

Ilminster Town Council Finance & Policy Committee Minutes

A meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee was held on 27th August 2013 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, J Pallister, A Shearman, S Shepherd, S Storey, E Taylor and L Vjeh.

In Attendance

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

Members of the Public

Three members of the public attended this meeting.

At the beginning of the meeting the Chair advised, with the consent of the committee, the agenda order would be varied. This was due to the presence of the person giving the presentation on becoming a fair trade town and the absence of the representatives from both organisations that were applying for a grant.

21. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors V Keitch, A Lawson, J Sothern, R Swann,

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

23. Minutes

RESOLVED

a) to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July 2013 as a correct record subject to Councillor Pallister's apologies being included.

b) to update the action list relating to the Finance & Policy committee

It was brought to the Town Clerk's attention that there is an increasing number of vermin around the rubbish store area on the recreation ground. The Town Clerk will speak to the Open Spaces Wardens regarding this matter.

24. Fair Trade Town Presentation.

A presentation was made by Mr. Westwood on the subject of how Ilminster can become a Fair Trade town. A copy of the presentation is attached to these Minutes and an 'Action Guide' is available on the Fair Trade website.

Issues discussed following the presentation included:

- Supporting local businesses
- The cost of fair trade goods and the financial impact on a business
- The impact on local businesses
- Current availability of fair trade goods in Ilminster
- Members would like the opportunity to find out more information for themselves

Chair's initials

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RESOLVED that an item regarding the Town Council's support for becoming a fair trade town be brought to a future Finance and Policy meeting for consideration.

25. Financial Comparison

The Committee received information about the Finance and Policy expenditure and commitments to date when compared with the 2013/14 budget.

Discussions on this topic included the following:

- The Town Clerk gave a brief explanation that the budget compared to the actual expenditure so far, for the year, is on target.
- Funds will be required for rebuilding the cemetery wall and depending on the costs of this work; and whilst there is a specific budget provision, additional funds may have to be taken out of reserves/renewals and provisions. The quotation requests for rebuilding the cemetery wall are due back by 30th August 2013.
- The company who are carrying out the 'snagging items' on the skate park have been contacted regularly in an effort to get the repairs completed.
- The Play Equipment Inspector came to the recreation ground unannounced, therefore, the staff were unable to ask him for his opinion on the skate park snagging items.
- The Financial Comparison sheet and the Approved Expenditure sheet will be amended in the following way:
 - £10,000 from the Open Spaces Contingency will be allocated to the general reserves fund.
 - £5,000 from the Finance and Policy Contingency will be allocated to the general reserves fund.
 - £5,000 for the Flood Alleviation Grant will remain as expenditure against the Open Spaces Contingency heading.
 - £800 for the Tourism Revenue Subsidy Grant will be shown as expenditure against the Finance and Policy Contingency heading.
 - £2068 for dismantling the football stands will be shown as expenditure against the Finance and Policy Contingency heading.
- The asset cost and formulae used to calculate renewal apportionment will be reviewed as part of the 2014/15 budget planning, as there are some items that need increased funds.

26. Grant Application.

The Committee was asked to consider the grant application made by Ilminster Entertainment Society for funding towards the costs of redecorating and refurbishing the foyer of the Warehouse Theatre.

Discussions included the following:

- Ilminster is fortunate to have a small theatre.
- The Town Council should support the refurbishment.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that a grant of £500 be awarded to the Ilminster Entertainment Society for funding towards the costs of redecorating and refurbishing the foyer of the Warehouse Theatre.

27. Revenue Subsidy Grant Application.

The Committee was asked to consider the revenue subsidy grant application made by the Youth Club for funding towards the running cost of youth centre.

Discussions on this topic included the following:

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- The Town Clerk explained that it is not unusual for funding to be awarded to organisations over an agreed period of time.
- Concerns were raised over the Town Council making a commitment to fund this organisation for three years, and perhaps the funding should be looked at year on year.
- A suggestion was made to award the Youth Club £ 2000 this year and then commit to an amount not less than £ 2000 next year, to enable the organisation to do some financial planning.
- A press release was issued by Somerset County Council that an amount of £49,000 is to be shared between youth clubs in Somerset. Iminster Youth Club will be getting £2,040.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that

- a) Iminster Youth Club is awarded an amount of £2,500 this year towards the running costs of the club and a commitment of an amount not less than £2,000 will be made for the year 2014/15
- b) The £2,500 this year will be taken out of the grant fund and the amount for next year will be agreed when the budget is set for 2014/15.
- c) A service level agreement will be set up between the Town Council and the Youth Club. This must be agreed and signed before the grant is paid.

28. Internal Auditor

The Committee was asked to approve the broad content of the documentation for engaging an Internal Auditor.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The method of obtaining previous internal auditors
- The potential costs of internal audit.

RESOLVED that the documentation, which includes a request for fees/ cost information is sent out to suitable individuals/organisations.

29. Mayor's Chain

Members were asked to consider the engraving of the mayoral chain of office with names of previous mayors.

Discussions on this topic included the following:

- The cost to have this work done would not exceed £350.
- If the engraving is not done, then the previous inscriptions should be removed.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the mayoral chain of office is engraved with the names of the previous mayors at a cost not exceeding £350.

The meeting closed at 21.33

Chair's signature & Date

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL
Staffing Committee

Minutes of a meeting of the Staffing Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, North Street, Ilminster, on Tuesday 9 July 2013 commencing at 14:00hrs

Present:

Chairman.... Councillor E J Taylor

Committee: Councillors J Sothern, S Shepherd, R Swann and L Vjeh

In Attendance:

Miss J Norris (Town Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence as all Committee members were present.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made in respect of any items on the agenda.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED

(i) to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 4th February 2013 as a correct record

(ii) to confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2013 as a correct record

4. HR Framework

A) Capability Policy and Procedure

The Town Council has been developing a suite of HR Policies to meet its duties as an employer. A draft Capability Policy, which had been circulated to all staff for comment, was presented for the consideration of the Committee, which complemented the previously agreed Discipline and Grievance Policies.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The need for anything posted to be sent recorded delivery
- The need to get signatures, as confirmation of receipt, for any documents sent or given to staff
- The need to agree timescales for improvements to be made in an individual's performance

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the draft Capability Policy and procedure be adopted

B) Staff Appraisal Framework

The Staffing Committee had previously intimated its desire for a staff appraisal scheme to be introduced. A draft framework had been compiled about which all staff had been consulted and was presented to the Committee for consideration.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The purpose of the appraisal scheme
- Whether or not the draft the scheme was suitable for an organisation as small as the Town Council
- The need for all staff to understand the purpose of the scheme and the benefits for individuals as well as the Council as an employer
- The importance of training so that staff get the maximum benefit from process

Chair's Initials

- Circumstances in which usually confidential appraisal detail may need to be disclosed for other purposes e.g. grievance or disciplinary procedures
- The possibility of the appraisee writing up the appraisal meeting record (rather than the line manager) once the scheme is established
- For the first round of meetings the Deputy Town Clerk and the Senior Open Spaces Warden will jointly conduct the appraisal meetings for the Senior Admin Assistant, the Admin Assistant, the Open Spaces warden and the Open Spaces Apprentice (this was suggested by staff when they were first consulted on the introduction of an appraisal scheme)
- The format of the meeting record – some people will find it easier to complete the generic text boxes e.g. “look forward” whilst other will prefer the statement boxes e.g. “Communicates regularly and clearly with team members”

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- (i) To adopt the draft Staff Appraisal Framework
- (ii) That training on appraisals is provided for all staff by a trainer external to the Town Council
- (iii) That a report on what has worked well and any suggested changes be made to the Staffing Committee after the first round of appraisal meetings have been completed

5. Pension Discretions

The Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) (Administration) Regulations 2008 s66 stipulate that all employers must prepare a written statement of its policy in relation to the exercise of its functions under certain regulations relating to individual discretions. The Committee was asked to consider the adoption of a policy.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL

- (i) That Ilminster Town Council adopts a policy of taking all decisions in relation to LGPS discretions on a case by case basis and on each occasion will take into account all possible risks and implications for the Council, with the exception of Regulation 3 – determining the employee contribution rate
- (ii) With regard to Regulation 3 “determining employee contribution rate” that the contribution rate band will be changed as appropriate whenever a pay change occurs

6. Staffing And Workloads

The Town Clerk started her report by updating the Committee on the training that staff had undertaken since the previous meeting:

- The Deputy Clerk had attended the Clerk’s training provided by Somerset association of Local Councils
- The Admin Assistant had successfully completed her NVQ level 3 in Business and Administration
- The Open Spaces Apprentice was making progress with his NVQ qualification with at least 40% of the required completed
- The on line health and safety training was being undertaken by all staff and was near to completion but there had been difficulties with the computer internet connections

The Town Clerk then provided information on the current work of each Town Council employee.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- The volume of work being undertaken by the Council
- Prioritisation – why it was necessary to do some jobs that did not at first appear important – e.g. weeding the files

Chair’s Initials

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Staffing Committee**

The closing time of the meeting was not recorded.

Chair's signature and date

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