

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE, ASSET MANAGEMENT & HR COMMITTEE
meeting held at the Guildhall, Much Wenlock
at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 24th November 2020

Present:

Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins, Cllr. Matthew Park, Cllr. Natalie Park, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter, Cllr Duncan White, Cllr Milner Whiteman.

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow – Assistant to the Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1) Apologies

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to approve the following apology: **Cllr Herbert Harper – family commitment.**

2) Disclosure of pecuniary interests

Members were reminded that they are required to leave the room during the discussion and voting on matters in which they have a disclosable pecuniary interest, whether or not the interest is entered in the Register of Members' Interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer.

3) Dispensations

None requested.

4) Minutes

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2020 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

5) Town Clerk's report

Members received a written report from the Town Clerk on action taken since the last meeting.

Members of the grounds and property maintenance group were asked to advise the Clerk of their views once they had met to discuss options for reconfiguring the Queen Street toilets.

It was noted that the Clerk would remove items from her report which she had dealt with but were awaiting attention from other parties.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and AGREED** that the Town Clerk's report be **NOTED**.

6) Finance

- a. The RFO presented a written and verbal report.

It was noted that a donation of £10,000 had been received from the Much Wenlock Forester Charitable Trust towards the Gaskell Ground path and access project. An unexpected and very welcome donation of £5,000 had also been received towards the project from the Lady Forester Trust.

All grant award payments had been made.

The external audit had been concluded satisfactorily, with no concerns being raised. This would be formally reported at the forthcoming full Council meeting.

The RFO advised of an error on the written report, where the contingency figure under the Gaskell Recreation Ground should read £1,891 and not £1,000.

Members **NOTED** the report.

- b. Members **NOTED** the balance sheet as at 31st October 2020.

- c. Members **NOTED** the income and expenditure to 31st October 2020.

- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 31st October 2020. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to **approve the bank reconciliations to 31st October 2020.**

- e. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to **approve payments from 31st October 2020 to date.**

7) Winter Flowers

It was **NOTED** that the order for winter floral displays in the town had been placed at a cost of £265, as agreed by the Mayor and RFO.

8) Security Alarm Contract

It was **NOTED** that the security alarm contract with Security Wise for the Corn Exchange and Guildhall had been extended for 12 months, from November 2020 to November 2021, at a total cost of £460, as agreed by the Mayor and RFO.

9) 2020/21 Budget

Members reviewed the draft budget prepared by the RFO and the working group. Councillors agreed to incorporate the amendments proposed by the RFO and to add in £2,000 towards new Christmas lights. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to recommend the draft budget of £266,104, with a precept of £213,553, to full Council for consideration.**

10) Grant Awards

- a. It was **NOTED** that a grant of £250 made to Crucial Crew in 2019 had been returned as it had not been possible to hold the event planned for 2020 due to the pandemic. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to put this money into reserves for next year's grant awards.**
- b. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the contribution of £250 to the Wenlock Herald should come from the Advertising and Publishing budget, rather than the grant budget.**
- c. It was **NOTED** that letters of thanks had been received from Wenlock Warriors, the Much Wenlock Windmill Preservation Trust and the Wenlock Olympian Games Live Arts Festival.

11) 10 High Street

Members **NOTED** a report from the working group. At their recent meeting, the group had reviewed suggestions for the future use of the premises. Common themes had emerged, such as the provision of Town Council services, the provision of office facilities for people working from home and a community hub, including suggestions for advice, social and recreational events. The group would now assess the viability of the proposals and follow up offers of support. The issue of business rates and ways of reducing this charge had also been discussed.

12) The Guildhall – Removal from List of Assets of Community Value

It was **NOTED** that the Guildhall had been removed from Shropshire Council's Register of Assets of Community Value on 27th October 2020 as the 5-year period of listing had expired. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED not to re-nominate the Guildhall for listing.**

13) The Guildhall – Repairs and Maintenance

- a. It was **NOTED** that the cupola on the Guildhall was in need of urgent repair. The Town Clerk had taken advice from Arrol Architects and would seek quotations for this work.
- b. Councillors noted essential repair work identified in the condition survey carried out in July 2018.

14) Olympian and other Information Panels

No progress had been made due to the lack of necessary equipment. Further endeavours would be made to obtain the required tools.

15) Telephone Kiosk at Homer

Members considered information received from British Telecom with regard to the removal of the telephone kiosk in Homer. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to request that BT disconnect the electricity to the telephone kiosk in Homer.**

16) Lighting up the Church Tower for Christmas

Members considered a request from Holy Trinity Church to allow a projector to be located in the Guildhall over the festive season to project Christmas images onto the Church. It was noted that a 'Happy Christmas from Much Wenlock Town Council' message, or similar, could be included. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to permit a projector to be located in the Guildhall over the festive season to project Christmas images onto the Church.**

17) Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance, Asset Management & HR Committee would be held on Tuesday, 26th January 2021 at 7.00pm.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the above Act it was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** that, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press should not be present.

18) Internal Audit

Members considered arrangements for the internal audit 2020/21. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to appoint Diane Malley to carry out an interim and final internal audit for 2020/21 at a cost of £500.**

19) Anti-Pigeon Measures for the Guildhall

Members gave further consideration to anti-pigeon measures for the Guildhall. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the quotation from Acute Pest Control for netting and spiking the gable end of the Guildhall at a cost of £1,800, and trapping, at a cost of £250 per week (estimated to be necessary for two months).**

20) The Guildhall

- a. Members considered quotations for cost reports for the condition survey and proposals prepared by Arrol Architects. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to accept the quotations from Wilf Jones of John Pidgeon Partnership for cost reports for condition surveys of the Guildhall, at a fixed fee of £650, and the Corn Exchange, at a fixed fee of £195.**
- b. Members **NOTED** correspondence received from outside agencies.

21) Mary Webb Room

Members considered options for the Mary Webb room.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to advertise the room for rental as an office, at an appropriate market rate.
In the meantime, the room should be left furnished as a meeting room and any opportunities for casual hire taken up.

22) 2 Burgage Way

As quotations for maintenance work were still awaited, **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.**

23) Linden Lodge

As quotations for maintenance work were still awaited, **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to defer consideration of this item to the next meeting.**

24) Personnel Matters

- a. It was **NOTED** that appraisals had been carried out for all employees.
- b. Members considered staff training requirements for the RFO and Administrative Assistant. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to support the RFO to undertake the CiLCA qualification and the Administrative Assistant to under the ILCA qualification, as outlined in the confidential report prepared by the Town Clerk.**
- c. Members considered the report on Gaskell Recreation Ground administration. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the Administrative Assistant should take on the role of Secretary and Treasurer to the Gaskell Recreation Ground, subject to agreement from the Charity, from 1st January 2021. It was RESOLVED to approve a commensurate increase in hours and pay, as outlined in the confidential report, in recognition of the additional responsibility.**

The meeting closed at 20.55pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....