



# Ottery St Mary Town Council

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Minutes of the **PROPERTY AND LAND COMMITTEE MEETING** of **OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL** held in the in the Council Offices, the Old Convent, 8 Broad Street, Ottery St Mary on **THURSDAY, 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022 at 2.00pm**

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The Chairman (Cllr Grainger); Cllrs Johns, Stewart, Faithfull; Christine McIntyre (CEO) and Kerry Kennell (Deputy CEO)

PL22/01/01

**TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES**

Cllr Lucas

PL22/01/02

**TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA AND RECEIPT OF REQUESTS FOR NEW DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS (DPIS) DISPENSATIONS FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Cllr Johns re the Museum and the Cricket Club

PL22/01/03

**IN CONSIDERATION OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 (PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST BY REASON OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED): TO AGREE ANY ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH AFTER THE PUBLIC AND PRESS HAVE BEEN EXCLUDED**

Quotes received in respect of the Museum works would need to be discussed in Confidential Session

PL22/01/04

**TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE PROPERTY AND LAND COMMITTEE MEETING OF 11<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**

The Minutes of the Property and Land Committee Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> November 2021 were approved and signed by the Chair subject to the addition of `Cllr Johns made a declaration of interest re the Cricket Club and the Museum, (should they be discussed at the meeting)` which the Chair duly initialled

PL22/01/05

**TO CONSIDER THE COUNCIL`S PROPERTY PORTFOLIO UPDATE PREPARED BY THE CEO AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS (IF APPLICABLE)**

PL22/01/06

**The Council Offices**

Safety Checks

PAT testing had been carried out. Emergency lighting checks had been carried out. A fire blanket had been fitted in the meeting room kitchen area. Argos had carried out fire extinguisher checks etc. The CEO was still waiting for quotes re fire safety doors and electrical cupboard but had been advised by Argos (on 12<sup>th</sup> Jan) that there was a `bottleneck

Chair`s Initials.....

with quotes`. Argos had carried out a Fire Risk Assessment some weeks ago. They had made a number of recommendations which were discussed. It was noted that Jane was carrying out the regular fire checks in the building. It was agreed that the recommendations whereby persons personal electrical equipment (Laptops, tablets etc) should be PAT tested, was not practical to carry out. The CEO had asked the police to provide a fire risk assessment for the police building. She was still waiting to receive this. Rock Compliance had provided a quote for a Legionnaires Risk Assessment – The Committee **RECOMMENDED** a risk assessment be carried out at a cost of £295

#### Office Update

A wireless video door bell would be installed shortly so staff could see who required attention on the ground floor. The current door bell would remain in situ as a backup. All three members of office staff should be moved into Office 3 once the new wireless door bell was installed. The IT upgrade was complete with the new website about to go live

#### Tenants

Currently Hostcomm rented an office but it was not manned. The remaining upstairs offices - 4,5 and 6 were still vacant despite some initial interest. Vicki Trebble-Sargent from `at the Nook` had looked at the Council accommodation with regards to it being rented out for hot desking etc. She was of the view that the Council couldn't compete with eg Regus (Workspace Solutions) as the décor and accommodation offered was out dated and dowdy and was unlikely to appeal to young professionals. Vicky had suggested a `make-over` but that would be expensive. It was **RECOMMENDED** at this stage that the vacant offices be re-advertised with Redferns and on Facebook

#### Redecoration of exterior of the Council Offices and meeting room and Office 4

Quotes had been received for the repainting of the exterior of the Council Offices; the meeting room and chamber. There was much discussion and it was accepted that the repainting of the exterior of the Council Offices would require scaffolding to be used, which was not included on the one quote received. It was also understood that repairs were required to the fascias and soffits. It was also considered that once the Community Larder vacated its room (which it would be so doing shortly), that a quote for the repainting of the Chamber may be required. It was **RECOMMENDED** that Rob Johns be asked to assess the condition of the exterior of the building as to what works were required and that he be paid for his time in doing this. Cllr Johns took no part in the discussion when this recommendation was made. Once the assessment had been carried out by Rob, current quotes could then be reviewed and further quotes obtained, if required.

#### Security Lights

It has been raised that more security lighting was required at the rear and side of the building. It was **RECOMMENDED** that a security light be affixed at the rear of the building on the right hand rear corner (on facing the front of the building)

#### Locks

Helping Hands had fitted a lock to the exterior door of the Council Chamber/Community Larder. However there were issues with it and Helping Hands would be coming back to fix it shortly. In the interim the Larder volunteers were using the other exterior door (near the blue bin) to gain entry to the Larder

#### Electricity Costs

Details of the new fixed rates (for 1 year; 2 years and 3 years) offered by Octopus (once the Council's current fixed rate had finished (March 22)) had been circulated. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council switch to a two year fix with Octopus

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### Cellar

The CEO still needed to obtain some quotes for works to the cellar. The area to the right appeared more affected by water and was not useable. There had been damage to the walls and only one of the lights worked. It was noted that it would be useful if the area in front of the door could be used more ie storage of the gazebos as they were so heavy and it would prevent people having to duck under the archway. It was noted that a specialist damp proof contractor was required to undertake the work and that this work should be undertaken prior to any works commencing on the exterior of the building. It was **RECOMMENDED** that quotes be obtained asap

### Tree

A sapling had started to establish itself outside the Council Offices and required removal. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the removal of the tree be carried out

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PL22/01/07

### **Strawberry Lane**

#### Pavilion

Pat testing had been carried out in January and the CEO was awaiting the inspection sheets. She had also asked the contractor to inspect the electrical installation at the same time and was awaiting the certificate. Argos had carried out all checks re fire extinguishers. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Petanque Club be approached to undertake the fire safety checks in the building as proposed in the Argos Fire Risk Report. Rock Compliance had provided a quote for a Legionnaires Risk Assessment – The Committee **RECOMMENDED** a risk assessment be carried out at a cost of £295. It was also **RECOMMENDED** that the Petanque Club be approached in due course to carry out regular checks of the water

#### Sit Down Mower

It appeared that someone had had access to the sit down mower (for use other than at Strawberry Lane). It was **RECOMMENDED** that the key codes (on the gate and the building) be changed and a steering lock placed on the mower.

### Bowling Club

#### Access

Solicitors had been instructed re the legal issues concerning the accessway and the CEO was waiting to hear from them with their findings

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PL22/01/08

### **Tennis Courts**

#### Shed

No progress had been made regarding the removal of the freezer in the shed. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Pixie Day Committee be approached to remove the freezer

### Fence

The chain link fence facing the main road required repairs. It was hoped that Helping Hands would be able to deal with this shortly (they had tried previously to carry out the repair)

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Chair`s Initials.....

PL22/01/09

### Allotments

#### Revised Agreements

The revised allotment agreements for new tenants and the Deed of Variations re existing tenants had been sent out to the Committee. Due to Cllr Faithfull not having read the documents and the Committee then being inquorate to make a decision it was **RECOMMENDED** that the matter be referred to the next Committee Meeting\*

*\*Later in the meeting it was **RECOMMENDED** that the matter be referred to the next Full Council meeting, with the CEO providing a brief explanation as to what was needed to be considered by the Council*

#### Shed

No progress had been made regarding the proposed relocation of the shed currently sited on Plot 57 in order to free up another allotment plot (due to there being a waiting list). It was **RECOMMENDED** that the matter be referred to the Allotment Association Management for them to provide their views

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PL22/01/10

### Cemetery

The CEO advised that some of the memorial stones which were found to be defective (after the inspection carried out by Orchard Memorials last year) have, or are in the process of being repaired by various memorial masons. However there will be a significant number that will not be repaired due to the CEO being unable to trace grave owners, or grave owners being deceased, or grave owners simply not coming forward, despite each grave having a notice attached advising of the necessary works required, with the Council's contact number. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council in August should decide whether they will pick up the bill for the repairs or (in some cases) simply leave stones that have been laid down, to remain in this position

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PL22/01/11

### The Museum

#### Legals

#### The Proposed 20+ years lease and an Agreement for Lease

The Council had not progressed this (hence the reason for having tenancies at will (TAWs) to allow for further negotiation time). It was hoped that an Agreement for Lease could be progressed shortly. It was noted that Michael Patrick (Heritage Society trustee) had resigned and new trustees had been brought on board.

#### Works

A Fire Risk Assessment had been carried out and the Assessment forwarded to Committee members. The Assessment contained a number of recommendations to be carried out in the building (none of which had been marked 'Urgent'). It was **RECOMMENDED** that a meeting be arranged between councillors and trustees to deal with the recommendations.

Western Power had sent their quote for an electricity service alteration in the sum of £752.56. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the quote be accepted and the Council's Scheme of

Chair's Initials.....

Delegation be used to formerly accept the quote and instruct Western Power to progress the work. It was noted that this work would need to be carried out before the electric works referred to below, were carried out.

### **The Meeting then went into Confidential Session**

Two quotes had been received re the electrics. Despite the Deputy CEO's best attempts, she had been unable to obtain three quotes and had taken advice from DALC who advised that two quotes would be acceptable. It was **RECOMMENDED** that Delve's quote in the sum of £7659 plus vat be accepted subject to them carrying out the work in a timely fashion after the Western Power works had been completed

### **The Meeting then resumed Public Session**

Only One quote had been received for the exterior painting works to the building. It was agreed that this wasn't sufficient. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the tender process the Council used some time ago for an approved contractors list be used again. It was hoped that this would then create a bank of contractors to approach for quotes, as currently the Council was struggling to find contractors.

PL22/01/12

### **The Silver Band Room**

#### Vents

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Delve's quote in the sum of £221 plus vat, to provide a fan to vent the room to remove the damp and musty air be accepted

#### Misc

#### The Heritage Society – Council Representative

The CEO had approached the Society enquiring whether they would consider a Council representative being on board. In response to the points raised by the Society. The following was **RECOMMENDED:-**

1. The Council would expect their representative to be an Observer
2. The Council considered that having a councillor as an `Observer` with a more `open` relationship should help obviate any conflicts of interest that may arise

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PL22/01/13

### **The Station**

#### Portacabins x 2

Cllr Grainger advised that he had made no further progress with regards to sourcing a contractor to anchor the portacabins. No progress had been made with regards to progressing the future use of the portacabins and it was likely that the Hub Management Committee may intend to use the cellar of their building for storage, rather than using one of the portacabins which had previously been likely. It was **AGREED** that the Deputy CEO would include this as an item on the Hub's next agenda. It was suggested that whilst work was being undertaken to the cellar at the Council Offices, the items currently in the cellar could be temporarily stored in the portacabins. However it was suggested that this was likely to create issues for the users of the gazebos/tables (and admin staff) if these items were stored in the portacabins

#### Main Building

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Rock Compliance had provided a quote for a Legionnaires Risk Assessment – The Committee **RECOMMENDED** a risk assessment be carried out at a cost of £295. The CEO was trying to arrange a fire risk assessment – and was chasing up Argos. The Pat testing should be carried out by 25<sup>th</sup> January according to the electrician. The CEO would chase up the electrician, if the work was not completed by that date. The work to the alarm had been completed. The Deputy CEO was currently working on a tender for works to the Station and this would cover redecoration (interior/exterior). It was noted that there was a requirement for smoke detectors to be sited in different parts of the building and quotes were being obtained. The Help Scheme would advise as to their accommodation requirements after their meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022

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PL22/01/14

### Skate Park

Tim Walmsley the Council's solicitor had heard from DCC on 13<sup>th</sup> January regarding the Council's request to cease being a party (tenant and sublandlord) to any legal agreement in respect of the skate park. DCC had indicated that it would be willing to progress this request subject to the replacement tenant taking on DCC's requirements in relation to the accessway. The CEO had recently heard from John Campion who had advised that the new tenant would be the Skate and BMX Trust (and not the Station) and that the Station charity would be considering its future later on in the year. Once the CEO had received the Trust's solicitors details she would let the Council's solicitor know and hopefully the transaction could progress

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PL22/01/15

### The Library and Library Toilets

Argos had carried out the safety checks eg emergency lighting; etc in the toilets back in September. All paperwork had been received and there were no issues. Rock Compliance had provided a quote for a Legionnaires Risk Assessment – The Committee **RECOMMENDED** a risk assessment be carried out at a cost of £295. It was **RECOMMENDED** that following the Risk Assessment being carried out that Libraries Unlimited be asked if they would be prepared to carry out the regular water checks, although the toilets were not part of their lease agreement. Paint was peeling around the front door of the library. The Admin Assistant had contacted Libraries Unlimited to inform them of this. The Lease indicates that they are responsible for the maintenance of the doors

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PL22/01/16

### Car Parking Spaces – Factory Site

The CEO had been in contact with EDDC to see if they were interested in having the car parking spaces transferred over to them rather than the Council taking possession. (The Council had previously agreed in writing to have the transfer of the car spaces and may be contractually bound to progress the transfer unless the developer agrees otherwise). EDDC had indicated that they were willing to have a discussion regarding the Council's request. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the CEO seek legal advice regarding any ramifications there

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might be if the Council was to rescind the contract with the developer. She was also asked to arrange a Zoom meeting with EDDC to discuss further

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PL22/01/17

## **Misc Matters**

### Cleaner

The CEO would arrange to have a conversation with the Council's cleaner to ascertain whether she was experiencing any issues etc and whether she was happy and willing to continue with her work at the Station/Council Offices. Justin Meagor was now the stand in cleaner for the Council Offices and the Station Hub to cover for the permanent cleaner's periods of holiday and sickness. The arrangement appeared to be working well.

### Grounds Maintenance

It had been resolved at the December Town Council Meeting that a meeting should take place between councillors and Idverde regarding concerns the Council had about the standard of the grounds maintenance work carried out during 2021. The CEO requested a meeting with Idverde to discuss these concerns. Idverde advised by e-mail that there had been issues with staff isolating and problems recruiting due to Coronavirus. Idverde did not respond to the meeting request. The CEO in conjunction with Cllr Stewart considered it unnecessary to progress a meeting in view of Idverde's explanation. It was **RECOMMENDED** that a rescission notice be served in respect of the Council's decision made at the December Town Council Meeting, namely *'To arrange a meeting with Idverde to discuss concerns regarding the standard of workmanship'*

The Council had for several years entered into an annual contract with DCC for additional grass cutting around the Parish. DCC paid the Council a fixed amount of money for the contract. The contract had then been sub-contracted out by the Council to Idverde. Each year the Council had been able to make a small profit on the work. DCC had invited the Council to enter into a further annual contract for 2022/23. However entering into a contract with DCC followed by a sub-contract with Idverde would result in the Council having a deficit of £585, in view of Idverde's increased costs. DCC had advised that if the Council did not wish to enter into a contract with them, then they would arrange for their own contractors to carry out the work. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council should not enter into a contract with DCC or a subcontract with Idverde, in view of the deficit.

### Development of a Strategic Property Plan - Janine Gardener

At the October Council meeting it was discussed that LCC had been asked to prepare a report to give a strategic overview of the properties owned by the Council and to make suggestions regarding how the assets could be maximised. LCC were waiting for additional information from the Council to complete this work, which had not been forthcoming. At the October meeting it was considered whether to continue with the contract was the most sensible way forward or whether options for managing the property could be investigated instead. The cost to rescind the contract would be £75. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the contract be rescinded

### Contractors working on Council Properties

The Committee noted the following recommendation (which was contained in the Council's Fire Risk Assessment) when contractors are appointed:-

### ***Contractors who work on any Council properties***

Chair's Initials.....

All contractors employed by the client (the Council) must supply risk assessments and method statements prior to working.

It is recommended that the client give all contractors induction training prior to commencing work, which should include emergency procedures.

Additionally, the client should arrange to conduct a post work inspection of the work area to ensure all works have been completed satisfactorily and safely, with no residual hazards present that could compromise the fire safety of the premises.

PL22/01/18

**MISCELLANEOUS PROPERTY MATTERS**

The matters which had not been discussed at this meeting (including the revised documents for the Allotment tenants (new and existing) and the Help Scheme's room requirements) would be referred to the Full Council Meeting in February. The proposed additional Property and Land Committee meeting being arranged for 3<sup>rd</sup> February would no longer need to take place

PL22/01/19

**TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS RELATING TO PROPERTY AND LAND**

Cllr Faithfull questioned Rob John's role with regards to the works being carried out at the Museum. He was advised that Rob was primarily appointed to assist with the works to the Museum for which he was required to draft a specification for works to progress the project. He was paid for the Spec and for other works needed on an 'ad hoc' basis

The meeting concluded at 16.25pm

<b>SIGNATURE OF CHAIRMAN</b>	
<b>DATE OF SIGNATURE</b>	

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