**MINUTES OF A MEETING**

**OF THE**

**FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON THURSDAY 21st SEPTEMBER, 2017**

**IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, LEDBURY**

**PRESENT:** Councillors: R Barnes - Chairman

 A Bradford M Eager

K Francis A Manns

 N Morris N Shields

A Warmington

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs K Mitchell, Clerk to the Council

 3 members of the public

**F.80 – 09.17 APOLOGIES**

 Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs E Fieldhouse J Roberts and J Simpson.

**F.81 – 09.17 INTERESTS**

 There were none declared at this point in the meeting.

**F.82 – 09.17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No members of the public present wished to speak.

**F.83 – 09.17 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6th July, 2017, copies having been previously circulated were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

**F.84 – 09.17 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

1. Summary of Receipts and Payments

Members were circulated with a summary of receipts and payments from 1st to 31st July 2017.

The Clerk advised that unfortunately due to pressure of work, ongoing staff shortage and annual leave she had been unable to produce records for August receipts and payments. These would be presented at the next meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the summary, as presented, be approved and adopted.**

2. Invoices for payment

Members considered a list of invoices for payment, copies having been circulated.(Schedule to be lodged with the Minutes)**.**

**RESOLVED: That the invoices be approved for payment.**

3. External Audit – Year ended 31st March 2017.

The Chairman reported that five challenges had been submitted to the external auditors regarding the Town Council Accounts and Annual Governance Statement 2016-17. Three from local residents and two from Ledbury Town Councillors, Harvey and Shields.

The matter is now in the hands of the external auditor; costs are as yet unknown.

**RESOLVED: That this be noted.**

4. Precept 2018/19

Herefordshire Council has requested that Ledbury Town Council submit its precept request for 2018/19 by 31st December 2017.

**RESOLVED: That this be noted.**

**F.85 – 09.17 CIVIC HOSPITALITY**

Members considered costs for refreshments at the 2017 Civic Service, estimated at approximately £1,000. The Chairman advised that the Council’s regular caterer was unavailable on this occasion.

Cllr Francis expressed some concern about expenditure and requested that an item be placed on the next agenda to consider whether or not to cut back on hospitality provided in the future.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve the provision of hospitality for the 2017 Civic Service, within budget.**

**F.86 – 09.17 RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Clerk circulated an update on actions taken in response to the Risk Management Report prepared by Ecclesiastical Insurance.

Referring to the testing of the lightning conductor at the cemetery chapel, the Clerk advised that costs had been obtained from a specialist firm of lightning engineers in the sum of £295 for a visual test, and £995 for a full system test. Clarification had been sought from the council’s insurers who had confirmed that a full inspection was required. Additional costs would also be incurred for electrical testing of any internal lightning surge protection, if found to be present.

At this point the Chairman allowed a member of the public to speak as she had information pertinent to the discussion. It was understood that a similar situation at the parish church had resulted in the removal of the lightning conductor due to the high costs of maintenance and appropriate insurance arrangements for possible lightning strikes being in place.

In light of this information, it was queried whether it was necessary to have a lightning conductor on the building. The Clerk would clarify this matter with the insurers prior to the full council meeting.

**F.87 – 09.17 WORKING PARTIES AND TASK & FINISH GROUPS**

1. ICT Working Party meeting held on 22nd August 2017.

Members considered the recommendations contained within the written report, copies having been previously circulated.

Referring to paragraph 2. Website provider, it was clarified that a local provider would be contacted to provide a quotation.

Following discussion,

 **it was RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council to approve and adopt the report and any recommendations contained therein.**

1. Policies and Procedures Working Party held on 18th September 2017.

The Chairman advised that the following policies/procedures had been reviewed and amended at the meeting. Copies showing tracked changes were circulated to members:

1. Fire Risk Assessment and Procedures

The Clerk advised that a quotation had been obtained from a professional company to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment in the Town Council Offices, Market House and Chapel/cemetery in the combined sum of £675.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve the quotation for carrying out fire risk assessments for the Town Council Offices, Market House and Chapel/cemetery in the combined sum of £675. Costs to be allocated to the unspecified projects budget line.**

1. Health and Safety Policy

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve and adopt the Health and Safety policy, as amended.**

1. Unreasonable Behaviour Policy

**RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve and adopt the Unreasonable Behaviour Policy, as amended.**

**F.88 – 09.17 OUTSIDE BODIES**

1. Members received the Minutes of the Herefordshire Market Town Forum meetings held on 24th May 2017 and 26th July 2017, copies having been circulated.

**RESOLVED: That the Reports be noted.**

1. Cllr Francis presented a report from the HALC Executive meeting the previous evening, 20th September, 2017.

**RESOLVED: That the Report be noted.**

**F.89 – 09.17 CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION**

There were no matters of correspondence other than those raised at F.84 – 09.17, 3.

**F.90 – 09.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA INCLUSION**

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 19th October 2017. Cllr Francis gave his apologies in advance for the meeting.

Item for next agenda: Civic Service hospitality

The meeting closed at 8.46pm

Chairman .............................................................. Date .........................................