

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 19th JANUARY, 2017
IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, LEDBURY**

PRESENT: Councillors: K Francis - Vice Chairman
R Barnes A Bradford
M Eager A Manns
N Morris

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs K Mitchell, Clerk to the Council
Cllr N Shields
Phillippa Stringer – Poetry Festival Manager
1 member of the public

F.1 – 01.17 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Baker, E Fieldhouse , J Roberts, J Simpson and A Warmington.

F.2 – 01.17 INTERESTS

None declared at this point in the meeting.

F.3 – 01.17 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ledbury Poetry Festival Manager, Phillppa Stringer spoke about a festival community project, funded by Ledbury & District Healthcare whereby a poet works with vulnerable groups in the community to create artwork which would be used to decorate the town during the 10 days of the festival. The Committee was asked to consider giving permission for the legs of the Market House to be used for display purposes.

Cllr Shields, speaking on behalf of the Ledbury Library Development Group, circulated details of a draft proposal for a project to demonstrate the need for parity of opening hours between Ledbury library and the libraries of Ross and Leominster. Cllrs Shields asked that the Committee bear in mind a request for sponsorship in the amount of £500 to fund additional opening hours when considering the budget for 2017/18.

F.4 – 01.17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 24th November, 2016, copies having been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

F.5 – 01.17 FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Summary of Receipts and Payments

Members were circulated with a summary of receipts and payments from 1st November to 31st December 2016.

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. Band Reconciliations

The Clerk advised that Cllr Warmington had verified the bank statement for the September quarter.

RESOLVED: That this be noted.

4. Appointment of internal auditor

Members considered the appointment of the Internal Auditor. The Clerk advised that five companies had been approached to quote for internal audit works. The Clerk reminded members that the Committee had been given delegated authority to make an appointment.

Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That Auditing Solutions Ltd. be appointed to carry out the internal audit for Ledbury Town Council for the ensuing year.

5. Review of funding awarded to Love Ledbury in the sum of £7,400 to fund two coin operated locks and signage/advertising for the public toilets in Bye Street.

Copies of an End of Grant report giving a breakdown of how grant monies had been spent had been circulated to members.

It was noted that there were a number of discrepancies with copies of the supporting invoices supplied, including missing invoices, expenditure listed against invoices outside of the grant period and for items not covered by the grant.

RESOLVED: That the matter be deferred for investigation and brought back to the next Committee meeting.

6. Subscriptions

Members considered the renewal of the Town Council's annual subscription to Clerk's & Councils Direct .

RECOMMENDATION to Full Council: That the annual subscription to Clerk's & Councils direct be renewed in the sum of £12.

F.6 – 01.17 BUDGET 2017/18

Members considered the third draft of the budget required by the Finance & General Purposes Committee for 2017/18, copies having been circulated.

Members reviewed each cost centre and made a number of changes:

It was agreed to increase the Town Clock budget line to £500 to cover maintenance of the Town Clock.

The Clerk was requested to contact Herefordshire Council to ascertain costs for recent elections.

Members considered recommendations put forward for initiatives identified by the Town Plan task & finish group meeting held on 28th November, 2016, copies having been circulated.

- Employment of Town Manager – £15,000 – it was agreed that consideration of this initiative should be deferred until after the operational review is completed. (The Town Plan Group to draw up a specification for the role)
- Training for the Youth Council - £4,600 already allocated to the budget for youth.
- Newsletter - £4,000 – It was agreed to keep the budget at £1,000.

RECOMMENDATION to Full Council: To include the sum of £239,785 in the budget to cover expenditure in 2017/18 for the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

F.7 – 01.17 MARKET HOUSE

1. Request from Ledbury Poetry Festival to decorate the Market House as part of the Festival's "Outdoor Magic" project.

RECOMMENDATION to Full Council: That permission be given to use the legs of the Market House during the Poetry Festival to display community artwork as part of the 'Outdoor Magic' project.

2. Improvements to heating circuit to isolate one/two heaters from the existing circuit to allow them to be kept on during winter months (cost to be obtained) and installation of new lighting time clock in the sum of £65.

Following discussion, it was RESOLVED to make the following

RECOMMENDATION to Full Council: That the Clerk authorise works within budget from the maintenance budget line.

F.8 – 01.17 TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

Members considered a matter referred by the Standing Committee to install a new CCTV system with additional coverage and audio. Estimates for the equipment had been obtained in the region of £400.

RECOMMENDATION to Full Council: That the Clerk authorise works within budget from the maintenance budget line.

F.9 – 01.17 ACCOMMODATION WORKING

Members received the report from the Accommodation Working Party meeting held on 7th December 2016, copies having been circulated.

The following recommendations were considered:

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| a. | That all eight pendant fittings are replaced with similar in style low energy or LED fittings | Quote for antique brass light bar (£100 excl. VAT) and pendent (£36.67 excl.VAT) were circulated. Agreed |
| b. | That the unused ceiling mounted heaters are removed. | Agreed |
| c. | That the spotlight strip over the stage is replaced with a low energy equivalent. | Agreed |
| d. | That all the associated wiring to the above is checked and replaced or removed as necessary. | Agreed |
| e. | Subject to suitable quote, install a broadband telephone line. | The Clerk advised that a quotation had been obtained from BT in the sum of: Line installation: £120 Line rental & broadband only £28.90p/mth In view of the costs involved it was decided to put the recommendation on hold and investigate a wi-fi extender from the Town Council Office. |

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| f. | Subject to English Heritage approval & advice, and also subject to a Welsh Water costing to seek quotes to install a small kitchenette and toilet. Cllr Barnes to source Ledbury Places detailed plan of Market House. | The Clerk advised that an application for a new water connection was needed at a cost of £76.80 Incl. VAT. Agreed As building is Grade I listed, an application form will need to be completed before a Conservation Officer will visit. Agreed |
| g. | That a sample chair is taken to a local furniture restorer to get a quote to re-upholster all the Market House councillors seating as required. | Agreed |
| h. | That all worn and broken public seating is removed. | Amend to remove 'worn'. Agreed |

RECOMMENDATION to Full Council: That the above recommendations, as amended, be approved and that the works, within budget, be put in hand. That the report be approved and adopted.

F.10 – 01.17 RISK REGISTER

Lone working was raised as an issue to be added to the register.

F.11 – 01.17 STAFF TRAINING

RESOLVED: That the Clerk's attendance at the SLCC Practitioner's Conference on 23rd-24th February 2017 be approved in the sum of £249 + VAT, and that clerk cover be arranged for the next Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting.

F.12 – 01.17 OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received the Report from Herefordshire Market Towns Forum meeting held on 23rd November 2016, copies having been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

F.13 – 01.17 CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION

The following correspondence had been received in the office:

- Ledbury Poetry Festival Annual Report 2016.
- Thank you letter from John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre for the grant received for the Library Refurbishment Project & Promoting Reading for Pleasure.
- Thank you letter from the Friends of Ledbury Children’s Centre for the grant received towards six creative pottery workshop sessions.

F.14 – 01.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA INCLUSION

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 23rd February 2017.

Items for inclusion on next agenda

- Participatory budgeting
- Love Ledbury grant review
- Portas money
- Drugs Forum money

The meeting closed at 9.32pm

Chairman

Date