



Ottery St Mary Town Council

Minutes of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING** of **OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL** held on Thursday , **15th OCTOBER 2020** at **12 NOON**

The meeting was conducted virtually in accordance with Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Meetings) (England) Regulations 2020

PRESENT : Councillor Stewart (**Chairman**), Cllr Grainger (**Vice- Chairman**), Cllrs Lucas* Johns and Giles, Michael Patrick, Quentin Beddall and the CEO

*Cllr Lucas gave apologies as he had to leave the meeting early due to a personal engagement

F20/10/01

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Green

F20/10/02

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

Councillor	Interest
Cllr Giles	Item 10 He was a trustee of the Heritage Society and would absent himself whilst this item was discussed
All councillors	Item 6 all were council tax payers
Cllrs Stewart, Johns and Lucas	Item 9 all were directors of Ottery Community Volunteer

F20/10/03

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

There were no items to be excluded

F20/10/04

TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF 24TH JANUARY 2020

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 24th January 2020 were approved and would be signed at a later date

F20/10/05

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED FINANCIAL PLAN FOR THE MUSEUM

Financial information had been circulated by the Chairman to all members prior to the meeting. There was much discussion resulting in the following recommendation being made. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council's preferred option (**Option A** to hand over the building now for minimal consideration (£1) together with up to £40,000 of investment and that £10,000 is made available immediately), be progressed. In addition, it was **RECOMMENDED** that in the transfer deed that provision be made that in the event of the charity winding up etc it is sold back to the Council for the same consideration. Dr Patrick advised that he would have to seek advice from the Charity Commission re the proposed transfer back provisions in the transfer; as charity property (which the Museum would become) was complex. It was noted that the remainder of the trustees would also need to be consulted for their views regarding the proposed transfer,

Chairman`s Initials.....

Alternatively if Option A could not be progressed then it was **RECOMMENDED** that **Option B** be pursued which was:-

The Council to

1. Release £10k immediately
2. Keep £10k in reserve for any additional work urgently required to reopen the museum
3. Ensure a proposed lease to be completed and the rental provisions to be as follows:-
Year 1 – Peppercorn
Year 2* – Peppercorn
Year 3 - £1000
Year 4 - £1000 and we are responsible for the building
*before the end of year 2, to assess the situation with the Trustees as to their potential to pay the increased rental amount from Year 3 and the Council to make a decision accordingly
4. Years 1-4 – to allocate £10,000 per year towards upkeep and repairs
5. to provide support with any grant applications and act as guarantor if necessary
6. to contract any tradesmen / companies directly

It was further **RECOMMENDED** that the CEO investigate the legal position of a proposed immediate transfer of the property. The Trustees would look at the funding/payment of the invoices/accounts in relation to the works to the Museum. If the works were carried out before the transfer of the building was effected (if it was to go ahead) then the Council should be able to reclaim any Vat incurred but this would be a matter for the Property and Land Ctte to consider

F20/10/06

TO CONSIDER A PROPOSED LARGE ORGANISATION GRANT SCHEME FOR ORGANISATIONS THAT ARE CULTURALLY, ECONOMICALLY OR HISTORICALLY IMPORTANT TO THE TOWN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CURRENT FINANCIAL NEEDS OF A NUMBER OF THESE ORGANISATIONS DUE TO COVID

The Chairman was of the view that something more ambitious was required for large organisations and events, rather than the existing grants scheme.

A large number of organisations could benefit from the Scheme. For example

- a. Tar Barrels
- b. Carnival
- c. Pixie Day
- d. Ottery Gazette
- e. Football Club
- f. Cricket Club
- g. Food and Families Festival

The Chairman requested that if councillors could think of any other organisations that would benefit from the proposed scheme, they should let him know. It was **RECOMMENDED** that rules and criteria should be drafted in the first instance, before approaches could be made to organisations

F20/10/07

COUNCIL TAX POLICY FOR 2021/22

The Chairman needed to prepare final figures to be considered at the November Full Council Meeting. The Chairman was also keen to progress a five year business plan. He advised that each committee chairman should produce their own budget for their committee and to provide their financial requirements for the next five years, to help assemble the budget. The information would need to be forwarded to the Chairman in time for the next meeting in November,.

F20/10/08

TO CONSIDER THE COUNCIL`S QUARTERLY ACCOUNTS

The Chairman reported that the figures would be ready shortly. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the item be included on the Full Council Meeting in November

Chairman`s Initials.....

F20/10/09

CONSIDERATION OF A BID (BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (' BID`)) FOR OTTERY ST MARY OR ALTERNATIVELY HOW THE COUNCIL COULD ADOPT THESE FUNCTIONS

The Chairman advised that this subject had been explored with Ottery Community Volunteers but had never really got off the ground. The Chairman advised that the BID worked on the basis of businesses within a defined commercial area, paying approx. 2% of their rateable value on top of their business rates. This money went directly to the BID management body which in turn funded a variety of business improvement projects in the locality. It had however been difficult to engage with businesses. There was no scope for a private company to run this and be self financing but according to the Chairman, there was scope for the Council to get involved, as many of the services overlapped eg tourism. He referred to the lack of website provision promoting the town and that there was no liaising between the business etc. Cllr Giles suggested that there should be contact with other councils who have been involved in BIDS to see how it worked for them. The Chairman confirmed that he would be happy to drive this and explore the opportunities of BIDS in terms of tourism; culture; business events and social media in general, and to consider employing a professional person. The Chairman advised that there was a need to have an Ottery website and for it to be kept up to date and managed by a professional person and that the Council`s website should have a link to it. Cllr Giles suggested that someone should write a paper of requirements.

F20/10/10

BRIEFING ON OTTERY COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS AND FUNDING UPDATE/REQUIREMENTS AND THE COMMUNITY LARDER

The Volunteers were opening a Community Larder in the Institute as a result of the increasing food needs of people as a result of Covid. The Volunteers believed that there would be a lot of food poverty coming up. They required desks and chairs and other equipment to be used in the Institute building and may need further funding from the Council for this purpose. The CEO advised that she had a number of desks that they could use. The CEO also advised there was approx. £6100 left in the community action fund.

F20/10/11

TO CONSIDER COUNCILLORS QUESTIONS RELATING TO FINANCE

There were no questions raised. Cllr Johns thanked the Chairman for all his hard work with regards to the meeting

Meeting Ended 1.35 pm

SIGNATURE OF CHAIRMAN	
DATE OF SIGNATURE	

Chairman`s Initials.....