

LEDBURY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 27 JULY 2023

PRESENT: Councillors Bradford, Hughes, and l'Anson

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

F30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harvey and Howells.

F31. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor Hughes declared an interest in item 16 due to having a personal friendship with the applicant.

F32. NOLAN PRINCIPLES

RESOLVED:

That the Nolan Principles be received and noted.

F33. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were present.

F34. TO APPROVE AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF FINANCE, POLICY & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 JUNE 2023

Councillor Bradford queried the minutes at F22, stating that there was a conversation about purchasing a concrete building which had not been minuted. The Town Clerk advised that she would review the recording of the June meeting to confirm this and record the amendments if appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Policy and General-Purpose Committee held on 1 June 2023 be approved and signed as a correct record subject to the amendment.

F35. TO REVIEW THE ACTION SHEET

The Clerk provided the following updates:

- F8.1 - The Clerk advised that she is working with BBLP in respect of them installing the plaque
- F16.9 - The Clerk advised that she had had a meeting with the Internal Auditor to discuss this and a scope and costings will be included in the Full Council agenda of 3 August 2023 for consideration
- F18 -The Clerk made Members aware of a letter received from the Treasurer of the Ledbury Visually Impaired Club in which they had suggested that the Council may wish to support the cost of transport to events, £40 per trip for 5 trips

RESOLVED:

1. That the Action Sheet be received and noted.
2. That Ledbury Town Council grants the sum of £200 to Ledbury Visually Impaired Group to provide transportation for their forthcoming trips.

F36. TO APPROVE INVOICES FOR PAYMENTS FOR JULY 2023

RESOLVED:

That the invoices for payment in the sum of £12,073.02 (plus VAT) be approved.

F37. TO RECEIVE THE RECORD OF RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS FOR MAY AND JUNE 2023

RESOLVED

That the receipts and payments for May and June 2023 be received and noted.

F38. TO RECEIVE THE BALANCE SHEET AND TRIAL BALANCE FOR MONTHS 2 AND 3

RESOLVED

That the Balance Sheet and Trial Balance for months 2 & 3 be received and noted.

F39. BUDGET MONITORING

i. 2022/23 End of Year Movements

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That a recommendation be made to Council that due to the low

amount in the general fund at the year-end close no movements from the general fund to the earmarked reserves be undertaken in respect of the 2022/23 year-end balance.

- 2. That in addition to the £40,000 allocated in the War Memorial earmarked reserve, Members offset any additional costs from the funds being received from The Stone Workshop, with any further additional costs being allocated from within the Listed Buildings Reserve as previously agreed.**
- 3. That the works to repair the Market House roof be allocated from within the Listed Building earmarked reserve.**

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the earmarked reserves for Play/Skate Park in the sum of £24,500 be used for improvements to the play equipment at the recreation ground in 2023/24.**

ii. 2024/23 Budget Monitoring Reports

The Chair queried the following lines within the 2023/24 budget reports which were showing as in excess of the anticipated 25% expenditure:

- CC 102 – NC 4170 – Cemetery & Buildings – Maintenance 82.9% - Clerk to check and provide update
- CC201 – NC 4122 – Market House – Electricity – the Clerk advised that this was due to a payment for the council offices having been posted to this NC in error and also that the contract for this account had ended and currently it is not possible to enter into new fixed contracts with electricity suppliers
- CC202 – NC 4122 – Council Offices – Electricity – this line appears to be showing a negative expenditure of 97.6% - the Clerk to check and provide update
- CC230 – NC4018 – Management and Payroll – National Insurance – it was noted that this is showing an expenditure of 62.7%, however it was also noted that staff salaries (4000) in the same Cost Centre was only showing an expenditure of 4% - The Chair asked that all salary payments be amalgamated into one in each cost centre going forward
- CC235 – NC4405 – Office facilities and equipment – Photocopier hire – it was noted that this was nearly double the anticipated spend at this stage of the financial year. However, it was recognised that this was due to an error in respect of ended the previous contract that had previously been reported to Members.
- CC31 – NC4553 – Planning/Economic Development - Tourist Information Centre – this was in relation to a one-off purchase of the advertising feathers and A boards in relation to the TIC

RESOLVED

That the Budget Monitoring Reports be received and noted, noting that the Clerk is to provide updates on the following:

CC102 – NC 4170 and CC202 – NC4122

F40. TO CONFIRM VERIFICATION OF BANK STATEMENTS AND RECONCILIATIONS FOR MARCH TO JUNE 2023

RESOLVED

That it be noted that the bank statements and reconciliations for March to June 2023 had been signed by the Chairman of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

F41. CCLA PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND FACT SHEET – MAY AND JUNE 2023

Members enquired as to whether, with the current high interest rates, this is the best way to hold these sums and whether there may be a higher yield with the monies in a deposit account.

RESOLVED

That the Public Sector Deposit Fund Fact Sheets May and June 2023 be received and noted.

F42. INTERNAL/EXTERNAL AUDIT (Standing item)

No updates were reported

F43. CHANGE OF BANK ACCOUNT

Members were advised that on attempting to sign up the Council to a new bank account with Starling Bank the Clerk had been asked to provide personal details which suggested that the bank account would be somehow linked to the Clerks personal bank account.

The Clerk informed Members that prior to the report regarding Starling Bank, Ledbury Town Council had previously taken the decision to move their banking Unity Trust Bank due to them having knowledge of how Councils operate.

Members agreed that the information which had been requested by Starling Bank, and the method of sign up, was not appropriate for Ledbury Town Council and that the Clerk should write to Starling to tell them that their services were no longer required and to request they remove all information provided to them when initially attempting to set up an account be removed from their databases.

RESOLVED

1. **That the Clerk investigate joining Unity Trust Bank and provide a report to the next meeting of the committee.**
2. **That the Clerk be authorised to write to Starling Bank, on behalf of Ledbury Town Council, to inform them of the Council's reasons for not continuing the process of opening a new bank account with them, and to request that they remove any data which has thus far been provided from their records.**

F44. MARKET HOUSE

i. ROOF TENDER

Councillor Bradford advised that the roof work previously carried out may still carry a guarantee and suggested that officers should look into this.

The Clerk informed Members that of the total sum of £33,064.60, £13,168 of the quotation was for scaffolding and another £5,000 was a contingency.

Councillor Hughes proposed that a recommendation be put to Full Council to accept the tender and that Full Council should be advised that Caroe & Partners have confirmed the tender as correct and that the company is reputable.

RECOMMENDATION

That Full Council accept the tender received in the sum of £33,064.60 for the works to the Market House Roof, noting that Jane Chamberlain of Caroe & Partners has confirmed the tender as correct and that the company is reputable.

ii. PLASTER WORK

The Clerk informed members that Company B had been asked to provide additional information for their quotation to bring it into line with Company A's quoted scope. Company B had quoted a further £550 +VAT for inspecting the panels of the Market House and had advised that an additional £5,000 be made available for further works following the inspection.

Members agreed that, with this information provided, Company A should be engaged to complete the works based on their clear quotation and price.

RESOLVED:

That Company A be appointed to undertake the repairs to the plaster on the Market House to enable works to be carried out as soon as possible.

F45. GRANT APPLICATIONS

£500 or under

Caroline Green – Take 4 Gallery

Councillor Hughes declared an interest in this item which resulted in the meeting being inquorate.

RESOLVED:

That this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee due to the meeting being inquorate as a result of one Councillor having submitted a declaration of interest.

F46. TO REVIEW RISK REGISTER PART 6 - CONTRACTUAL

Councillor Hughes stated that he and the Clerk had discussed the Risk Register and agreed that there was some work needed to clarify the content of the Register.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Clerk and Councillor Hughes work on the Risk register and provide an amended version to a future meeting of the Committee.**

F47. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee is scheduled 28 September 2023

RESOLVED

To note that the next meeting of the Finance, Policy & General Purposes Committee is scheduled to take place on Thursday, 28 September 2023, at 7.00 pm, in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Church Lane, Ledbury.

F48. 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, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting.

F49. UPDATE ON STATUS OF MORTUARY LEASE

RECOMMENDATION:

That Full Council be asked to approve that the Council's Solicitors, Red Kite, be given instruction to proceed with a Section 25 Notice to end the existing lease confirming that the Council is prepared to enter into a new lease, setting out the terms the Council is prepared to accept.

F50. UPDATE ON SMALL CLAIMS COURT APPLICATION

Members asked for clarification as to what a Warrant of Control would entail.

The Clerk informed the meeting that this meant that if you have a county court judgment for a debt and do not pay as the court has ordered, the creditor can apply to the court for a 'warrant of control'. This warrant authorises a county court bailiff to try to take control of possessions to encourage the individual to pay what they owe.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Full Council be asked to approve the application for a Warrant of Control be made to recover the outstanding sum of £928.30 and any additional costs owed to Ledbury Town Council in respect of the individual.

F51. VEXATIOUS COMPLAINANT

Members considered whether the Vexatious Complaint Policy should now be invoked. The Chair advised that the Council's Vexatious Policy clearly outlines that in the first instance the Resources Committee should be informed, and the complainant should be contacted to state that the Vexatious Complaint Policy was to be invoked with a copy of the Policy being sent to them to ensure that they are aware of the full Policy.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. That Full Council authorise the Clerk to write to the complainant to advise them that should they continue to request a response and further information from the Council on this matter, then the Council will invoke the first stage of the Council's Vexatious Complainant Policy in respect of further communication, and that a copy of the Policy be included with the correspondence accordingly.**
- 2. That the offer of assistance received from Mr Rippon be considered subject to any response received from the individual in relation to the notification of the invoking of the first stage of the Council's Vexatious Policy.**

The meeting ended at 8.25pm.

Signed **Date**.....
(Chairman)