

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & PREMISES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2019

Present were Councillors: D Ogle (Vice Chair), G Lakin, J Housley, T Bawden, K Guest and V Bowden, substitute T Grantham for P Swift

In attendance: K Mann (Advisor to Council) and members of the public

The meeting was recorded on behalf of the Council.

57. To receive apologies for absence from members and to consider the reasons for absence

Cllr P Swift provided his apologies and the substitute was Cllr T Grantham.

RESOLVED: That the apologies from Cllr Swift be approved and Cllr T Grantham as substitute be approved

58. To receive any declarations of personal and/or disclosable pecuniary interests from members on items to be discussed at this meeting

None

59 To identify items for discussion which may require the exclusion of the Press and Public

The press and public will be asked to leave when discussing item 65 and onwards on the agenda. Item 67 to move to public session to be heard after item 64.4

60. Minutes of previous meeting held on the 12 September 2019 for information

The minutes had been approved at Council and were for information only.

RESOLVED: That the minutes from the 12 September Finance & Premises Committee meeting be noted.

61. To receive the adopted Finance & Premises Committee Terms of Reference (Council 5 September 2019)

Should the Grants Policy review be amended then the Terms of Reference would need to be amended.

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference be considered after the Grants Policy review.

62. To receive an update on the Accounts of Council

62.1 Budget v Spend Analysis – Quarter 2 report

The Advisor to Council presented the quarter 2 report from Rialtas. Councillors considered the information provided. A discussion took part with regard to setting budgets for 2020/21. It was agreed to cancel the Standing Order of £7,000 to the Bank Imprest Account as there was £43,000 in the account up to the end of August and as the salary costs are approx. £2,500 per month the funds in this account cover this cost. Should a standing order be needed in the future then it would be set up once again

RESOLVED: That

- i) The Quarter 2 accounts information provided be noted; and**
- ii) The Standing Order for £7,000 from the Cooperative General Bank Account to the Cooperative Imprest Account be cancelled**

62.2 Financial Strategy Review

The Advisor to Council had provided a draft Financial Strategy for discussion, this included Ear Marked Reserves (EMR) and an Investment Strategy.

A debate on what should be EMR for the next 3 – 5 years took place.

The instruction from Council to open two bank accounts, one with the Yorkshire Bank and one with Lloyds Bank was on going. The business 1 year fixed term deposit account with the Yorkshire Bank needed the Business Manager to approve the investment and the Chairman was awaiting a call back. Upon investigation opening a business bank account with Lloyds Bank had significant bank charges attached. An account would be opened with Unity Trust Bank, a bank that several town and parish councils use and there is only a £6.00 monthly charge for having an account. As agreed by Council £85,000 would be invested with Unity Trust Bank. Once the account is opened there would be an option to have an instant access savings account with Unity Trust Bank.

EMR's be set up as follows:

- Election Costs £5,000 for the next 3 financial years
- David Chadwick Centre to be spent in accordance with the resolution of Council
- Loan Repayment Thorncliff Leisure for a period of 24 years the sum of £17,000
- Community Liaison Function may be an EMR however this needs further discussion.
- Archive Project - £7,205 was currently in the budget for 2019/20. As the archivist had resigned the Staffing Committee would be considering appointment of a new officer. Once this is arranged an EMR with costs over the next 3 years would be considered.

New EMR's

- Community Room refurbishment and repairs
- Chapel Green Advice Centre
- Disabled access to the office
- Contingency - 3 months precept and staffing costs
- IT provision
- British Legion £250 per annum for the next 3 years

Further items to be added to the EMR until the Budget Setting meeting.

The investment strategy – consider ethical investments in the future to ensure the parish council do not invest in organisations that deal with arms dealing and deforestation and other unethical ventures.

RESOLVED: That the Draft Financial Strategy would be updated and circulated to members of the committee.

62.3 To consider giving a donation to Royal British Legion in lieu of using their PA system for the Service of Remembrance – to consider this to be an annual contribution

The committee considered the cost to hire the PA system of £50.00 per annum which was a donation to the Royal British Legion. They also considered the purchasing of wreaths. It was agreed to set up a donation to be paid annually to the Royal British Legion.

Cllr Ogle declared a personal interest as a past member of the Army.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That an annual contribution of £250.00 for a period of 3 years to be provided to the Royal British Legion for the loan of the PA System and purchase of wreaths for the Remembrance Event.

62.4 To consider free of charge room hire for Councillors using the Community Room

The committee considered the request for free room hire for councillors. Councillors were reminded to consider the adopted Code of Conduct.

It was agreed to include a sentence within the councils room hire booking form that charges would be waived to new groups wanting to hire the community room, this would be at the discretion of the council delegated to the Chairman if the request was between Council meetings and funds were needed prior to the next meeting. The chairman would inform councillors that a request had been received for free room hire to give councillors the opportunity to comment before the request was approved.

Councillors would not have any benefit over other members of the public.

RESOLVED: That the room hire booking form would be reviewed at the next meeting prior to providing the document to Council for adoption.

62.5 To consider providing free of charge dog poo bags to local residents

The Advisor to Council updated that the cost to provide dog poo bags to local residents was £303.12 per annum.

A discussion took place with regard to continuing providing bags to local residents. It was felt that the benefit to the community was greater than the cost to the council.

RESOLVED: That the provision of free of charge dog poo bags continues.

64. Policies Review

64.1 Document Retention Policy

The committee considered the Document Retention Policy. The Advisor was asked to check the document for consistency. Once it was checked then the document to go to Council for adoption. It was agreed that once the new member of staff was in place a review of documents kept at the council offices would take place.

RESOLVED: That the office staff review the documents held at the council offices

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the Document Retention Policy be adopted.

64.2 To approve the updated Training Policy (as requested by Council 3 October 2019)

The committee discussed sections 2.3 and 2.4 of the training policy. A suggestion to amend section 2.4 was discussed. Any training councillors are booked onto would be added to Google Calendar and a reminder would then be sent to the councillor.

RESOLVED: That the wording provided in the Training Policy be approved. All councillors will be circulated with the adopted policy.

64.3 Grants Policy

The reviewed grants policy had been reduced and wording shortened. All grants have to go through council as councillors do not have delegated power to award grants. The proposal was that grants would be considered on a ward basis. There would be two documents: the Small Ward Grant Application and a Community Support Fund Grant Application. A discussion took place regarding the amended policies.

It was felt that the small ward grant funds should be split equally between each councillor. Each councillor would be given a grants budget. The community support fund would cover grants awarded across the Ecclesfield Parish area.

It was agreed that the grants awarding policy needs to be simplistic and the current documents were too difficult for members of the public and groups to understand.

RESOLVED: That the Grants Working Group look at the final document, the original criteria for the policy and ward councillor grant options. Once reviewed the policy would go to Council on the 7 November 2019 for adoption.

64.4 To consider the David Chadwick Funds Working Group Terms of Reference

A discussion took place about the terms of reference. The fund would be for capital costs and any interest would be revenue. A Survey could be completed for the use of the funds to every residence in High Green and Thorncliffe.

RESOLVED: That the working group revised the ToR and provide the revised document to council on the 7 November 2019.

The meeting had taken 2.5 hours and it was agreed to suspend Standing Orders to continue the meeting for an additional 30 minutes.

65. Confidential Matters

Grant Funding

The committee considered the following grant applications:

- 65.1** Angram Bank Primary School – Christmas Grant at a cost of £450.00
- 65.2** Ecclesfield Primary School – Christmas Grant at a cost of £500.00
- 65.3** Lound Infant School – Christmas Grant at a cost of £300.00
- 65.4** Lound Junior School – Christmas Grant at a cost of £250.00
- 65.5** Coit School Fund – Christmas Grant £1,200.00
- 65.6** Chapel Green Advice Centre - £11,600.00
- 65.7** Grenoside Conservation Society - £342.39

It was agreed that an EMR to schools for Christmas grants for the next 3 years be suggested to Council. Councillor Bawden voted against this suggestion.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That

- i) all schools in Ecclesfield Parish Area are provided with a Christmas Gift of £350.00 and this would be included in the Financial Strategy for the next 3 years as an Ear Marked Reserve (EMR) using S137 for the funding;
- ii) Chapel Green Advice Centre be awarded £6,600 for the rent of the building and to request a further breakdown and more detail on the other items on the grant application; and
- iii) Grenoside Conservation Society be awarded £342.39 from L.G. Act 1972 s137

66. Staffing Update

- 66.1** Pensions update – agreement April 2017 – March 2020 (3 year agreement in place 25.3% employer contribution)

RESOLVED: That the update be noted

- 66.2 To consider the ongoing agreement in place with the Advisor to Council.**

The current agreement in place was set for 10 hours working from home (attending parish council meeting and the office when required) however due to workload and meetings the Advisor has attended the office for 2 days plus working from home. The advisor will be discussing the continued agreement with the Staffing Committee on the 18 October 2019.

RESOLVED: That Staffing Committee consider the agreement with the Advisor to Council.

67. School Safety Barrier

The committee considered the request to use the remaining CIL funds for a pedestrian safety barrier. It was felt that it was Sheffield City Council's responsibility and they had provided information in 2018 regarding the measurements needed for safe passage on a footpath which prevented the installation of a barrier.

It was agreed to invite an officer from Sheffield City Council to meet with Cllrs Ogle and Lakin on site to discuss this matter further.

RESOLVED: That a site meeting be arranged with Sheffield City Council to discuss the installation of a safety barrier outside a local school.

68. Closure of the meeting and dates of future meetings

The meeting closed at 9.30pm. The Chairman thanked all for attending. The date of the next meeting was Wednesday 13 November 2019 at 6.30pm (changed from Thursday 14 November 2019)

Future Meetings:

12 December 2019 at 6.30pm (Budget Setting Meeting)

16 January 2020 at 6.30pm