

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE & ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
meeting held at the Corn Exchange, Much Wenlock
5.30 pm on Tuesday 26th March 2019

Present:

Cllr. Graham Edgcumbe Venning (Chairman), Cllr. Adam Davy, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak and Cllr. Marcus Themans.

In attendance:

Trudi Barrett – Locum Town Clerk.

1) Chairman's welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr. Allan Walter, who was on holiday.

This apology was ACCEPTED and AGREED as APPROVED absence.

3) 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.

None declared.

4) Dispensations

None requested.

5) Minutes

The minutes from a Finance & Asset Management Committee meeting held on 26th February 2019 were considered for approval.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that the minutes be APPROVED and signed as a true record.

6) Town Clerk's report

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

It was noted that Shropshire Council planned to commence external decoration of the museum on 29th April 2019 and the work was expected to take one to two weeks, depending on weather.

Councillors were pleased to note that sponsorship had been obtained from a local company for the supply and installation of the car park fence at the rear of the Corn Exchange.

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

7) Internal Audit

Councillors **NOTED** that the Internal Auditor had carried out interim audits on 4th February and 14th March 2019 and considered the report submitted. The auditor had cross referenced the areas examined to control objectives on the Annual Governance and Accounting Statement. In most cases the control objectives had been met, however, the auditor drew attention to a number of areas requiring attention. Councillors noted the auditor's comments, in particular the following recommendations, to which the Committee's response is shown in italics:

- a. Since August 2019 payments in excess of £500 have not been uploaded to the Council's website.
This was in hand: the temporary RFO was currently revising the list for uploading to the website.
- b. A Strategic Plan and linked Strategic Financial Plan as required by the Council's Financial Regulations does not currently exist and would assist in developing projects and in the budget/precept setting process.
The Clerk was asked to seek advice from the internal auditor on how best to address this matter and the recommended format for the Plans. The accounting software provider, RBS, should also be consulted to ensure the most useful reports were being generated from the system.

- c. Overall the control objective D has been met however the financial future of the Council remains unclear and requires immediate attention.
This would be addressed as part of b. above.
- d. I would recommend that the petty cash is balanced on a regular end of month basis to reduce the risk of minor errors.
This recommendation had been implemented.
- e. It is recommended that the RFO prepares year end accounting summaries for both (Thorn Pudsey Account and Barnados Morris & Cooke Account) and Council review whether there remains a need for the accounts or whether they too can be closed.
A report would be prepared for the Committee following completion of the year end accounts.

8) Finance

- a) Councillors **NOTED** the financial report from the temporary Responsible Financial Officer. The Clerk was asked to query with the temporary RFO the deficit in heading 4004 Pension Contributions.
- b) **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to note the balance sheet for February 2019.**
- c) **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that income and expenditure for February 2019 be NOTED.**
- d) **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that receipts and payments for February 2019 be APPROVED.**
- e) **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that bank reconciliations to the end of February 2019 be APPROVED.**
- f) **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that payments for March 2019 be APPROVED.**

9) Shropshire County Pension Fund Deficit

- a. Councillors noted that Shropshire Council had advised that the Pension Fund deficit payment due for the year 2019/20 would be £3,000. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to approve payment.**
- b. Councillors noted that provision for this payment had not been made in the Council budget and that a virement was likely to be necessary.

10) Budget 2019/20

Councillors noted that the internal auditor had identified an omission in the 2019/20 budget: no provision had been made for PAYE of £4,560. It was likely that a virement would be necessary to cover this cost.

11) Street lighting insurance

Councillors noted that the cost of additional all risks cover for the Council's street lights would be £744.65 p.a.

In view of the rare incidences of damage, **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED that no cover would be taken out.**

12) Gaskell Recreation Ground

- a. Councillors noted that a Section 81 Demolition Notice was required from Shropshire Council for the demolition of the toilet block on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to approve the cost of £126.00 + VAT.**
- b. Councillors noted that the combined cost of the survey and legal fees for the licence to use Shropshire Council land for storage during the agreed drainage work would be £570, £70 above the budget set. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to approve the additional expenditure of £70.**

13) Play Equipment

Councillors considered quotations for replacement swings on the Gaskell Recreation Ground. The Locum Clerk advised that there was no budget for this expenditure as the Council made an annual grant to the Gaskell Recreation Ground and such expenses were expected to be covered by this grant. Should the Committee wish to purchase replacement swings, funds would need to be found in an underspent budget heading (should any be available) or taken from the general reserve. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to award the contract for the supply and installation of two flat swings and two baby swings to Play and Leisure at a cost of £740 + VAT.**

14) Town Markets

Members of the Media, Marketing and Tourism working group had met representatives from local businesses, the Christmas Fayre and other interested parties to discuss the possibility of regular markets in the town as well as one large, additional annual event. There had been a generally positive response to the idea. It was noted that a calendar of town events would help with setting dates. Rather than rely on volunteers, a commercial organisation might take on responsibility for the organisation of the events and the group was exploring opportunities. The working group would continue research and discussions with relevant individuals and organisations and would report back to the full Council on 4th April.

15) Christmas Lights

Due to pressure of time, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

16) Corn Exchange & Guildhall

Due to pressure of time, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

17) Date of next meeting

Councillors noted that the next meeting would take place on 23rd April 2019 at 5.30pm at the Corn Exchange.

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) Linden Lodge

- a. Councillors considered a property survey and recommendations for Linden Lodge. It was noted that the demolition of the adjacent toilet block (recommendation 5.2) was in hand. The report did not indicate any problems with the drainage system, so a CCTV survey was not deemed necessary. The tenant / Town Handyman would be asked to reduce the level of the flower bed at the north-east corner of the building. The Clerk was asked to obtain quotations for remaining recommended work which was the responsibility of the landlord.
- b. Councillors noted damage to the garden fence caused by high winds. Having considered quotations to hand, **it was PROPOSED, SECONDED and unanimously RESOLVED to award the contract for replacing the fence to CVS at a cost of £655.**
- c. Consideration of future options for Linden Lodge was deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....