

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 MARCH 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Bradford, Hughes, and Sinclair

ALSO PRESENT: Angela Price – Town Clerk
Charlotte Barltrop – Minute Taker

F567 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Howells and Sims.

F568 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sinclair declared an interest in the Coronation Mugs item as he had recommended a company.

Councillor Hughes declared an interest in the Grant Applications made by Ledbury Carnival due to Mrs Hughes sitting on the Carnival Committee.

F569 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

F570 TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Policy and General-Purpose Committee held on 26 January 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record.

F571 TO REVIEW THE ACTION SHEET

RESOLVED:

That the Action Sheet be received and noted.

F572 TO RECEIVE AND NOTE THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE GRANTS WORKING PARTY HELD ON 15 MARCH 2023 AND TO GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ANY RECOMMENDATIONS THEREIN

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of the Grants Working Party held on 15 March 2023 be received and noted.

F573 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)

The Clerk enquired as to the reasoning behind recommendation 2 whereby the Task & Finish group advocated the removal of the paragraph for sending data abroad.

Members stated that this was due to Ledbury Town Council not sending any data abroad.

The Clerk advised members that Ledbury Town Council do, on occasion, send data regarding Cemetery deed owners abroad and suggested that this paragraph should be reinstated. Members advised that they believed that GDPR had changed since Brexit and asked the Clerk to investigate this and if EU rules remain in place in respect of GDPR then this paragraph be reinstated.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the GDPR Regulations must be revisited due to the removal of items which are relevant to the business carried out at Ledbury Town Council.**
- 2. That the officers draft a Ledbury Town Council data parental consent form based on the NSPCC form included within the agenda papers.**

F574 TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENTS FOR MARCH 2023

RESOLVED:

That the invoices for payment in the sum of £34,645.72 (plus VAT) be approved with the exception of the invoice for DM Property Maintenance in the sum of £2,323.50 pending review by the Clerk and Chair of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee.

F575 TO RECEIVE THE RECORD OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2023

RESOLVED:

That the receipts and payments for January and February 2023 be received and noted.

F576 TO RECEIVE THE BALANCE SHEET AND TRIAL BALANCE FOR MONTHS 10 AND 11

RESOLVED:

That the balance sheet and trial balance for months 10 and 11 be received and noted.

F577 2022/23 BUDGET MONITORING

RESOLVED:

That the 2022/23 Budget Monitoring report be received and noted.

F578 TO CONFIRM VERIFICATION OF BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS FOR OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2022, AND JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2023

The chair advised that whilst he could confirm he had verified the bank statements for October, November, and December 2022, he could not confirm having verified those of January and February 2023 due to his absence during that period.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That it be noted that the bank statements for October, November and December 2022 had been signed by the Chairman of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.**
- 2. That confirmation of the bank statements for January and February 2023 be deferred to the meeting of Full Council on 30 March 2023.**

F579 TO RECEIVE REPORT ON PAYMENTS MADE IN RELATION TO THE WAR MEMORIAL

The Chair raised the question of whether the wording "as a full and final payment" had been included in the agreement with The Stone Workshop as this may have a bearing on where the Council stands on the recovery of the overpayment now identified.

The Clerk advised Members that the Council's solicitors had been contacted in respect of the wording of the agreement between the Town Council and the Stone Workshop and once received she will advise Members accordingly.

It was felt that whilst the War Memorial repairs had been discussed in previous meetings, the matter of the overpayment had never been raised and that the Stone Workshop should be asked to return the overpayment.

Councillor Bradford proposed that Ledbury Town Council should pursue repayment of the overpayment made to the Stone Workshop.

Councillor Sinclair made the following statement:

“I have handed two additional papers to you. I notice that none of the culprits who set all of this up are here this evening, I would like that to be noted, please. At a meeting on the 18th of June 2020 the chair and vice chair of E&L (Environment & Leisure) along with the chair of Finance decided that they were structural engineers and they authorised a payment for £7,250 pounds to the stone workshop with no tender, and with no structural engineers advice. There is a report which has been put in by Hugh Peachey who is a stone mason approached by this council who said that the spire has gone on squint, that it has not been fixed properly and that nothing was done about this at the time. There is also a report from James Cambridge both of these reports are from the beginning of 2021. And the most worrying one for me is that Stone Workshop quoted to change the paving stones and quoted a further £5,400 for reclaimed and another £17,355.

It strikes me that there's quite a bit of background to this that just has never sat right with me since I first did any investigation into the War Memorial. I didn't have time to separate out the Hugh Peachey report and the James Cambridge report but I did actually speak to Hugh Peachey and he said, “I'm not in any trouble am I?” and I said, “No, of course you're not in any trouble.” He just reiterated what he had seen so when I make an accusation that this Council has tried to hide from its responsibility for the War Memorials. I'm 100% right and I want an apology from the Mayor for correspondence that he sent to me, I further want him to write a public apology to Steve Ellis for what he said about Steve Ellis, and for him to resign as Mayor and not stand in Ledbury again because he lives in Ross-on-Wye.”

The Chair responded that whilst these demands could be minuted from this meeting, the Finance Committee should be dealing with the overpayment and that the matters identified could be brought up at the meeting of Full Council on Thursday, 30 March 2023.

It was proposed that the Council pursue the repayment of the overcharge from The Stone Workshop for the full amount of £5,000.

Councillor Sinclair proposed that the Council ask the police to open an investigation into activities in relation to the War Memorial by the Stone Workshop (Paul Jones).

It was discussed that there should be a written request with what Ledbury Town Council would like the police to investigate, Councillor Sinclair agreed to work provide this.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That a recommendation be submitted to Full Council at its meeting on 30 March 2023, that Ledbury Town Council pursue the repayment of the overcharge from the Stone Workshop for the full amount as detailed in the report provided to the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee.**

2. That Councillor Sinclair provide a written request to Full Council at its meeting on 30 March 2023 detailing what Ledbury Town Council should request the Police to investigate in respect of the War Memorial.

F579 CCLA PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND

- i. Fact Sheet – January and February 2023
- ii. Current Declared Yield update

RESOLVED:

That the information regarding CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund be received and noted.

F580 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

Environment & Leisure Committee – Coronation Mugs

There was a short discussion as to whether a commemorative Coronation mug should be purchased to be given to all children attending Ledbury Primary School. It was felt that the money would be better spent to provide a free meal/event for the children of Ledbury Primary School.

As Councillor Sinclair had declared an interest in this item and left the room, it was noted that the meeting was no longer quorate and therefore could not be considered. It was agreed to defer this item to Full Council for further consideration.

RESOLVED:

That due to the meeting being inquorate for this item, further discussion be deferred to the meeting of Full Council to be held on 30 March 2023.

F581 ADVANSYS PROPOSALS

- i. Proposed development changes to Council website
- ii. Instagram and Facebook training on how to link in with website.

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed development changes to the Council website be approved.
2. That the Instagram and Facebook training on how to link in with the website be approved.

F582 VIDEO RECORDING SYSTEM FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS

RESOLVED:

That Quote 2 be approved, along with a tripod, at the total sum of £394.99.

F583 GREAT PLACES TO VISIT FUNDING

- i. PA System for future Council Events
- ii. TIC Signage
- iii. Trailer

i. There was some discussion as to the output of the speakers on each of the three options for item i. Members agreed that due to the short timescale remaining for the Great Places to Visit funding to be spent, Councillor Bradford and the Administrator to meet to choose which of the systems offered the best quality and that delegated powers be given to the Clerk in conjunction with the recommendation from Councillor Bradford and the administrator to purchase a PA System.

ii. Members discussed the signage options, noting that there was only one company who were able to supply everything requested on the list, therefore it was agreed that Quotation 3 be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That Councillor Bradford and the Administrator meet to consider the specification of the options within the report, following which the Clerk be delegated to purchase a PA System based on their recommendation.

2. That Quotation three in respect of signage for the TIC be approved.

3. That a trailer and hitchlock be purchased from Ifor Williams trailer, noting that either trailer proposed would be suitable, but that officers order whichever trailer and hitchlock can be delivered soonest.

F584 GRANT APPLICATIONS

£500 or under

- i. John Masefield School - £500
- ii. Ledbury Children's Centre - £350
- iii. Ledbury Community Day - £300
- iv. Three Counties Home Educator's - £500

RESOLVED:

That members agreed to pay the Grant Application to all four of the applicants in the £500 or under category.

Over £500

- i. Bosbury Scouts - £1,008 – That the grant application be declined.**
- ii. Ledbury Places - £4,600 – That the grant application be declined.**
- iii. Ledbury Places - £750 – That members agreed to pay Ledbury Places the sum of £500.**

- iv. **Ledbury Carnival Association - £1,000 - That the decision regarding Ledbury Carnival Associations application for £1,000 be deferred to Full Council due to not being quorate.**
- v. **Ledbury Maritime Cadets - £2,000 – That members agreed to pay the sum of £2,000 to Ledbury Maritime Cadets.**
- vi. **Ledbury Poetry - £5,000 – That the grant application be declined.**

Multi-Year applications

- i. **Community Action Ledbury – That Members agreed to funding for Community Action Ledbury in the following amounts:**

Year 1 - £10,000

Year 2 - £12,000

Year 3 - £12,000

- ii. **LEAF (Locally Encouraging all to Flourish – That members agreed to pay the funding for LEAF in the requested amounts.**

Year 1 - £10,440

Year 2 - £10,440

Year 3 – 10,440

Chaplain - £5,000

Counselling - £5,040

Kintsugi - £400

RESOLVED:

1. **That the members agreed to make payments as outlined above.**
2. **That members agreed that there should only be one round of Grant Funding offered in future financial years in order for the figures to be included when Budget setting.**

F585 POLICIES

- i. Draft Training and Development Policy
- ii. Draft Capability Procedure
- iii. Civility & Respect – Dignity at Work Policy
- iv. Draft Grievance Policy
- v. Draft Disciplinary Policy

Members enquired as to whether a HR professional, either past or present, had viewed these documents prior to them being brought to Committee for approval. The Clerk informed the members that at this time this had not happened, however Ledbury Town Council do have a contract with professional HR provider, Citation, who could review the policies and advise the Council accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the Policies and Procedures provided within the agenda be sent to Citation and Councillor Shields, as a former HR expert, for review and comment, prior to them being adopted.

F586 TO APPROVE COST FOR CLERK'S ANNUAL APPRAISAL

RESOLVED:

That the cost for the Clerk's annual appraisal be approved, with the caveat that a report is provided to the Resources Committee by the Councillor undertaking the Clerk's appraisal.

F587 TO REVIEW RISK REGISTER PART 5 ONWARDS

RESOLVED:

- 1. That, as Ledbury Town Council does not hold any CIC's the third entry in Part 6 of the Risk Register be removed from the risk register.**
- 2. That the item in Part 7 of the Risk Register be amended to include the following, noting that this will reduce the residual risk:**

"that all minutes be provided to the Chairs of Committees for approval, prior to inclusion in future agendas".
That "long term consultation processes" should be a medium risk 4 rather than a high risk.

F588 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

The next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee will be agreed at the Annual Council Meeting scheduled for 11 May 2023, following the local Council elections.

F589 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Section 12(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the press and public are excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

F590 FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

Members were requested to give consideration to quotes received in respect of a fire assessment of the council offices. Members noted that this is a legal requirement and asked whether this should be carried out every year. The Clerk advised that the government website states that a business should undertake regular fire assessments, but that no guidance was given as to how often this should be. With this in mind Members agreed that biennial fire assessments would be acceptable.

RESOLVED:

That that the quote received from Chubb for the provision of biennial fire assessments be approved at a cost of £587.00 for the first year.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Signed Dated
(Chair)