



## CHEPSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Financial Policy and Audit Committee** of Chepstow Town Council held via Zoom on Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7.00pm

**Present:**

**Chair:** Cllr P Hobson

**Councillors:** H Beach, C Duchet, Y Havard (left 9.30pm), N Heywood, A Horne, T Kirton, A Redhead, D Rooke

**Apologies:** None

**In Attendance:** Mrs L Allen (Town Clerk)  
Mrs A Sandiford (Deputy Town Clerk)  
Member of Public (1)

**1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair**

Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair were sought.

**RESOLVED:**

To elect Cllr P Hobson as Chair and Cllr A Redhead as Vice Chair.

**2. Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda**

None

**3. Suspend Standing Orders**

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Members to enter into discussions with a representative from Basecamp in regards to their grant application - *see Min 20 a(i) below.*

A representative from Basecamp outlined their grant application and responded to Members' queries in relation to the project.

*The remote connection was cut off and the meeting was temporarily suspended whilst Members re-entered the meeting room.*

**4. Minutes**

The minutes of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were approved and will be signed at the next available opportunity due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

**5. Matters Arising**

It was noted that Town Festival will be considered at the next Full Town Council meeting.

**6. Review of Systems of Internal Control**

In compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 Members undertook a review of the Council's systems of internal control.

**RESOLVED:**

To report to Council that having reviewed the Council's systems of internal control, the Financial Policy and Audit Committee is satisfied that the Council's internal controls were:

- (a) operated during the year;
- (b) were relevant and appropriate for the Council; and
- (c) Were not too onerous or disproportionate

**7. Effectiveness of Internal Audit**

In compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Wales) Regulations 2014 Members undertook a review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit arrangements.

**RESOLVED:**

To report to Council that having reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's internal audit arrangements, the Financial Policy and Audit Committee is satisfied that the Council's internal audit arrangements met the required standards and were effective.

**8. Internal Audit – Final Report 2020/2021**

Members considered the final report and recommendations of the Internal Auditor in respect of the Council's accounting records and system of internal control for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 together with an update on the recommendations from the Clerk.

The Committee commended the Clerk on the outcome of the Internal Audit Report.

**RESOLVED:**

To accept the final report and recommendations of the Internal Auditor in respect of the Council's accounting records and system of internal control for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and recommend adoption by Full Council.

**9. Statement of Accounts and Covid-19 Impact Assessment**

Members considered the Statement of Accounts for Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and the Covid-19 Impact Assessment report.

A Member referred to a grammatical error on page 5 of the Covid Financial Impact Statement.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and the Covid-19 Financial Impact Assessment report and recommend adoption by Full Council.

**10. Year End Accounts and Annual Return**

Members considered the Year End Accounts and Annual Return for the Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

On considering the Annual Governance Statement (Part 1) the Committee agreed to items 1 to 8 and acknowledged that item 9 was not applicable to Council.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the Year End Accounts and Annual Return for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and recommend adoption and signature by Full Council.

**11. Earmarked Reserves**

Members considered the Earmarked Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the Earmarked Reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and recommend adoption by Full Council.

**12. Assets**

Members reviewed the Council's Register of Assets. The Clerk clarified why the Drill Hall was listed in the register of Assets.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the Register of Assets.

**13. Insurance**

Members reviewed the Council's Insurance requirements. The Clerk clarified the reason for the one-year term and advised new quotations will be sought for a longer term insurance contract from 2022.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the Council's Insurance requirement for the period 1<sup>st</sup> June 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2022.

**14. Annual Investment Strategy**

Members considered the Reserves Policy, Investment Policy and Annual Investment Strategy prepared in line with the guidance issued by the Welsh Government as required under s15 of the Local Government Act 2003.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the Reserves Policy, Investment Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2021/2022 and recommend adoption by Full Council.

**15. Review of Committee Terms and Reference and Scheme of Delegation**

Members reviewed the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation for its committees, sub-committees and working parties to ensure that it is fit for purpose.

A discussion ensued regarding the number of powers and responsibilities currently delegated to the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee. It was suggested that the scope of the Committee is reviewed by Members individually over the Summer months in order to give consideration at the next meeting to a split in powers and responsibilities to reduce the burden on the Committee.

**RESOLVED:**

a) To recommend that Full Council adopts the Committee Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation as presented, subject to the inclusion of an expiry date for its working parties and the delegation of War Memorials to the Environment and Amenities Committee.

b) To review the powers and responsibilities of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee at the next meeting in November in order to make recommendations to Full Council.

**16. Cheque Signatories**

Members reviewed the Council's designated cheque signatories.

**RESOLVED:**

To confirm the cheque signatories as Cllr Ms H Beach, Cllr Mrs Y Havard, Cllr P Hobson, Cllr A Redhead and Cllr D Rooke.

## 17. Internal Investigation

At the Extraordinary meeting of Full Council on 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020 it was resolved to approve the cost of £2,000 to carry out an independent investigation on the events around the breakdown of the relationship (with the Chepstow Chamber of Commerce and Tourism) to include the actions of the proper officer, Councillors and staff of both organisations, minute ref 268 and 269. Following discussions with potential consultants it is anticipated that this project will require 6-8 working days at a cost of £2,275 + VAT up to a maximum of £3,000 + VAT (£375 per day).

### RESOLVED:

To recommend to Full Council a maximum cost of £3,000 + VAT to carry out an independent investigation into the events surrounding the breakdown of the relationship between Town Council and the Chepstow Chamber of Commerce and Tourism (*LGA 1972 s.111*).

## 18. Repair Café and update on Community Fridge

Members received an oral report from the Clerk on the set up of a Repair Café in Chepstow following a meeting with Repair Café Wales. Members considered an interim budget of £1,000 for associated costs for the project and delegating authority to the Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee to allow work to commence. The Clerk was requested to liaise with Repair Café Wales in relation to volunteers to run the project out of Bulwark Community Centre every other Saturday for an initial trial period of six months.

### RESOLVED:

- i) To agree an interim budget of £1,000 for associated costs to set up a Repair Café to be run out of Bulwark Community Centre for a trial period of six months and to delegate authority to the Clerk to allow work to commence.
- ii) To invite Repair Café Wales to address the Committee at the next meeting.

Members received an oral update on the Community Fridge and noted that the group had been invited by Basecamp to share premises in the town.

## 19. Policy Review

It was agreed to re-arrange the order of business and consider item (b) prior to item (a).

- b. Members considered at length Council's existing Social Media & Electronic Communications Policy in conjunction with a draft Communications and Public Participation Policy and agreed in principle to the amalgamation of both policies. It was requested that the working party present details of the financial implications for all proposals contained within the draft policy for consideration by the Committee.

### RESOLVED:

To defer the draft Communications and Public Participation Policy to the next ordinary meeting of the Committee pending detailed information of the financial implications for all proposals contained in the policy.

- a. Members reviewed and where necessary amended the following Policies:

- I. Advertising Policy – *NB this policy is currently suspended*
- II. Communications and IT Policy
- III. Information and Data Protection Policy
- IV. Retention and Disposal Policy
- V. Social Media Policy and Electronic Communications Policy
- VI. Training Policy - *awaiting new guidance following updated legislation*

**RESOLVED:**

- I. To retain the suspension pending investigation of alternative locations
- II. To approve the amendments and recommend subsequent adoption by Full Council
- III. To approve and recommend adoption by Full Council
- IV. To approve and recommend adoption by Full Council
- V. To approve the amendments and recommend subsequent adoption by Full Council
- VI. To note

**20. Community Grant Funding and Donations**

a. Members considered grant applications received under the Covid Emergency Grant Scheme from:

- i. Basecamp - £1,538

**RESOLVED:**

To grant fund £1,538 to Basecamp towards the purchase of materials necessary to create a vertical garden for use as a therapeutic space for young and isolated people (*LGA 1976 (Misc Prov), s19*).

- ii. St Mary's RC Primary PTA - £1,089.98

**RESOLVED:**

To grant fund £939.98 to St Mary's RC Primary PTA for the purchase of 2 x industrial gazebos with sides (*LGA 1976 (Misc Prov), s19*).

Members were reminded of a previous resolution made by Full Council to purchase a number of foggers for community use.

**FURTHER RESOLVED:**

As per the previous resolution by Full Council, to purchase a fogger and donate to St Mary's RC Primary PTA for community use.

b. Members considered a donation to:

- i. Retired Police Dogs of Gwent – grant application attached to capture information.

**RESOLVED:**

To donate £500 to Retired Police Dogs of Gwent towards veterinary bills for adopted retired Police dogs who have served in Gwent Police Force (*LGA 1972, s137*).

- ii. SARA - a one-off donation due to Covid-19 and their inability to fundraise during the pandemic.

**RESOLVED:**

To donate £6,000 to SARA towards operational costs due to their inability to fundraise during the pandemic (*PHA 1936, s234*).

*Standing Orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue past 9.30pm*

**21. Items for Next Meeting**

Public Toilets – Welsh Street Car Park

Feasibility of public toilets in Bulwark (*bf FTC 26/05/21*)

To consider potential investment opportunities for the Town Council  
Community Emergency Plan  
Town Award

**22. Date of Next Meeting**

Confirmed the next ordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee will take place at 7.00pm on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 either via Zoom remote meetings or in the Council Chamber, The Gatehouse, Chepstow.

**23. Exclusion of Press and Public**

**RESOLVED:**

To exclude the press and public for the discussion of Item 24. Tenders and Quotations owing to the confidential and sensitive nature, this is in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

**24. Tenders and Quotations**

1. Members considered the recommendations in the confidential report following the tender process for a consultant to carry out the work in regards the Community Asset Transfer of the Drill Hall. Members also considered how the Working Party members, consisting of Drill Hall Management Committee and CIO Members can be involved in the decision as this falls outside the scope of the Town Council's Financial Regulations

**RESOLVED:**

- i. To agree to the potential costs associated with consultant fees and to allocate budget from the Earmarked Reserves "Devolved Services" budget head;
- ii. For the Drill Hall Community Asset Transfer Working Party to review the quotations and make recommendations to Full Council.

2. Members considered the quotes in the confidential report following the tender process for the first year works to the Gatehouse

**RESOLVED:**

To accept quotation from Clarke Electrical and Security Services Ltd for the first year works to the Gatehouse at a cost of £59,600 + VAT (*LGA 1972, s.133*).

3. Members considered the report and recommendations in regards the roof at the Old Library.

**RESOLVED:**

To accept quotation from Stay Dry Roofing to replace the roof of the Old Library at a cost of £12,350 + VAT (*LGA 1972 s.133*).

**CLOSE: This completed the business of the meeting at 22:00.**

**SIGNED CHAIR PERSON:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_