year include overseeing the toilet refurbishment programme, managing existing contracts and future tendering processes and to explore litigation insurance and other areas of potential Cowes Town Council liability.

In the assessment of the Town Clerk's performance over the last year, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor said that the Town Clerk has done everything that has been asked of her, she is professional and responsive and always open to suggestions as to how things can be improved.

633 ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK'S APPRAISAL

The Town Clerk reported that the Assistant Town Clerk had a successful appraisal with the Town Clerk on 1 November 2021. Achievements were acknowledged which included achieving the CiLCA qualification, undertaking annual condition surveys of all the Town Council's assets, monthly inspections of public convenience blocks, assisted the Mayor with the production of two newsletters, the servicing of the Projects Committee and Working Group meetings. Objectives for the following year include identifying and accessing grant opportunities and the completion of current projects i.e. The Cut enhancements and the Ark and Dove Information Board.

The Town Clerk acknowledged that this has been a very busy year for Kate and, given all the constraints regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, the work of the Town Council has successfully continued in no small way due to Kate's hard work and commitment.

634 OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

There were no other staffing matters to discuss.

635 HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

To continue to protect Councillors and the Clerks from the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it was agreed that the Town Council should continue to use bigger rooms than the Town Council's office for Town Council, Committee and any other meetings.

636 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

There were no items raised for inclusion on future agendas.

The proceedings terminated at 7.33pm.

CHAIRMAN