



CHEPSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the **Finance, Policy and Audit Committee** of Chepstow Town Council held on Wednesday 8th February 2023 at 7.00pm

Present:

Chair: Cllr J Rosser

Councillors: M Griffiths, P Griffiths, T Griffiths, N Meyrick, D Rooke, J MacTaggart, S Tulley (remote)

In Attendance: Mrs L Allen (Town Clerk)
Mrs A Sandiford (Deputy Town Clerk)
Cllrs D Barnes (left 7.15pm)

37. Apologies

None

38. Declarations of Interest in Items on the agenda

None

The Committee agreed to bring forward Item 59 below to allow Cllr D Barnes to participate in the discussion.

59. Communications Project – University of South Wales

The Committee received an update from Cllr D Barnes who responded to Members' questions in relation to the communications project being undertaken by the University of South Wales. Consideration was given to inviting the participating students to visit Chepstow later in the year as part of the Council's Vision to promote the town. Cllr Barnes requested a working party is set up to carry this matter forward and stated he would forward his written report to the Clerk for circulation and further consideration at the Full Council meeting in February 2023.

RESOLVED:

To earmark £500 from the 2022/2023 Civic Entertainment budget heading towards hosting students from the University of South Wales later in the year and to disseminate Cllr Barnes' report to all Councillors for further consideration at the Full Council meeting in February 2023.

39. To Suspend Standing Orders

a) Public Open Forum (15 minutes at the discretion of the Chair)

There were no members of the public in attendance.

40. Minutes

The minutes of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee Meeting held on 9th November 2022 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

41. Matters Arising

Received the Clerk's Report on matters arising from the minutes for items not on the agenda. No issues were raised.

42. 3rd quarter budget monitoring to end December 2022

The Committee considered the financial position on the 3rd quarter budget monitoring in respect of the current financial year 2022/23.

The Clerk responded to Members queries on the following budget heads:

- 1101 – salaries: *projected overspend as a result of the National Pay Award.*
- 1643 – defibrillators: *Clerk to circulate a list of current locations to Councillors.*

The Chair advised that minor amendments to budget projections were required, but these would not affect the end balance.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the financial position on the 3rd quarter budget monitoring in respect of the current financial year 2022/23 to include the minor amendments to the budget projections.

43. Annual Risk Assessment and review of the Risk Management Policy

The Committee considered the annual Risk Assessment 2023 Report together with the Risk Management Policy and Strategy in line with proper governance practices as detailed in the Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide.

The Clerk responded to Members queries on the following:

- Drill Hall sinking fund
- Ensuring Consultative Committee deadlines for responses are met
- Hybrid meetings

RESOLVED

1. To add hybrid meetings to the Risk Assessment
2. To adopt the annual Risk Assessment and Risk Management Policy subject to the inclusion of (1) above.
3. To further investigate and obtain quotations for alternative microphones for hybrid meetings.

44. Standing Orders

The Committee noted that the revised model standing orders, requested in January 2022 are still outstanding from One Voice Wales following new legislation under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

45. Financial Regulations

The Committee reviewed the Council's Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Financial Regulations as circulated.

46. Asset Register

The Committee undertook an annual review of the Council's register of Assets and noted photographic evidence was also being gathered. The Clerk advised that an amendment to the pop-up shelters was required to reduce the number to 30.

RESOLVED:

To adopt the Asset Register, subject to the reduction of pop-ups to 30.

47. Insurance

The Committee undertook an annual review of the Council's Insurance requirements and noted the process to renew the policy from 1st June 2023.

RESOLVED:

To approve the existing Policy Schedule and note the renewal process which will be considered by Full Council.

48. Investments

The Committee considered the Investment Report in conjunction with the Council's 'Reserves Policy, Investment Policy and Annual Investment Strategy 2022/2023' (*b/f Full Council 23.11.22 minute ref 144 (f)*).

RESOLVED:

To retain a working balance of £300,000 in the Unity Trust current account and transfer the balance to the CCLA. In addition that prior to investment in any other financial institutions their Ethical Policies are investigated.

49. Community Grant criteria

The Committee considered the Community Grants awarding criteria (*b/f Full Council 23.11.22 minute ref 144 (g,ii)*).

RESOLVED:

That Cllrs J Rosser and M Griffiths produce a draft amended Grants Awarding Policy for consideration at the next Finance, Policy & Audit Committee in June 2023.

50. Drill Hall Roof

a. The Committee received an update on the status of the quotations being sought for the repairs to the Drill Hall roof.

A discussion ensued on the issue of urgent repairs to the Drill Hall roof and Cllr P Griffiths referred to discussions with Monmouthshire County Council in relation to the extension of the lease.

RESOLVED:

To delegate authority to the Clerk in consultation with the Chair of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee to review and approve quotations when received for roof repairs at the Drill Hall to a maximum cost of £10,000.

b. The Committee noted the requirement to advertise for a full roof replacement via the Contracts Finder portal "Sell to Wales" due to the potential value being over £25,000 (*Public Contracts Regulations 2015*).

RESOLVED:

To hold the issue of a replacement roof in abeyance pending the establishment of a CIO (Charity Incorporated Organisation) for the Drill Hall.

51. Community Contributions 2023/24

a. The Committee considered the community contributions for the Summer Bands on the Bandstand, for which a budgetary provision was recommended under the budget setting process for 2023/2024. This is to allow organising the event which will be held on 13 Sunday's through June, July and August 2023.

RESOLVED:

To approve the contribution to the Summer Bands on the Bandstand 2023/2024 events as allocated within the budget (*LGA 1972 s145*).

b. The Committee considered the community contribution towards the Chepstow Fireworks display to be held on Sunday, 29th October 2023. Early authority was requested to enable booking of the fireworks.

RESOLVED:

To contribute £3,885 towards the Chepstow Fireworks display (*LGA 1972, s145*).

52. Community Grant Application

The Committee received the community grant report and considered the following application:

Welsh Air Ambulance

Members considered an application from Welsh Air Ambulance for £200 towards funding of Rapid Response Vehicles.

RESOLVED:

To grant fund £200.00 to Wales Air Ambulance (*LGA 1972 s137*)

53. Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

Members considered renewal of the Deputy Clerk's annual membership to the SLCC.

RESOLVED:

To renew the Deputy Clerk's annual membership to SLCC at a cost of £236.00 (*LGA 1972, s143*).

54. Dog waste removal contract

The Committee considered the dog waste contract with Merlin Environmental Services for the emptying of dog waste bins at a cost of £7.00 per bin for 12-months.

RESOLVED:

To approve the dog waste contract with Merlin Environmental Services for the emptying of dog waste bins in Chepstow.

55. King's Coronation

The Committee considered the report detailing proposed activities for the King's Coronation over the weekend of 6th - 8th May 2023 and noted the budget of £10,000 set aside for the occasion.

RESOLVED:

1. To encourage 'community parties' in all wards and delegate authority to the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to administer grants to a maximum of £100 per application for the purchase of non-alcohol related items, subject to valid receipts.
2. To arrange bands on the bandstand on Sunday 7th May 2023 between 2pm and 7pm for a 'picnic in the park' event and to permit authorised outside entertainers to perform at the event under their own volition, subject to the provision of relevant insurance and risk assessments being provided prior to the event.
3. To decorate Moor Street, High Street and St Mary's Street with Union Flag bunting from late April to early September at an approximate cost of £2,500 (*LGA 1972 S144*).

56. Report on emergency spend

Following the Christmas recess, the Committee noted expenditure under Financial Regulation 3.3 *"The Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done at once, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of £7,500. The Clerk shall report the action to the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter"* and that all costs are within budget.

RESOLVED:

To ratify the following emergency spend under Financial Regulation 3.3:

- Old Library business rates - £1,586.38 (*LGA 1972, s133*)

- Old Library Emergency lighting works - £1,125.00 (*LGA 1972, s133*)
- Old Library electrical works following 5-year safety report - £1,685.00 (*LGA 1972, s133*)
- Blockage at WC Riverbank - £280.00 (PHA 1936,87)

57. Office Franking Machine

The Committee considered early settlement of the office franking machine as it is rarely used now that Councillors receive their documents electronically. Budget remaining in this financial year of £700 with the balance being sought from general reserves which would be replaced in 2023/24 with the projected budget line of £1,470. This budget head would be reduced in 2024/25.

RESOLVED:

To authorise early settlement of the office franking machine at an approximate cost of £ 2,300.00 (*LGA 1972 s111*).

58. Governance and financial management: a self-evaluation toolkit for community and town councils in Wales.

The Committee considered the self-evaluation toolkit and summary, developed jointly by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks, completed by the Clerk.

RESOLVED:

To accept the responses by the Clerk contained in the self-evaluation toolkit, as circulated and implement the following recommendations:

- Implement an agreed community engagement strategy for periodic review.
- To periodically purge information which it no longer needs to keep and retain information disposal records.
- Implement a business continuity plan to help Council to continue to function should it encounter loss or damage to property.
- Implement a stress management policy.
- Implement a stress risk assessment.
- Implement documented arrangements for transfer of documents on change of Responsible Financial Officer.

59. Communications Project – University of South Wales

See above

60. Old Library Memorial Hall

a. The Committee considered 3 quotations to install loft insulation at the Old Library Memorial Hall.

RESOLVED:

To accept quotation 3 for loft insulation at the Old Library Memorial Hall at a cost of £1,400 + VAT (*LGA 1976 (Misc Prov) s19*).

b. The Committee considered the request from the new tenant for financial support towards a replacement entrance door at a cost of £5,000.

RESOLVED:

To decline the request from the new tenant for financial support towards a replacement entrance door at the Old Library Memorial Hall.

61. Date of Next Meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy and Audit Committee will take place at a date to be arranged in June 2023.

62. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED:

To exclude the press and public for the discussion of Item 63. Old Library Memorial Hall, 64. Community Orchards and 65. Drill Hall Manager owing to the confidential and sensitive nature, this is in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

63. Old Library Memorial Hall

The Committee considered the confidential draft Heads of Terms

RESOLVED:

To accept the draft Heads of Terms and ensure that confirmation that the floor will remain protected is included.

64. Community Orchards

The Committee considered the confidential report on the future provision of the Community Orchards.

RESOLVED:

To approve additional staffing costs for administration support for the Orchards for 7 days (51.8 hours) per annum at a cost of approximately £1,000 (*LGA 1972 s112*).

65. Drill Hall Manager

The Committee considered the salary scale for the new Drill Hall Manager role.

RESOLVED:

To appoint Salary Scale Point (SCP) 26-28 to the role of the Drill Hall Manager at a cost of £45,534.78 (*LGA 1972 s112*)

CLOSE: This completed the business of the meeting at 8.50pm

SIGNED CHAIRPERSON: _____ **DATE:** _____