

Ilminster Town Council Resources Committee Minutes

A meeting of the Resources Committee was held on 14th January 2014 in the Council Chamber, The Council Offices, North Street, Ilminster, Somerset, starting at 19:30hrs

Present

Chair: Cllr D Miller

Councillors: P Burton, C Goodall, V Higgins, V Keitch, A Lawson, J Pallister, A Shearman, S. Shepherd, S Storey,

In Attendance

M Clayton (Senior Administrator) and J Norris (Town Clerk),

Members of the Public

One member of the public attended this meeting.

R10. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sothern, Taylor, and Vijeh

R11. Declarations of Interest

Name	Minute No	Agenda Item	Type of Interest	Nature of Interest
Cllr V Higgins	R13a	4a	Personal	Works at the school
Cllr S Storey	R13a	4a	Personal	Has many acquaintances at the school
Cllr A Shearman	R13a	4a	Personal	Works for the County Council
Cllr C Goodall	R13a	4a	Personal	Has many acquaintances at the school

R12. Minutes

RESOLVED:

- a) to confirm the minutes of the Resources meeting held on 19th November 2013 as a correct record.
- b) to note the action list relating to the Resources Committee.

R13. Grant Applications

a) The Committee was asked to consider the grant application made by Sunny Ile Pre-school for funding towards an air conditioning/heating unit for their porta cabin.

The Chair took the meeting out of session so that Councillors had a chance to question Mrs. Lancaster, The Finance Administrator of Sunny Ile pre-school, about the application.

Back in session, discussions included the following:

- The doors of the porta cabin can be left open in the summer, but the windows have large safety catches on them, for health and safety reasons, which does not allow adequate air flow into the classroom. The windows also open onto the school's playground.
- The prices shown in the application are for two units. One in the office/group room and the other in the classroom.
- The pre-school has to use a County approved contractor
- The units will be situated by the front door, out of the way of the children and in the group room, up high, out of reach.

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- The pre-school was unable to obtain a grant from Gooch and Housgo as the 'Breakfast Club' put in an application at the same time.
- The pre-school are trying to raise funds for this project
- The ongoing maintenance of the units will be paid for by the school and a percentage of the costs, worked out on floor spaces occupied, will be recharged to the pre-school.

RESOLVED that a grant of £1295 be awarded to the Sunny Ile pre-school for funding towards two air-conditioning/heating units.

b) The Committee was asked to consider the second grant application made by The Golden Oldies Charity for funding towards a new singing and activity session in Ilminster.

Discussions during the consideration of this item included the following:

- Muchenley House does have singing sessions
- The Meeting House would be too far from where the majority of the elderly residents live
- People would have to pay for attending these sessions.

RESOLVED that Ilminster Town Council refuses the grant application made by The Golden Oldies due to lack of funds

R14. Financial Comparison

Members received information about the Resources expenditure and commitments to date when compared with the 2013/14 budget.

Councillors were satisfied with the information and figures they had received and had nothing further to discuss.

R15. IT Upgrade for Office

The Committee received a report on upgrading the Council's IT systems and was asked to consider the quotations and make recommendations to Full Council.

The Town Clerk gave an explanation as to why there was a need to upgrade the IT systems, and what work has been carried out by staff to obtain the quotations.

Items discussed during the consideration of this item included the following:

- The quotations do not include a computer for the Open Spaces workshop, but once the office computers have been replaced, one of the old computers can be used at the workshop.
- There is an option to have two tower units and two laptops if the staff have a personal preference
- Dual screens are the way forward, so laptops can be used alongside the existing monitors and keyboards.
- The installation fees quoted are higher than expected.
- The option to upgrade the broadband contract to Unlimited Infinity Fast would provide adequate speed for the office. If more speed is required in the future then the contract can be upgraded to the 'Super Fast'.
- The managed support contracts offered by the companies, is not required at the moment.
- Company B is the preferred supplier, but additional questions would need to be asked regarding the full specification of the laptops.

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RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

- a) the Town Council upgrades it's broadband contract to Unlimited Infinity Fast connection, at a cost not exceeding £35.00 per month
- b) the Town Council accepts the proposal received from Company B for the purchase of four laptops, using office 365, with an agreed specification of laptop, and after negotiations to reduce the installation/training costs to £1,000, at a total cost not exceeding ££3520 + vat

R16. Budgets

The Committee received an update on the progress of developing the Town Council's budget for 2014/15 and received working papers for the Resources budget for 2014/15

Discussions on this topic included the following:

- The total amount in the budget for grants has increased due to the introduction of the heading for Revenue Subsidy Grants. However, due to the current financial situation members agreed this amount should be reduced.
- There should be a ceiling limit on how much is given for each grant application, so that there are smaller grants available to more organisations. This matter will be discussed at a future Resources Committee meeting when the grants policy is set for the new financial year.
- The contingency amount shown in the budget papers is to cover 3 months running costs and is in accordance with the minimum recommended amount set out in the 'Guidance for Town and Parish Councils'. This matter will be discussed with the internal auditors on 31st January 2014.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the total grants budget is reduced to £7900 (£5000 for grants and £2900 for Revenue Subsidy Grants).

R17. Staffing updates

The Committee received an oral report from the Town Clerk regarding staffing matters.

The report included the following items:

- Since the last staffing report there has been a great deal going on for the Town Council staff and Members. Staff are now in the process of catching up with paperwork, etc.
- One member of staff will be re sitting a maths exam this week.
- The Open Spaces Warden has passed all units so far of the leadership and management qualification and has one unit left, which is due in this week.
- There is one staff appraisal which is outstanding. This has been delayed due to staff working on flooding and Local Plan matters.
- Some training needs have been identified from the appraisals, but enough money has been allocated in the draft budget figures for 2014/15 to cover these costs.
- Personal development and training time has gone very well and staff would like to thank Councillor Keitch who took one of the sessions on 'what it is like to be a Councillor'.
- The Open Spaces Warden's vacancy will be reviewed once the Recreation Review is complete.
- Councillors thanked the staff for their hard work at the recent public meetings.

The meeting closed at 21:02hrs

Chair's signature & Date

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