

Minutes of the Finance and Governance Committee Meeting held on

Thursday, 13th July, 2017 at 1 p.m. Eye Town Hall

1. *Apologies for absence:*
There were no apologies received.
2. *In attendance:* Cllrs J Mather, N Ford, A Evitt, and M Ford
Additional Councillors in attendance not members of F&G: Cllrs. C Ribchester, C Byles (arrived 2 p.m. and departed 2.30 p.m.)
Members of the public present: Mrs Gould (arrived 2 p.m. and departed 2.30 p.m.)
3. *Minutes of the meeting held on 7th June 2017:*
These were accepted.
4. *Chairs Actions/Committee discussions:*
 - a) It was agreed that F & G will require new members following the resignation of Richard Berry as a Councillor.
 - b) Concern was expressed about the continued absence of Cllr. Molesworth. It was agreed that Cllr Ribchester would write to him to determine whether he wished to remain as a Councillor and the letter would indicate that if no response is received by the end of July the assumption would be made that he wished to resign.
 - c) It was agreed that the Councillor co-option process would be started in August with the intention, if deadlines could be met, of completing the co-option in September. The Clerk will be asked to contact Chris Willoughby before the copy deadline to put details of the co-option in the September issue of the Eye Magazine.
 - d) It was agreed that Cllr N Ford would meet Andy Robinson to discuss his line management and reporting streams.
 - e) Cllr Evitt confirmed that the process of disbanding ETHIC is being halted and that the intention is to reinstate/retain the charity.
 - f) It was agreed that the request from Andy Robinson for consideration of a report he had prepared with regard to the allotment land investigations should first be reported to Environment for their comments and recommendations. It could then be referred to the F&G Committee for consideration of the potential financial and legal repercussions before going to full Council. It was agreed that Cllr N Ford would advise Mr Robinson of this decision.

Cllr Byles and Mrs Gould joined the meeting

5. *Town Hall*
 - a) The options concerning the method of repayment of a loan from PWLB were discussed. It was noted that the THMDC had recommended the Annuity loan rather than the EIP. F & G reviewed the options as presented by Cllr Byles and concurred that the annuity route should be recommended.
 - b) It was noted that Cllr Evitt would work with Cllr Byles to determine whether the Council should apply for VAT registration (as it is reaching the threshold of £6k which applies to local councils taking hirings from businesses) and to investigate whether VAT paid on the Town Hall renovations could be recovered.
 - c) The rationale for drafting a revised set of Town Hall conditions of hire was outlined by Mrs Gould. Cllr M Ford advised that these redrafted conditions had been sent to the insurers for comments. It was agreed that, provided the insurers did not require any changes, the new agreement should be adopted as it was a lot clearer. Mrs Gould requested that the Clerk review the document to ensure that it can be easily used.
 - d) Cllr Byles advised that she is to investigate the use of an app - Docusign - which would allow documents to be signed online and returned.
 - e) It was noted that, at present, no deposit for hiring is charged as it had been too difficult to manage but that this would be implemented for all hirers once the refurbishment works are complete, particularly to cover the hire of equipment. It was agreed that deposits would be implemented now on a discretionary basis for one-off hirings.
 - f) Cllr Ribchester confirmed that he is a full licensee for alcohol and it was his understanding that he was already the Designated Premises Supervisor for the Town Hall.

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- g) It was agreed that THMDC should check the seating capacity with the Fire Service as this may have been reduced since the numbers were originally formulated.
- h) It was agreed that a cancellation fee for the hall hire should be implemented now on a discretionary basis.

Cllr Byles and Mrs Gould left the meeting

6. *Staffing*

- a) It was noted that the Clerk has settled well into her new position and continues to increase her knowledge and ability to take responsibility for all aspects of her work.
- b) It was confirmed that references have been received for Heather Meager. Cllr N Ford confirmed that she would issue the formal offer to Mrs Meager.
- c) It was agreed that Cllr N Ford would meet with the project coordinator to discuss his current work streams. It was agreed that he should continue to report to F & G who will be responsible for prioritising his work.
- d) It was noted that all queries regarding wage payments had now been resolved by the Clerk.
- e) It was agreed that the Clerk would be asked to determine with the Chairs of the relevant committees when performance reviews for all staff are due.
- f) It was noted that the Clerk has now completed 2 days of clerk training in addition to cemetery, planning and Scribe training, and that these had proved very successful in assisting her with her responsibilities. It was agreed that the Deputy Clerk should attend the Clerk training courses but that other training would have to be discussed and prioritised by F&G having regard for monies remaining in the training budget line.

7. *Finance*

- a) It was agreed that the Clerk would be asked to provide details of the payments for dog bin emptying, garage rental, and business rates on the toilet to determine whether these were annual charges. The costs of public toilet sundries were also queried as they appeared to be higher than anticipated for the quarter. Again, the Clerk will be asked to provide details.
- b) It was noted that Environment wanted to change some of the charges they levy and it was agreed that the Clerk would be asked to obtain details.
It was noted that THM&DC had decided not to change charges for the Town Hall during the refurbishment period.
It was agreed that the Clerk would be asked to produce a schedule of all Council charges for review at the September F&G meeting.
It was noted that Cllr N Ford would obtain a copy of the market hire agreement for its periodic review from the Clerk.
- c) It was noted that the Clerk would be asked to follow up with SALC the response regarding the payment of invoices via direct debit, the implementation of a system of BACS payment for employees salaries, and a Council credit card.
- d) It was noted that the Clerk has drawn up a procedure for calculating salaries and wages
- e) It was noted that no response had been received from SALC with respect to the Interim Clerk invoice and that the Clerk would be asked to pursue this.

8. *Governance*

- a) Cllr Ribchester confirmed that he had had to cancel the councillor induction with Cllr Blake, but that this would be rearranged, and that Cllr Burke was too busy at the moment with his District Councillor role.
- b) It was agreed that a 6 month action plan would be deferred to the next meeting.
- c) It was recommended that clarity been obtained from Cllr Byles on whether Barrister Walters is offering his expertise on the VAT query free of charge. It was noted that, as Barrister Walters is Cllr Byles' husband, that Cllr. Byles would likely need to declare a pecuniary interest with regards to advice received. It was agreed that if Mr Walters is offering his expertise free of charge the Council should gratefully accept his advice but that confirmation should also be sought in writing from another external source so that the Council would have some recourse if necessary.

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d) It was noted that the drug problems at the Community Centre falls outside the remit of the Council but that, as the problems also concerned the skate park, the Clerk should ask Cllrs Crispin and Cooper to report on the situation at the next Council meeting.

e) Cllr Mather confirmed that the Clerk had requested Council e-mail addresses for Cllrs Blake and Burke from Echo Internet. It was agreed that the Clerk would be asked to issue an updated schedule of all Councillors e-mail addresses.

9. *Documents (to include policies, procedures and protocols)*

a) It was agreed that Cllrs N Ford and Mather would meet with the Clerk to determine what documents are currently held on the Council files.

b) To consider any required direct debit procedures (links to item 7(c)) - deferred

c) To consider any required policies - deferred

d) It was agreed that Chairs would be asked to provide a schedule of what needs to be done each year and when. This should enable a calendar of reviews to be drawn up covering, for example, risk assessments, licence renewals, events across the year, allotment contracts, tenders e.g. Christmas lights, and grass cutting (and should include what is required, and when) as this would make the scheduling system more robust.

10. *Tendering, Contracts and Agreements*

It was noted that there were none.

11. *Health and Safety (including risk assessments)*

It was agreed that Cllr Mather would discuss the risk assessments with the Clerk.

12. *Grants and Donations*

It was noted that there had been no applications.

13. *Reports and Updates*

It was noted that there were none.

14. *Correspondence and Referrals*

It was noted that there were none.

15. *Any Other Business*

a) Possible Council Office Space - It was noted that Cllr M Ford had discussed office requirements with Cllr Burke and that Andy Robinson had also been involved in discussions with MSDC regarding Tacon Close. It was agreed that Cllr Burke would be asked to report back at the Council meeting.

It was agreed that the Clerk would be asked to send a holding letter to the Volunteer Centre thanking them for their offer of accommodation but advising that the Council is exploring other options before making a decision because of the level of rental costs involved at the Centre.

b) It was agreed that cover for the Clerk whilst on holiday would be put on the Council agenda if it was determined that Andy Robinson would not be able to assist. The Clerk will then be able to advise staff who they should contact for assistance if they need anything.

c) Cllr M Ford advised that, following discussions with Merlin Carr about the Tour of Britain, it was anticipated that there may be a high volume of people present. Cllr M Ford confirmed that the Town Hall had been booked for use by the Tour of Britain event. Merlin Carr and the volunteers working on the event are requesting that Broad Street should be closed to traffic to ensure safety. It was agreed that this should be put on the Council agenda for consideration and that, if proposed and agreed, the £50 cost for road closure would be funded from the Late Night Shopping budget and that the Clerk would also be asked to apply for road closure

d) It was noted that the boundary review is to be on the Council agenda as a separate item.

16. *Date of Next Meeting*

Wednesday, 13th September 2017 at 7 p.m.