

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 24th June 2019 commencing at 19:15 hours in the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Murdoch (Chair), Marshall (Vice-Chair), Bartlett, Davies, Marsh, Norman, Rumsey, Sutcliffe, Thomas and Williams.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk.

FG01/19 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were invited for the position of Chair of the Committee.

Cllr Murdoch was proposed by Cllr Bartlett and seconded by Cllr Rumsey. There being no other nominations, Cllr Murdoch was formally elected Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Cllr Marsh was formally thanked for all her hard work and time as the previous Chair of the Committee.

FG02/19 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

Nominations were invited for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

Cllr Marshall was proposed by Cllr Marsh and seconded by Cllr Thomas. There being no other nominations, Cllr Marshall was formally elected Vice-Chair of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

FG03/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies to receive.

FG04/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made.

- Cllr Norman: Leominster in Bloom.

FG05/19 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations received.

FG06/19 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

FG07/19 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 29th April 2019 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

FG08/19 CLERK'S REPORT

- (a) **Councillor Induction Evening** – Committee noted that the Councillor Induction Evening was held on Monday 17th June 2019. A comprehensive grants and projects update had been provided alongside an overview of the Grounds Team and the Tourist Information Centre. Thanks were extended to the staff for attending the session.
- (b) **Leominster in Bloom Sponsorship** – Committee considered the sponsorship of a beehive planter as part of its Leominster in Bloom support. The planter would be sited in Corn Square. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** to sponsor the planter for £500.
- (c) **Freedom of the Town** – Committee noted the timetable of events for Saturday 29th June 2019 when the Rifles would exercise the Freedom of the Town as part of Armed Forces Day. Councillors would be meeting up at Grange Court for robing at 10:00am and guests would begin to arrive at 10:15am.
- (d) **Heritage High Street Fund** – Committee noted that an initial meeting had taken place to begin to develop an Expression of Interest for submission by 12th July 2019. Leominster Town Council, in partnership with Herefordshire Council, would prepare the Expression of Interest and submit it to the High Street Heritage Action Zone Fund for consideration.

The objective of the Fund was to renew and reshape town centres and high streets with a particular emphasis on heritage assets and in a way that improved experience, drove growth and ensured future sustainability. Letters of support were currently being sought and it was noted that a template letter of support was available and would be sent to all Councillors for distribution across their networks.

This initiative would be the main priority of the Council up to the closing date of 12th July 2019. All available resources would be diverted into developing a comprehensive submission.

- (e) **Roger Albert Clark Rally** – Committee noted that this event would start from Leominster on Thursday 21st November 2019 at 4:00pm. Road closures were being secured for Broad Street along with the use of the Broad Street car park, which would be used as an overspill rally car preparation area.
- (f) **Clerk's Holiday** – Committee noted that the Clerk would be on holiday from 1st to 12th July 2019. He would be in attendance on Monday 8th July for the Planning & Highways meeting.

FG09/19 FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

- (a) **Financial Report** – Committee noted the draft Income and Expenditure report presented.

It was noted that a new Finance Assistant had been appointed and would take up post on Monday 5th August 2019. Current financial capacity was limited and there were a number of revisions required prior to the finalisation of the Quarter One financial accounts. It was hoped that a Quarter One report would be available for presentation to Full Council on 29th July 2019.

- (b) **Outstanding Accounts for Payment** – Committee ratified the payments relating to the months of May and June 2019 to date amounting to £38,173.51, inclusive of VAT.
- (c) **Housing Needs Survey** – Committee considered the report regarding the proposed Housing Needs Survey and, following consideration, **RESOLVED**:
- That the report be noted;
 - That the quotation from Data Orchard be accepted, subject to further refinement to better reflect the Town Council's requirements;
 - That a meeting be set up with Data Orchard Ltd to review the quotation;
 - That Cllrs Murdoch and Sutcliffe attend the meeting if available.
- (d) **Bank Mandate** – Committee formally **RESOLVED** to amend the bank mandate. The following Councillors would be the nominated signatories:
- Cllr Thomas
 - Cllr Rumsey
 - Cllr Rosser
 - Cllr Murdoch
 - Cllr Norman
 - Cllr Marsh

The relevant paperwork and amendments would be submitted to the Cooperative Bank as soon as practicable.

- (e) **Committee Report** – Committee considered the Committee Update Report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED**:
- To note the report;
 - With regard to the Councillor Allowances consultation, to separate the Councillor Allowance Scheme from the childcare and dependants' carers' allowance scheme;
 - To recommend that support be given in principle to adopting the childcare and dependants' carers' allowance scheme, subject to consideration and resolution by Full Council;
 - That clarification be obtained regarding the possibility of adopting a specific Leominster Town Council allowance scheme.

FG10/19 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items were expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance & General Purposes Committee **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act

1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of, Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

(a) **Clerk's Report Item: Grange Court** – Committee noted that LARC had submitted a formal request to the Town Council requesting it to consider applying for a Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) loan on behalf of the Trust to help secure the Grange Court building. Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:

- To invite representatives of the Trustees of the Leominster Area Regeneration Company (LARC) to attend the next Full Council meeting being held on Monday 29th July 2019 to provide a presentation on LARC. This would include background information on the Community Interest Company, its aims and objectives, an overview of its finances, an update on its existing loan, any agreements in place or being negotiated with other organisations, including Herefordshire Council, and its future plans;
- To hold the presentation between 6pm and 7pm prior to the Full Council meeting;
- To note that in order to apply for any PWLB loan a full consultation process would need to be carried out with local residents to obtain their views;
- That any PWLB application would need to meet the requirements of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government;
- To note that the Town Council would be required to undertake due diligence of the request prior to reaching a final decision;
- To note that any decision to borrow money would need to be formally agreed by Full Council.

(b) **Grants Report** – Committee noted the Grant Report and **RESOLVED** to release the annual grant of £7,000 to LARC. It was agreed to send a copy of the accounts received from LARC to all members of the Council for information.

Committee received the Youth Budget Report and, following consideration, **RESOLVED**:

- That the report be noted;
- That funding of £920 of the £1,659 that was underspent by HVOSS from the original grant awarded to them by the Town Council in 2016, be released to fund four art sessions for 11-17 year olds at Barons Cross. The art sessions would be run by HVOSS and compliment the sessions already organised and run by Wildplay;
- That consideration be given to spending the remainder of the underspent funding at Ridgemoor to provide activities for young people;

- That the evaluation report provided by HVOSS summarising the consultation findings be considered when received.

(c) **Staffing & Equipment Report** – Committee received the report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED**:

- That the report be noted;
- That the revised staffing structure for the Grounds and Environmental Team be ratified;
- That the projected overspend and required virements be noted;
- Proposed by Cllr Thomas, seconded by Cllr Rumsey and **RESOLVED** that authority be given to the Town Clerk to investigate and negotiate terms and conditions for the renting of a new depot building at Southern Avenue, and that a full report be presented to Full Council for consideration at its meeting to be held on Monday 29th July 2019;
- Proposed by Cllr Thomas, seconded by Cllr Williams and **RESOLVED** that a new Ransomes HR300 mower be purchased at a cost of £18,800 + VAT. A credit of £10,000 would be received for the existing second hand machine.

FG11/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Monday 2nd September 2019 at 19:00 at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 9:24pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: