



# Ottery St Mary Town Council

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Minutes of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING** of **OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Council Chamber, the Old Convent, 8 Broad Street, Ottery St Mary on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at 12.30PM

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**PRESENT** : Councillor Stewart (**Chairman**), Cllr Grainger (**Vice- Chairman**), Cllrs Pratt, Giles, Lucas and Dobson together with Peter Faithfull (non-committee member) and the CEO

F19/12/01

**TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none

F19/12/02

**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**

There were none

F19/12/03

**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 none

F19/12/04

**UPDATE AND PROPOSALS RE THE ANNUAL GRANTS AND TO CONSIDER AND RECOMMEND (IF APPLICABLE) WHETHER ANY BELATED APPLICATIONS RECEIVED SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR GRANT FUNDING**

Twenty applications had been received. The Chair and other councillors would meet with applicants during January to discuss their applications. The Chairman would be advising some applicants that they would be better placed applying for other funding streams ie S106 funding. It was agreed that the intention of the Committee was to invest in local groups, organisation etc.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the late applications of the Tennis Club, the Food Bank and Angie Phillips be considered. Their application forms were currently awaited

F19/12/05

**TO CONSIDER PROPOSED DALC INCREASE IN FEES – BY 2.5%**

It was recommended to accept the increase

F19/12/06

**TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING FUTURE ACCOUNTANCY PROVISION AND BOOK-KEEPING SERVICES, AND THE COUNCIL USING QUICK BOOKS FOR INVOICING**

The CEO had sought four quotes but had only been able to obtain two. The two quotes were discussed – one from a local practitioner and the other from a firm in Exeter. It was

**RECOMMENDED** that the CEO speak to the local practitioner who had submitted a quote, to see whether there was any flexibility with the quote and if so, the revised figure to be brought back to Full Council for consideration. It was further **RECOMMENDED** that the Council use the Quickbooks system to assist with the invoicing system which would incur a monthly fee of approx £12

*F19/12/07*

**TO CONSIDER CURRENT INSURANCE PROVISION AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CEO had obtained three quotes It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council accept the quote from Came & Co subject to the excess amounts not exceeding those of Zurich

*F19/12/08*

**TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF: A REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT, STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL, INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN FOR 2019/20 AUDIT**

It was **RECOMMENDED** to accept the updated documents

*F19/12/09*

**TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS RE ROOM HIRE CHARGES FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING ROOM/CHAMBER AND FOR THE COUNCIL OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that there should now be two type of room hiring rates only – one rate for commercial and the other rate for charity/voluntary organisations with the current charging rates to remain - £20 plus Vat per hour and £5 plus Vat per hour respectively. The CEO to have discretion as to whether to charge a hire fee for a charity/voluntary organisation depending on the individual circumstances of the organisation. In addition, that it was clearly advertised on the website and on notices, that all room hirers must have public liability insurance. It was further **RECOMMENDED** that the meeting room be upgraded with better IT facilities to make it more of a conference facility, particular as Ottery was in the process of being the recipient of super fast fibre broadband. Cllr Stewart would factor this cost (£5,000) into his precept calculation. It was also **RECOMMENDED** that Al Findley provide costings/advice re the equipment required. The Chairman and Cllr Lucas agreed to be points of contact with Al

It was further **RECOMMENDED** that the rental amounts charged for the office accommodation in the Council Offices should not be increased

*F19/12/10*

**TO CONSIDER A REVISED TRAINING AND LEGAL COSTS BUDGET AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that there should be a training budget of £1500 for 2020-21. The CEO was in the process of going out to tender re the Council's legal costs

*F19/12/11*

**TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING UPGRADING THE CURRENT OFFICE PHOTOCOPIER**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Council should retain its present photocopier and not to upgrade at this stage

*F19/12/12*

**TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2020-21 (IF APPROPRIATE)**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the amounts of the allowances remain unchanged

F19/12/13

**TO CONSIDER STAFF SALARIES 2020/21 AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that any proposed pay rises should not be less than 2% and would be in accordance with NALC's proposals. The CEO advised that details of the NALC annual pay increase had not yet been revealed. She advised that in addition, there was an additional pay increase for each employee subject to them having satisfactorily worked throughout the year. The CEO confirmed that work assessments would be carried out in the New Year

F19/12/14

**TO CONSIDER AN INCREASE IN ALLOTMENT FEES FOR 2020/21 AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the allotment rents be frozen for five years. The rents would next be considered in 2025/26. Cllr Grainger declared an interest by virtue of being an allotment holder

F19/12/15

**TO CONSIDER AN INCREASE IN CEMETERY FEES AND OTHER ASSOCIATED CEMETERY COSTS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that cemetery fees be increased by 3% (the figures to be rounded up)

F19/12/16

**TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE EARMARKED RESERVES AND THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT POLICY DOCUMENT RELATING THERETO**

The earmarked reserves and the policy document would be considered at a subsequent meeting

F19/12/17

**TO CONSIDER THE COUNCIL'S PUBLIC WORKS LOAN USED TO PURCHASE THE COUNCIL OFFICES AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS (IF APPROPRIATE)**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that no changes should be made to the loan arrangements

F19/12/18

**TO CONSIDER MAKING A CHARGE FOR THE USE OF WINTER'S LANE TENNIS COURTS**

It was **RECOMMENDED** not to pursue this matter further

F19/12/19

**TO CONSIDER THE TENDERS RECEIVED FOR THE TREE SURVEY OF ALL TREES ON THE COUNCIL'S PROPERTY AND TO MAKE A RECOMMENDATION ACCORDINGLY RE APPROPRIATE CONTRACTOR**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that these be opened on 23<sup>rd</sup> December at 10.00am and information about each tenderer be supplied to the Full Council at the January meeting for its decision

F19/12/20

**TO CONSIDER THE COUNCIL FUNDING THE COST OF A 2020 CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR SENIOR CITIZENS**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this become a Town Council event from 2020 with a budget of £500. The event to be organised by Cllr Dobson

F19/12/21

**TO CONSIDER:-**

- i. **INFORMATION FROM EDDC (TO ENABLE LOCAL COUNCIL TAX TO BE CALCULATED)**
- ii. **A DRAFT BUDGET AND**
- iii. **TO RECOMMEND A PRECEPT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2020-2021**

Cllr Lucas suggested £10,000 be earmarked to offer match funding to improve Mill Street. The Chairman would prepare figures (draft budget) based on increasing the precept (together with a precept figure) which he would arrange to circulate to all the members of the Committee for consideration

F19/12/22

**TO CONSIDER THE COUNCIL'S REVISED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

These were **RECOMMENDED** for approval

F19/12/23

**TO CONSIDER HOLDING A BARCLAYS WEBINAR PRIOR TO THE NEXT FINANCE CTTE MEETING**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this be organised by the CEO

F19/12/24

**TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS RELATING TO FINANCE**

It was understood that there were a number of ASOS tablets in the Council Offices which were not being used. A number of suggestions as to likely organisations who could make use of the tablets, took place. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Chairman make enquiries as to potential organisations and report back to the Council

**Meeting Ended 2.10pm**

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