



Ottery St Mary Town Council

Minutes of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING** of **OTTERY ST MARY TOWN COUNCIL** held on **TUESDAY, 15th DECEMBER 2020** at **10.30AM**

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 and Giles, and the CEO

F20/12/01

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Green and Johns

F20/12/02

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

| Councillor | Interest |
|-------------------|---|
| Cllr Stewart | Item 12 (Room Hire Fees) Item 21 (Councillors Questions) Director of Ottery Community Volunteers |
| Cllr Giles | Item 20 (To consider a draft budget)Trustee of Heritage Society |

F20/12/03

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 no items to be excluded

F20/12/04

TO APPROVE AND SIGN THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF 15TH OCTOBER 2020

The Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of 15th October 2020 were approved and would be signed at a later date

F20/12/05

UPDATE AND RECOMMENDATIONS RE THE ANNUAL GRANTS TO BE AWARDED

All councillors had received e-mailed details of all the applications. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the same process as last year be adopted (a number of councillors would meet with the applicants in the New Year to determine which applicants should be awarded grants)

F20/12/06

CONSIDERATION OF PROPOSED POLICY (RULES AND REGULATIONS) FOR THE COUNCIL'S LARGE ORGANISATION GRANT SCHEME

It was **RECOMMENDED** to accept the Proposed Policy

F20/12/07

CONSIDERATION OF FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Chairman`s Initials.....

It was understood that the following requests had been made:- £50,000 for Regeneration and £5,000 (Consultancy Fees) for the Policies and Compliance Working Group* It was **RECOMMENDED** that these two sums be approved

**Note the Terms of Reference of the Policies and Compliance Working Group stipulated requirements which had to be complied with re any funding requests.*

F20/12/08

TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE REVISED ACCOUNTANCY FEES FOR 2021/22

All councillors had received e-mailed details of the accountancy fees (Rachel Hollox -Otter Accountants) . It was understood that the accountant`s fees would remain unchanged for 2021/22 but that Rachel could not guarantee that payroll charges would not increase It was **RECOMMENDED** that Otter Accountants remain as the Council`s accountants and the current fees accepted subject to there being potentially a small increase for payroll fees.

F20/12/09

TO NOTE AND CONFIRM THE COUNCIL`S CURRENT INSURANCE PROVIDERS

All councillors have received e-mailed details of the insurance providers Came and Co and it was noted that the Council was locked into a three year term to expire in 2023

F20/12/10

TO CONSIDER STEPHENS SCOWN REMAINING AS THE COUNCIL`S LEGAL ADVISORS

All councillors had received e-mailed details of the solicitors fees which would not increase for 2021/22. It was **RECOMMENDED** that Stephens Scown remain as the Council`s legal services providers

F20/12/11

TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDING APPROVAL OF: A REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT, STATEMENT OF INTERNAL CONTROL, INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN FOR THE 2020/21 AUDIT

All councillors had received the draft documents. However the Investment Strategy had already been approved at the October 2020 TC Meeting and was for information purposes only. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the other three documents be approved as drafted

F20/12/12

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

All councillors had received e-mailed details of the room hire charges. It was **RECOMMENDED** that there should be no increase for room hire charges (currently the Council Chamber was the only available room as the meeting room was being utilised by Ottery Community Volunteers) and consideration be given at some point as to the best means of generating an income stream for the accommodation within the building. Cllr Lucas advised that he had already carried out some research in this respect which he would be happy to make available to any interested party. The Chairman left the meeting whilst this item was being discussed

F20/12/13

TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS RE TENANTS RENTALS

All councillors had received e-mailed details of the current rentals. It was **RECOMMENDED** that there should be no increase

F20/12/14

TO CONSIDER AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2021-22

The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provides that parish councils may pay a 'parish basic allowance' to recognise the time and effort their elected members put into their parish duties.

An authority may pay an allowance for each year ("parish basic allowance")— (a) to its chairman(c) only; or (b) to each of its members, and the amount of that allowance payable to its chairman may differ from that payable to each other member of the authority, but otherwise that amount shall be the same for each such member

All councillors had received e-mailed details of the Allowance and the CEO had provided details of the relevant legislation. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the CEO seek advice as to the current allowances scheme, with a view to it being revised/replaced to include co-opted councillors (currently allowances

Chairman`s Initials.....

could only be paid to elected councillors and not to those co-opted onto the Council) and that the allowance amount paid to each councilor should reflect their involvement with the Council through out the year. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the current Scheme be retained for the interim

F20/12/15

TO CONSIDER STAFF SALARIES 2021/22 AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS

All councillors had received e-mailed details of staff salaries. It was noted and **RECOMMENDED** that the salaries be increased in line with employees contract terms and the NALC annual pay awards

F20/12/16

TO NOTE AND CONFIRM THE CURRENT RENT FREEZE RE ALLOTMENTS RENTALS

All councillors had received e-mailed details of current rentals and the previously agreed rent freeze. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the rentals remain frozen up to 25/26 with allotments costing 0.35p a metre. It was also **RECOMMENDED** that Caren Flicker be thanked for all her work as Chair on the Allotment Management Ctte and wish her a speedy recovery. Cllr Grainger would make contact with the land owner of the land neat the hospital which could be a potential site for allotments and a skate park. The CEO had advertised in the Gazette asking landowners who were willing to make land available for allotments to come forward. However she had received minimal interest. Cllr Lucas advised that allotments could be considered as part of a Regeneration matter for future discussion

F20/12/17

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

All councillors had received e-mailed details of current fees. It was **RECOMMENDED** that there should be a 3% increase

F20/12/18

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

All councillors had received e-mailed details of current policy. It was **RESOLVED** that the Policy remain un-amended

F20/12/19

TO CONSIDER AN ALTERNATIVE AUTHORITY FOR THE COUNCIL`S BANKING PAYMENT SYSTEM

The CEO advised that currently the Chair and herself were the only authorised signatories on the Council`s banking system. The Mayor was in the process of being an authorised signatory and that was being progressed by Barclays. Ideally there should be a fourth person but it must be someone who was on the Finance Ctte and who was intending to remain on the Ctte from next May and had the time available to trigger payments etc, She asked members to consider coming forward for this role.

F20/12/20

TO CONSIDER:-

- I. A DRAFT BUDGET AND**
- II. TO RECOMMEND A PRECEPT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021-2022**

All councillors had received e-mailed details of the draft budget. It was **RECOMMENDED** that the draft budget be approved and the precept remain as at the same figure for last year - £156,000. The Ctte had taken into account current circumstances due to Covid and accordingly if the proposed precept figure was subsequently approved by Full Council, it would indicate a responsible and well budgeted council. It was also noted that the following be earmarked reserves:-

| PURPOSE | AMOUNT |
|---|-----------------|
| Regeneration | 50,000 |
| Policies and Compliance | 5,000 |
| Land of Canaan Bridge | 20,000 |
| Grants and Donations | 25,000 |
| Building & Repairs (Museum) | 20,000 |
| Monies to plug deficit in budget (instead of raising the precept) | 25,000 |
| TOTAL AMOUNT | £145,000 |

Chairman`s Initials.....

F20/12/21

TO RECEIVE COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS RELATING TO FINANCE

1. Cllr Lucas had now resigned as a Director of the Ottery Community Volunteers (OCV) and the Chairman thanked him for all his hard work during his time as a director. It would be necessary to have this `interest` removed from Cllr Lucas`s Declaration of Interest form
2. The Chairman advised that OCV required further funding in the sum of approx. £600-£700. The CEO would inform him of the process that the OCV would require to follow, for the request to be considered by Full Council. It was also requested that the CEO investigate the funding set aside by the Council at the beginning of lockdown in March 2020 (the Community Action Fund). Cllr Lucas wanted to know whether it had been advertised and who was eligible to apply

Meeting Ended 11.45 pm

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <i>SIGNATURE OF CHAIRMAN</i> | |
| <i>DATE OF SIGNATURE</i> | |

Chairman`s Initials.....