

**LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE HELD ON  
26 MAY 2022**

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**PRESENT:** Councillors Eakin, Howells and Hughes

**ALSO PRESENT:** Angela Price – Town Clerk

**F439. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON FOR THE 2022/23 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Hughes be nominated as Chairperson of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal year.**

**F440. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bradford, Harvey, and Sinclair.

**F441. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None received.

**F442. NOLAN PRINCIPLES**

Councillor Howells pointed out that in respect of Point 7 of the Nolan Principles, Members should be willing to challenge poor behaviour of their colleagues at all times.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Nolan Principles be received and noted.**

**F443. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE 2022/23 MUNICIPAL YEAR**

**RESOLVED:**

**That Councillor Harvey, who was absent from the meeting, be nominated as the Vice-Chairperson of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee for the 2022/23 Municipal year, noting that she had previously advised Members that should no one else**

wish to be considered for the position she would be willing to stand.

**F444. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

**No members of the public were present.**

**F445. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Chair suggested the following amendments to the Terms of Reference:

1. Page 2361 – that it be made clear in the heading of the document that the information contained within has been taken from the Council’s Corporate Plan document.
2. Page 2361 – Objective 1(a) that “equally” be replaced with “equitably”.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That the above amendments be made to the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee Terms of Reference and that the amended version be referred back to the next meeting of Full Council for approval.**
2. **That the following Working Parties be established:**
  - **Budget Monitoring Working Party**
  - **Grants Working Party**

**F446. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF A MEETING THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 MARCH 2022**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the minutes of the meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee held on 24 March 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:**

**Minute No. F425 should read “Under £500 – reduced from £1,650 to £1,200”.**

**F447. TO REVIEW THE ACTION SHEET**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the action sheet be received and noted.**

**F448. TO APPROVE THE INVOICES FOR PAYMENT FOR MAY 2022**

Members were requested to approve invoices for payment in the sum of £31,089.83 plus VAT (which included BACs and Direct Debit payments), with the additional payment of £120 to the SLCC in respect of the FiLCA training course for post holder 49.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the invoices for payment in the total sum of £31,209.83 plus VAT be approved.**

**F449. TO RECEIVE THE RECORD OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR MARCH AND APRIL 2022**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the record of receipts and payments for March and April 2022 be received and noted.**

**F450. TO RECEIVE THE BALANCE SHEET AND TRIAL BALANCE FOR MONTH 12**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the balance sheet and trial balance for month 12 be received and noted.**

**F451. TO CONFIRM VERIFICATION OF BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS FOR MARCH AND APRIL 2022**

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note that due to there not being a chair elected prior to this meeting, that the bank statements and reconciliations for March and April 2022, were awaiting verification.**
- 2. To note that the new Chairman would attend the Council offices to verify the bank statements and reconciliations for March and April 2022.**

**F452. TO RECEIVE YEAR END REPORTS**

The Clerk, in her role as RFO, provided additional information to support the Annual Return on page 2416 of the agenda as follows:

Annual Return – Brief explanation of significant variations from last year to this year in Section 2.

**Line 3** – Income in 2021/22 is significantly higher due to £90,000 being received in respect of Great Places to visit fund.

**Line 4** – Salaries were increased in 2021/22 from the 2020/21 figure due to two reasons:

1. New roles created for CDO, and Town Maintenance Operative
2. In 2020/21 meetings were held via Zoom and therefore there was less overtime being paid for minute takers and also being paid to the Clerk due as less hours were worked in the evenings.

**Line 6** – the total expenditure in 2020/21 including the cost of the Viaduct Inquiry

**Lines 7 & 8** – Due to issues with staffing and Covid not as many projects were completed as had been anticipated, therefore resulting in an increase in the overall reserves of the council

**Line 9** – This figure was not available at the time of closedown; however, this will need to be included in the final papers due to be sent to the Auditor

The Clerk, in her role of RFO, also provided the following suggestions in respect of the 2021/22 year-end outturn, noting that there was an underspend of £176,580

- Council has previously agreed that an additional £15,000 would be added to the War Memorial Earmarked Reserves which will increase this to £30,000.

Suggestions for consideration in respect of remaining overspend of £146,580:

- Business plan and start-up costs (including staffing costs) for Tourist Information Centre
- Additional funding for Christmas Lights £7,004.81
- Additional £20,000 to be added to the current earmarked reserve in respect of play equipment/skate park

The Clerk suggested that a Budget Working Party meeting be arranged ahead of the Full Council meeting of 9 June 2022 to allow further consideration of the underspend and Annual Return, with a recommendation from that meeting being submitted to the full council meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That the end of year reports be received and noted.**

2. That the additional information provided by the Clerk in respect of Section 2 of the Annual Return be included as part of the documents to be submitted to Full Council for approval, prior to being sent to the External Auditors.
3. That it be noted that the 2021/22 fixed asset figure will be included in the final documents provided to Full Council on 9 June 2022.
4. That a Budget Working party meeting be arranged for 4.00 pm on Tuesday, 7 June 2022 to discuss the year end outturn and agree earmarked reserves from within the underspend.

**F453. 2021/22 ANNUAL RETURN AND INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

Members were provided with a copy of the Internal Auditors report following the 2021/22 year-end close down of the council's accounts.

Members noted the improved Internal Audit report provided by Kevin Rose and thanked the Clerk and Accounts Clerk for their work towards the year end and internal audit.

The Clerk, in her capacity as RFO, provided responses to the comments made within the Internal Audit Observations report, noting that these comments would be provided as part of the information provided to Full Council on 9 June 2022, along with any recommendations from the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee and the Budget Monitoring Working Party meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That the internal audit report be recommended to the meeting of Council, scheduled for 9 June 2022 for completion of Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement, prior to sending to the External Auditor.**

**F454. EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT**

**There were no external audit reports to consider, and it was noted that the internal audit report had been considered in the previous agenda item.**

**F455. SHOP FRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANTS**

Members were requested to give consideration to applications received in respect of the Shop Front Improvement Grants which were being funded by the Town Council through the Great Places to Visit Fund.

Members were advised of recommendations from the Grants Working Party as follows:

1. That all grants be awarded as per the attached sheet, and that traders be advised that the grants will be paid on production of invoices.
2. That it be noted that an extension had been granted in respect of the Great Places to Visit fund and therefore consideration be given to a second round of grants being offered with a deadline date for applications of 30 June 2022 for any shops or businesses that have not yet applied.
3. That the Civic Society be asked whether they would consider further contributions to a second round of applications, noting that if they do not wish to participate the grant on offer in the second round will be £750 only.

The Clerk advised Members that the Civic Society had expressed concerns over the colour scheme being used by Spec Savers, noting that the colour scheme was like for like. The Clerk had received an email from the Civic Society stating that they did not consider the colour scheme sat well in the street scene around the Market House.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That all grants be awarded as per the attached sheet, and that traders be advised that the grants will be paid on production of invoices.**
2. **That a second round of grants be offered to traders and businesses who have not yet applied with a deadline for applications of 30 June 2022.**
3. **That the Civic Society be asked whether they would consider further contributions to a second round of applications, noting that if they do not wish to contribute the grant offer in the second round will be £750.**
4. **That the Civic Society be advised that, whilst the Council take on board their comments in respect of the Spec Savers building, the council do not believe this is sufficient grounds to decline the application.**

**F456. GREAT PLACES TO VISIT – JUBILEE STREET PARTY GRANTS**

Members were requested to give consideration to applications received from local residents for Jubilee Street Party grants, which were being funded via the Great Places to Visit fund.

Members were provided with an updated list, and advised of the following recommendations from the Grants Working Party:

1. That the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee decline the grant application from Sara Fletcher of Ledbury Primary School on the grounds that this is not a traditional street party.
2. That the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee decline the grant application from Chris Weedon on the grounds that Coddington is not in the Parish of Ledbury, noting that they have their own Parish Council, Bosbury & Coddington Parish Council.
3. That the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee accept the late application from Rachel Drury noting that they have only requested 50% of the award on offer, due to only having a small number of residents in their street.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That the application from Sara Fletcher of Ledbury Primary School be declined on the grounds that this is not a traditional street party.**
2. **That the application from Chris Weedon be declined on the grounds that Coddington is not in the Parish of Ledbury, noting that they have their own Parish Council, Bosbury & Coddington Parish Council.**
3. **That the application from Rachel Drury be approved, noting that they have only requested 50% of the grant being offered.**
4. **That all remaining Street Party grants be awarded accordingly.**

**F457. REVIEW OF FRANKING MACHINE CONTRACT**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Council enter into a further 5-year contract to lease the franking machine from FP Mailing at a cost of £10 per month plus postage.**

**F458. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

1. Environment & Leisure Committee
  - a. Christmas Lights

Members were requested to approve the recommendation from the Environment & Leisure Committee in respect of the additional Christmas lights for the two remaining years of the contract with Blachere Illuminations Ltd and that the additional

funds in the sum of £7,004.81, which exceed the 2022/23 budget allocation, be taken from the Council's general reserve.

b. Fees and Charges

That Members approve the recommendation from the Environment & Leisure Committee to increase the fees and charges in respect of all council services as listed within the report, be increased by 2%.

2. Economy & Planning

Members were requested to give consideration to the quote received from Bill Bloxsome, for additional work in respect of the Neighbourhood Development Plan in the sum of £800.00.

**RESOLVED:**

1. **That the recommendation from the Environment & Leisure Committee in respect of the additional Christmas Lights be approved and the additional sum of £7,004.81 which exceeds the 2022/23 budget allocation, be taken from the Councils general reserve.**
2. **That the fees and charges in respect of all council services be increased by 2%.**
3. **That the quote received from Bill Bloxsome in relation to additional work associated with the Neighbourhood Development Plan in the sum of £800 be approved.**

**F459. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION POLICY**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the revised Recruitment and Selection Policy be approved.**

**F460. GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR)**

**No reports were submitted.**

**F461. WEBSITE – REPORT BUTTON**

Members were advised that a "Report Button" had now been added to the council website, which allows users to report any issues they encounter when using the website.

**RESOLVED:**

**That the website update be noted.**

**F462. BBI CLOCK**

The Clerk advised Members of an email received from Councillor Sinclair in respect of the BBI clock, in which he asked, "Where is the evidence that LTC are responsible for the Cost of Electricity?"

Taking on-board the concern raised by Councillor Sinclair, Members agreed to refer this item to Full Council for approval

**RESOLVED:**

**That this item be referred to a meeting of Full Council for approval, due to concerns raised by Councillor Sinclair and there only being three councillors present at the meeting.**

**F463. RISK REGISTER – PART 1 FINANCIAL**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the Clerk review Part 1 of the Risk Register to include any items raised within the internal audit report that are not already within the document.**

**F464. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

**RESOLVED:**

**To note that the date of the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for Thursday, 28 July 2022.**

**F465. 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 is advisable in the public interest that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.**

**F466. DRAFT MORTUARY LEASE**

**RESOLVED:**

**That the draft Mortuary Lease be approved, and that the Clerk notify the Council's solicitors to request the final document be drafted for signing accordingly.**

**The meeting ended at 8.08 pm**

**Signed ..... Dated .....**