

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 18th January 2016 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Offices, 17 West Street, Leominster HR6 8EP.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Norman (Chair), R Pendleton (Vice Chair), Bartlett, Barton, Marsh, Rosser and Rumsey.

ALSO PRESENT: One member of the public and one member of the press.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk.

F49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Davies, Evans, Gibson and A Pendleton.

F50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made.

F51 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

No requests for dispensations had been received.

F52 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A resident asked whether members of the Council that were not Leominster Parish residents were allowed to vote on the setting of the Town Council's budget and precept. He was informed that the Town Council was a corporate body and elected and co-opted members of that body had full rights to vote on any matter under consideration except those in which they had registered an interest under the Localism Act 2011.

A resident asked why 17 West Street, Leominster was no longer fit for purpose to deliver Town Council services. He was informed that the Town Council was taking on many additional services and responsibilities from Herefordshire Council as well as reviewing the way existing services such as the Tourist Information Centre were delivered. Following lengthy consideration the Town Council had agreed that it could achieve savings and improve service delivery by purchasing 11 Corn Square.

The Town Council had undertaken a public consultation on its proposed budget to ensure that it was meeting the needs of the local community.

F53 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 7th December 2015 be agreed and signed as a correct record subject to the amendment agreed.

F54 FINANCIAL MATTERS

- (a) **Financial Report** – Committee considered the financial report for December 2015 and, following discussion, it was **RESOLVED**:
- That the report be noted;
 - That the payments made in December 2015 amounting to £26,639.59 inclusive of VAT be ratified;
 - That income received in December amounting to £1,585.44 be ratified;
 - That Petty Cash transactions for December amounting £76.31 be ratified;
 - That the current balance as at 31st December 2015 of £242,894 be ratified;
 - That the projected budget underspend for 2015/16 of £2,426 be noted.

Committee considered the budget monitoring report and noted that although certain cost codes were overspent the main cost centre headings were not overspent.

Committee **NOTED** that a revised asset register was currently being drawn up and a full report would be submitted to Committee at its next meeting on 22nd February 2016.

Committee **NOTED** the Audit Report update outlining progress to date. The following items would be presented to Committee in February 2016:

- A draft Internal Controls document for approval;
 - Revised asset register for approval;
 - A report on the staff and Council review currently being undertaken;
 - Lone Worked Policy.
- (b) **Outstanding Accounts for Payment** – Following consideration Committee **RESOLVED** to pay all the outstanding accounts to date for January 2016 amounting to £13,119.86 inclusive of VAT.

Committee **RESOLVED** to request a 50% reduction of the invoice received from Gala Lights due to the poor level of service received including the number of festive lights which had not worked. In addition the Certificate of the Stress Testing undertaken would be requested.

It was noted that the Festive Lights contract had come to an end and it was agreed to review the way the Town Council delivered the lights in the future including the possibility of undertaking the erection of the lights in-house.

- (c) **Consultation Report** – Committee considered the Final Consultation report presented and **RESOLVED**:
- That the report be noted;
 - That the results of the consultation be used to help direct future funding requirements and commitments;
 - That the results of the consultation be published in full on the website.

- (d) **Budget and Precept 2016/17** – Committee considered the Draft budget and precept report for 2016/17 in detail. Following discussion it was **RESOLVED**:
- That the report be noted;
 - That a grant allocation of £10,000 be recommended for inclusion for the Community Centre which would be dependant on the LDCA working with the Town Council's Task & Finish Group to develop a new business plan for the centre;
 - That an allocation of £9,000 be recommended for inclusion to fund youth provision in Leominster;
 - That additional grant funding from Awards for All and the Troubled Families funding be pursued for youth provision;
 - That projected income from 11 Corn Square be reduces to £20,000 in 2016/17 as it would not be available to let for the entire year;
 - That the recommended annual expenditure of £55,000 per annum submitted by the Estates, Markets and Environment Committee be agreed and out forward to Full Council for adoption;
 - It was proposed by Cllr Norman, seconded by Cllr Rosser and agreed that a sum of £10,000 be included in the 2016/17 budget to help fund innovative travel solutions

It was confirmed that the final proposals for the management, maintenance and upgrade of the public conveniences would be developed by the Trask & Finish Group and that proposals would be submitted to Full Council for agreement and adoption.

It was **NOTED** that no income or expenditure had been included under the P3 and Lengthsman Scheme for budgeting purposes. However, once confirmation had been received regarding the funding allocation from Herefordshire Council this would be included in the budget monitoring report information.

It was proposed by Cllr Rosser, seconded by Cllr R Pendleton and **RESOLVED** to propose to Full Council that a precept of £404,062 be requested from Herefordshire Council for 2016/17. This would result in a Band D charge of £114.60.

A recorded vote was requested, the result being:

For: Cllrs Norman, R Pendleton, Bartlett, Marsh, Rosser and Rumsey.
Against: Cllr Barton.

- (e) **11 Corn Square** – Committee **NOTED** that the instruction notice to dispose of the building by Herefordshire Council had been agreed but as yet the Town Council's solicitor had not received any paperwork.

A meeting with the Solicitor had been held and it had been agreed to contact Herefordshire Council for the relevant paperwork and to instruct a surveyor to carry out a survey of the premises as soon as possible.

It was agreed to request Full Council to consider drawing down £350,000 of the £500,000 loan from the Public Works Loan Board at its meeting on 25th January 2016.

- (f) **Ellis Whittam** – Committee considered the proposal received from Ellis Whittam to provide employment law, human resources and Health & Safety support. This included unlimited support for a fixed fee, the development of a Staff Handbook and relevant up to date HR and Health & Safety policies.

It was noted that the only potential change to the £2,500 fee might be the cost of legal expenses insurance per employee at £7.50 and legal expenses Insurance (Health & Safety prosecution) at £3.00 per employee.

It was proposed by Cllr R Pendleton, seconded by Cllr Rosser and **RESOLVED** to enter into a three year contract with Ellis Whittam with immediate effect for a sum of £2,500 per annum plus VAT.

F55 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items were expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance 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) **Council & Staffing Review** – Committee noted that Mr Rolley would be in Leominster again from Tuesday 19th to Thursday 21st February 2016 to continue the review.

F56 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **NOTED** that the next Finance Committee meeting would be held on Monday 22nd February 2016 at 19:00 at the Council Offices, 17 West Street, Leominster HR6 8EP.

There being no other business the Chair thanked members for their attendance and closed the meeting at 9:10pm.

CHAIR:

DATE: