

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE HELD ON
25 NOVEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: Councillors Bradford, Eakin (Chair), Howells and Knight

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Councillor Sinclair

F362 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harvey, Hughes and Manns.

F363 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

F634 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

**F365 TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES
OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 SEPTEMBER 2021 AND AN
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON
27 SEPTEMBER 2021**

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee held on 23 September 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.**
- 2. That the minutes of the extraordinary meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee held on 27 September 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.**

F366 ACTION SHEETS

RESOLVED:

That the Action Sheets be received and noted.

F367

TO APPROVE THE INVOICES FOR PAYMENTS FOR NOVEMBER 2021

Councillor Knight raised queries in respect of outstanding invoices:

1. Officer Travel - £166.95 – the Clerk advised that this was for travel to the SLCC Conference in Leicester and the Travel & Tourism Show in the NEC.
2. Gazebo Hire - £1,320.00 – The Clerk confirmed that this expenditure would be claimed back as part of the Welcome Back Fund.
3. Office Cleaning x 3 – The Clerk advised that these were for September and October and that the October invoice had been listed twice and that this would be deleted from the list.
4. Removal/Storage of Hanging Baskets - £216.00 – The Clerk confirmed that 8 of the hanging Baskets were owned by the Council with the remainder being provided by the Yard House as part of the contract. These are stored and reused each year.
5. Martin Sullivan Reimbursement – The Clerk advised that this figure was incorrect as one of the invoices included in this had been paid by the Clerk – she advised that these were for items that had been purchased by the Town Cleaner directly. She also confirmed that she had discussed this issue with the Member of staff and his line manager and advised that procurement procedures are in place that should be adhered to in order to avoid this happening in the future.

RESOLVED:

That the invoices for payment for November 2021 be approved, with the addition of the following invoices and in the total sum of £19,892.19:

Shredall – Confidential Waste Collection November 2021 - £65.52

SLCC - Clerks Annual Membership 2022 - £406.00

Hoople – Supply of maps for NDP - £441.60

Vision – Photocopier meterage costs November 2021 – £437.04

F368

TO RECEIVE THE RECORD OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Bradford raised concerns over the amount of paperwork being presented in respect of this item and asked whether it was necessary. The Chair advised that there is a legal requirement for the committee to consider the information.

The Clerk suggested that in order to reduce the amount of paperwork being produced, in future the information could be included in the electronic versions of the agenda sent to Councillors, with paper copies only being provided to those Councillors who request them.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That in future the documents in respect of the financial reports be included in the electronic agenda packs sent to Councillors, with paper copies only being provided to those Councillors who request them.**
- 2. That the receipts and payments for September, October and November 2021 be received and noted.**

F369 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE BALANCE SHEET AND TRIAL BALANCE FOR MONTHS 5, 6 AND 7

RESOLVED:

That the balance sheet and trial balance for months 5, 6 and 7 be received and noted.

F370 TO CONFIRM VERIFICATION OF BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS FOR AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2021

Councillor Eakin confirmed that he had visited the Council offices to inspect and sign the bank statements and reconciliations for August, September and October 2021, confirming that these were all in order.

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that the Bank Statements and Reconciliations had been signed by the Chairman of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee in accordance with Financial Regulations.

F371 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

RESOLVED:

That the budget monitoring report be received and noted.

F372 EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT

Quotes received in respect of Internal Auditor Services for the period April 2022/23 – March 2024/25

Members were provided with two quotes in respect of the appointment of an internal auditor for the period April 2022/23 – March 2024/25.

Councillor Sinclair raised a concern over there only being two quotes. The Clerk advised that she had contacted a number of companies known to provide internal auditing services to Town and Parish Councils, however some of them had advised that they were not taking on any more councils at the current time or had not responded.

Councillor Sinclair was satisfied with the explanation and supported Councillor Howells' proposal to appoint the company that had provided quotation 2. It was noted that this quotation was slightly higher than quotation 1, however the information provided was more detailed and substantial compared to that of quotation no. 1.

RESOLVED:

That Quotation no. 2 be accepted in respect of the 2022/23-2024/25 internal audit services in the sum of £750.00 per annum, which will include two visits to the Council offices for the purpose of audit.

F373

SUBSCRIPTIONS

RESOLVED:

That the Acrobat pro subscription licence renewal be approved in the sum of £343.92.

F374

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Members were advised of two recommendations in respect of items for inclusion in the 2022/23 Budget.

1. Economy & Tourism Committee had requested consideration be given to the inclusion of funds to create QR codes to be used around the town to promote places to visit in and around Ledbury.

The Clerk advised that the Community Development Officer had carried out research on QR Codes and identified a number of websites that enable individuals to create QR Codes free of charge. As a result of this information the Committee agreed that there would be no requirement for funds to be included in the 2022/23 budget for QR Codes.

RESOLVED:

That the request for funds to be included in the 2022/23 budget for the creation of QR Codes be declined.

2. Planning Committee had requested consideration be given to the inclusion of funds in the 2022/23 budget for the installation of white traffic calming gates in Parkway.

Councillor Bradford raised the issue of placing such gates on land owned by Hereford Council. He advised that the Council had considered this previously however, BBLP had not supported the request and he did not believe this should be the responsibility of the Town Council, but that it should be the responsibility of the Highways Department of Herefordshire Council.

There was further discussion on this matter, including concerns being raised about not being in possession of a proposed cost for the gates should it be agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk investigate whose responsibility it is to pay for the installation of traffic calming gates in Towns and Parishes, along with the cost and refer this back to a future meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for consideration in the 2022/23 budget.

F375 **ANNUAL GRANTS PROCEDURE**

Members were requested to agree a timeline for the advertising and consideration of the grants policy for the remainder of the 2021/22 financial year and 2022/23

RESOLVED:

That the grants procedure, timeline and press release presented to Committee be approved.

F376 **RISK MANAGEMENT**

RESOLVED:

To note that officers were working on this document and that an updated version will be available on the agenda of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee in January 2022.

F377 **ADVICE RECEIVED FROM RIALTAS**

Members were provided with information received from Rialtas Support advising that the Council should not amend their general reserve versus expenditure in-year. They were advised that doing this would change the AGAR figure in box 6 (or 4) when the money has not been spent and that this would lead to the Annual Governance Audit Return (AGAR)

being wrong and there being a difference between box 7 of the AGAR and the reserves reconciliation report at year end.

RESEOLVED:

That the advice received from Rialtas Support be received and noted.

F378

DRAFT SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANT SCHEME

Members were provided with a draft Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme to consider, as this was something that could potentially be considered as part of the Great Places to Visit funding project. However, Members did not feel they were able to consider this at this stage due to no decision having been made in respect of the Great Places to Visit funding and concerns over whether this is something that the Town Council should be funding.

A proposal was put forward and seconded to defer the Draft Shop Front Grant Scheme to Full Council for further consideration as part of the discussion on the Great Places to Visit. The vote was tied 2-2 and the Chair used his deciding vote to agree to the item being deferred to Council.

RESOLVED:

That the Draft Shop Front Improvement Grant Scheme be deferred to a meeting of Council for further discussion as part of the Great Places to Visit funding.

F379

GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

There was no update to report in respect of GDPR.

F380

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED FROM LEDBURY COMMUNITY HALL

Members were requested to give consideration to a request from Ledbury Community Association in respect of the cost of electricity for the CCTV and lighting at the Recreational Ground.

Councillor Bradford asked why grant support had been withdrawn from the Community Hall for the past two years, as he felt this issue could be resolved by reinstating the grant funding.

Councillor Knight asked why the CCTV could not be housed in the Council offices; the Clerk advised that this had been looked into in 2019 but that the cost had been several thousands and it had been agreed not to pursue that option.

Councillor Howells advised that when he and other Councillors had visited the CCTV suite in Hereford they had been advised that it would be possible to link the CCTV to theirs and therefore it would be possible to have it in the council offices.

The Clerk pointed out that having the CCTV linked with Herefordshire CCTV was different to what Councillor Knight was asking and reminded members that this conversation had been going on with the CCTV suite for some time, however due to Covid and work pressures of Debbie Turner and her team this had not been progressed.

Councillor Bradford advised that he would like the matter of the grant funding to be discussed at a future meeting of Council and that he would like a copy of the minutes of the meetings where councillors had decided to no longer grant funding to the Community Hall.

Councillor Bradford left the meeting at 8.10 pm.

The Chair did not consider this item should be referred back to Full Council and proposed that it be placed on the next agenda of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for further discussion.

Councillor Howells advised that he believed the matter of the electricity costs etc. raised in Mr Eager's letter were separate to the matter of the grant funding and proposed that the Clerk should investigate the costs as highlighted in the letter and submit a further report to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the matter of grant funding for the Community Hall be placed on the next agenda of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for consideration.**
- 2. That a copy of the minutes where the Committee had decided to no longer support the community hall with grant funding be emailed to Councillor Bradford.**
- 3. That the Clerk investigate the costs as highlighted in the letter and provide a copy to Mr Eager and submit a further report to a future meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for consideration.**

F381 **CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED IN RESPECT OF OIL PAINTING OF LEDBURY MARKET HOUSE**

RESOLVED:

That the Clerk be instructed to write back to Mr Bottomley to advise that the Council would not be interested in purchasing the oil painting of the Market House.

F382 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED:

To note that the date of the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 27 January 2021.

F383 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public were excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

F384 **SCHEDULE OF COSTS RE BUILDING VALUATIONS**

Members were requested to give consideration to a quote received in respect of the valuation of Council owned buildings.

Councillor Sinclair advised where drawings of the buildings may be able to be obtained, which would help reduce the cost of the quote.

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee to allow the Clerk to obtain further information on drawings etc. that can be provided to the valuers with a view to a revised quote being provided.

F385 **RECOMMENDATION FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

Environment & Leisure Committee – Land Valuation Report

Members were requested to authorise the Clerk to confirm with the Council's Solicitors the suggested market rental value of the mortuary at the Cemetery on New Street, for inclusion in the draft lease between the Council and Co-operative Funeral Care, Ledbury.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Clerk be authorised to confirm with the Council's Solicitors the suggested market rental value of the mortuary at the Cemetery on New Street, for inclusion in the draft lease between the Council and Co-operative Funeral Care, Ledbury.**
- 2. That once the draft lease has been drawn up a copy be provided to the Co-operative Funeral Care Solicitors for consideration and comment.**

F386

INSURANCE RENEWAL QUOTATIONS

Members were requested to give consideration to the insurance quotes provided by the Council's brokers in respect of insurance for the Council and all properties etc. which was due for renewal in December 2021.

Members were advised that their current insurance provider Ecclesiastical had ceased providing insurance cover for Town and Parish Council's and that this is the case with many other insurance companies. The Council's insurance broker, Gallagher (formerly Came & Company) had advised that they were only able to obtain a quote from one company in respect of the Council, but that this company do not provide insurance cover for listed properties. Therefore, they had had to approach a specialist insurance company in respect of this.

The Clerk advised that she had also spoken to Zurich Municipal about insurance, however they had also advised that they do not insure listed properties and that Ledbury Town Council may be too small for them to consider for insurance purposes.

As a consequence of the above Gallagher had provided one quote for general insurance and one from a specialist insurance provider in respect of the Listed Buildings. These were as follows:

Quote 1 – Hiscox Insurance Company Ltd

The total Cost for insurance of all council property, excluding the buildings as listed above is 2022/23 is £3,281.61.

Quote 2 – Ecclesiastical

The total cost for the insurance of the four buildings as listed and Business interruption cover should anything happen to any of those buildings which would mean the council would need to relocate to be able to continue to function is £10,639.99.

Members were advised that should they agree to accept both quotes for the period December 2022-December 2023, the cost would be:

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Hiscox | 3,281.61 |
| Ecclesiastical | <u>10,639.99</u> |
| TOTAL | <u>13,921.60</u> |

The total cost of the insurance renewal costs with Ecclesiastical in 2021/22 were £9,872.65, and therefore this is an increase of £4,048.95, which is due to the costs to insure the Listed Buildings via a separate policy to that of the standard business insurance policy and Ecclesiastical no longer providing insurance cover for town and parish councils.

The Clerk advised that the prices quoted were for one year only, and that Gallagher's had advised that they were hopeful there would be other insurance companies able to provide insurance to town and parish councils in 2022/23 onwards.

Members acknowledge that there was a need to agree both of the quotes above, due to there being limited alternative options and also noting that the Council's current insurance provision expires on 18 December 2021.

RESOLVED:

That the above quotes be approved in respect of the Council's insurance requirements for 2022/23 in the total sum of £13,921.60.

The meeting ended at 8.31 pm.

Signed
(Chair)

Dated