

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, 23rd March 2021

Present:

Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr Natalie Park, Cllr Matthew Park, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter, Cllr Duncan White (from minute 12), Cllr Milner Whiteman

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Town Clerk, Diane Barlow –Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

1) Apologies

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to approve the following apologies: Cllr Herbert Harper – technical issues, Duncan White for late arrival due to attendance at a training course.

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 of the Finance, Asset Management & HR Committee meeting held on 26th January 2021 be **APPROVED** and signed as a true record.

5) Town Clerk's report

Members received a written and verbal report from the Town Clerk on action taken since the last meeting. Members noted that the benches in The Square had been moved to the agreed locations and the Clerk was asked to arrange for the pointing between the flagstones to be checked.

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. She advised that the year-end closedown of the accounts would be undertaken remotely by Rialtas on 26th May and the internal audit would be carried out on 1st June, in the office if restrictions allowed. The charity accounts had now been closed and the funds would go into charity reserves at the end of the financial year. A VAT refund of £4,196.22 had been received.
Members **NOTED** the report.
- b. Members **NOTED** the balance sheet as at 28th February 2021.
- c. Members **NOTED** the income and expenditure to 28th February 2021.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 28th February 2021. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to **approve the bank reconciliations to 28th February 2021**.
The RFO was asked to check the interest rate for the Public Sector Deposit Fund.
- e. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to approve payments from 27th January 2021 to date.

7) Bank Account Signatories

Members noted that new signatories would be required on the Council's bank accounts after the forthcoming election. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED** to recommend to full Council that **outgoing Councillors be removed from the mandates and that those Councillors who have confirmed that they will be standing for election be added as signatories and online authorisers**.

8) Internal Audit Report

Members reviewed the report from the interim internal audit dated 28th January 2021. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to accept the report.**

9) Pension Scheme: Annual Deficit Lump Sum Payment

Members noted that the deficit lump sum for 2021/22 would be £1,400 and that this would be paid to Shropshire County Pension Fund in the new financial year.

10) Gates for 2 Burgage Way

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to retrospectively approve an additional cost of £20 over the agreed budget of £650 for the new gates for the rear of 2 Burgage Way.

11) Asset Register

Following review, **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the revised asset register as at 31st March 2021, following the incorporation of agreed amendments.**

It was noted that the Town Council's street lights were not currently listed in the asset register. The RFO would take advice from the internal auditor on this matter.

12) Forward Planning Documents

- a. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to incorporate the Critical Commitments Strategy into the Asset Management Plan and Forward Plan, as appropriate.**

Councillor White joined the meeting.

- b.i. Members considered the latest version of the Forward Plan, which required considerable revision. It should include, among other additions, references to the Flood Group and related actions, the Transport Working Group and environmental matters. It was agreed that the Council should consider setting up a working group to revise the Forward Plan following the local elections.

- b.ii. Members considered the revised Asset Management Plan. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the revised Asset Management Plan.**

Members noted that more of the historic items owned by the Council could be displayed in the Guildhall if secure display cabinets were installed. A video display showing items owned by the Council which were displayed elsewhere might also be incorporated. Councillor Hill undertook to obtain a list of items held at Shropshire Archives on behalf of the Council. Improved displays could form part of the renovation of the building.

- c. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to defer consideration of the desired format of a Strategic Plan to the proposed working group of the new Council.**

13. Cemetery Allotments

Members considered a query from an allotment holder regarding the Council policy to permit no greenhouses or polytunnels on the Cemetery allotments. Members expressed concerns about the visual impact on the cemetery of such structures, the risk of vandalism and the environmental impact. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to maintain the current policy that no greenhouses or polytunnels be permitted on the Cemetery allotments.**

14. Olympian and other Information Panels

There had been no further progress with the repair or replacement of the information panels. Councillor Hill undertook to follow this up.

15. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Finance, Asset Management & HR Committee would be held on Tuesday, 25th May 2021 at 7.00pm, subject to confirmation at the Annual Town Council meeting.

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.

16. Pandemic Project

Members noted a report from Councillor Hill on the project to record the personal experiences of members of the Much Wenlock community during the Covid 19 pandemic. Around 65 contributions had been received. Help with the project was generously being provided by a local resident with experience in publishing. It was proposed to produce a hardback book for retention in the archives and paperback versions for sale. It was noted that the sales would help to offset the cost of publication. Councillors expressed their support for the project, which would provide a lasting record and would also raise the profile of the town.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to support publication of the ‘Wenlock Covid Chronicles’ and to allocate a budget of £1,100 to the project.

17. Telephone Kiosk in Homer

Members considered quotations to hand for the removal and disposal of the telephone kiosk in Homer. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to place the order for the work with DC Transport & Engineering at a cost of £450.** The funds should be taken from the contingency budget.

18. Guildhall Renovation

- a. Members noted the report on the repair of the Guildhall cupola and quotations received to date. It was suggested that other work to the roof and guttering could be carried out while scaffolding was in place.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to consider the repair of the cupola as a stand-alone item and to consider quotations at the full Council meeting on 15th April.

- b. Members considered the report on the Guildhall renovation and the scale of the work required. It was agreed that the Clerk should take advice from the Conservation Officer on how to approach the project and sources of potential funding. Contact should also be made with organisations that had carried out similar projects such as Bridgnorth Town Council and The Maltings in Shrewsbury. Consideration might be given to the appointment of a part-time project officer, possibly on a voluntary basis.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that consideration of the Guildhall renovation should be discussed as a priority item by the new Council.

19. Opening of The Guildhall to the Public

Members considered a report on the above.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to re-open the Guildhall on Friday, 21st May, providing the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions proceeded as currently planned by central government.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that the staffing rota and paid hours for current Guildhall Custodians should run from 21st May for the 2021 season, with provision for additional hours prior to this date, if required.

20. Personnel Matters

- a. Members noted the report on staff annual leave. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to allow remaining annual leave for identified members of staff to be carried over into the next financial year.**
- b. Members noted the report on the increase in national minimum wage and salary increments. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to implement the new national minimum wage and to approve the salary increments for the Clerk and RFO following satisfactory performance as per their contracts of employment.**
- c. Members noted an update on the recruitment of a new Guildhall Custodian.

The meeting closed at 20.55 pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....