

08/20

MUCH WENLOCK TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a
FINANCE, ASSET MANAGEMENT & HR COMMITTEE
 meeting held remotely by video conference
 at 7.00 pm on Tuesday, 20th October 2020

Present:

Clr. Herbert Harper, Cllr. Mary Hill, Cllr. Yvonne Holyoak, Cllr. Dafydd Jenkins, Cllr. Natalie Park, Cllr. Marcus Themans, Cllr. Daniel Thomas, Cllr. Allan Walter, 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:** Councillor Matthew Park – work 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 29th September 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.

It was noted that the second and final claim for LEADER funding had now been received.

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.

The first draft of the 2021/22 budget had been prepared by the RFO and Clerk and distributed to the working group. The RFO noted that there had been no expenditure so far this year on Town Celebrations or Climate Change. There was £700 remaining in the budget for Mayoral Civic Events. The first payment for library services would be made this year, in the amount of £9,180.

With regard to income, 46.4% of the budgeted income had been received from market stalls at the Corn Exchange and there was interest from additional stall holders. Some of the previous traders had not returned to the Buttermarket under the Guildhall since the lockdown and income was 32% under budget for this time of the year.

It was noted that there was £641 in reserves for the purchase of a fire-proof cabinet for the archive room, which had yet to be purchased.

It was **RESOLVED to NOTE the report.**

- b. Members **NOTED** the balance sheet as at 30th September 2020.
- c. Members **NOTED** the income and expenditure to 30th September 2020.
- d. Members reviewed the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2020. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the bank reconciliations to 30th September 2020.**
- e. It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve payments from 30th September 2020 to date.**

7) Online Year End Closedown and Annual Return Preparation

Members considered the appointment of Rialtas to carry out the online year end closedown and annual return preparation.

It was **PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to appoint Rialtas to carry out the online year end closedown and annual return preparation at a cost of £560.**

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8) 2021/22 Budget

Members noted that the RFO and Clerk had prepared a first draft of the budget for further consideration by the working group. It was agreed that the working group would meet remotely on Tuesday, 10th November at 6.30 pm to consider the draft budget.

9) Grant Awards

Members considered grant applications from local organisations.

Councillor Hill declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Live Arts Festival Committee.

Councillor Holyoak declared a non-pecuniary interest in the British Legion.

Councillor Hill advised that the Wenlock Olympian Games Live Arts Festival wished to reduce their grant application from £500 to £225 as no insurance would be required this year.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to consider a contribution to the Wenlock Herald from the Advertising and Publishing budget at the next Finance, Asset Management and HR Committee meeting, rather than from the grant budget.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to make the following awards:

£225 for Wenlock Olympian Games Live Arts Festival

£283.80 for Wenlock Warriors Football Club for a line marking machine

£50.00 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

£600 towards maintenance of Holy Trinity Church Green

£300 for the Much Wenlock Windmill Preservation Trust towards the erection of a new fence and planting of new trees and shrubs

Councillors requested that the financial contribution from the Town Council to the upkeep of the Church Green and to the Windmill Preservation Trust be acknowledged on appropriate notices.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to retain £541.20 as an earmarked reserve for the grant budget for 2021.

10) 10 High Street

Members noted a report on progress from the working group.

The external decoration of the lower front of the building had now been completed. The next stage would be to consider internal refurbishment. Public consultation on the future use of the building would finish at the end of the month, when suggestions would be collated. Councillors were requested to pass on any suggestions received to the Clerk.

11) The Square

Councillors considered changes to The Square to improve usability and accessibility. A number of Councillors had met on site to consider options and had identified alternative locations for the three benches in the centre of The Square, which would still allow those seated to look towards the Guildhall, but would leave a larger open space.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to move the benches to the new locations and to move the roundel to another location, to be determined at a later date.

It was noted that some of the paving slabs were uneven and in need of re-pointing.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to arrange a meeting with Wenlock Estates to discuss moving the benches and to raise concerns about the condition of the paving and how this might be addressed.

12) Olympian and other Information Panels

Councillor Hill had been advised that when the information panels were produced, it had been decided to put an exact copy of the information on the underside of the display boards. This would allow the panels to be inverted when they became worn and the other side to be displayed. However, the panels had been fitted with anti-vandal bolts and these would need to be ground off to check the underside. The matter was progressing.

It was RESOLVED to NOTE the report.

13) Telephone Kiosk at Homer

Members noted a newsletter issued by the Homer and Wigwig Community Group regarding the telephone kiosk in Homer and a report on a recent meeting held with the group by the Mayor. The Mayor had discussed the possibility of locating a defibrillator in the kiosk, but the community was adamant that the telephone kiosk should be removed. They wished to place a Christmas tree in that location.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to arrange for the removal of the telephone kiosk.

Officers would make appropriate arrangements.

14) Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 24th November 2020 at 7.00pm.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00pm.

PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

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

15) Anti-Pigeon Measures for the Guildhall

Members considered additional information obtained regarding options for anti-pigeon measures for the Guildhall. The RFO had contacted pest control companies, the Public Protection Officer and Conservation Officer at Shropshire Council, Natural England and Defra. The Conservation Officer had advised that Wenlock Priory engage a falconer to visit once per annum and contact had therefore been made with English Heritage to enquire about the success of this method of dealing with the pigeons. Various methods of control were discussed, including sonic devices.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Contego for removing the existing pigeon spikes, cleaning the ledges and installing new spikes at a cost of £1,744.49 + VAT.

If necessary, other options would be considered at a later date.

16) Guildhall Proposals

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to defer to the next meeting consideration of quotations for cost reports for the proposals for the Guildhall prepared by Arrol Architects.

17) Mary Webb Room

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to defer to the next meeting consideration of options for the future use of the Mary Webb room.

18) Litter Picking Equipment

Members considered a request from the volunteer litter pickers for additional equipment. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to proceed with 20 sponsored hi-visibility vests and to purchase a handcart at a cost of £105.99 + £5 delivery.**

19) Remembrance Day Commemoration

Members considered a proposal for the Remembrance Day commemoration.

It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to commission Illuminate Audio Visual Effects to project a Remembrance Day image onto the church building for the period 1st to 12th November at a cost of £700 + VAT.

20) 2 Burgage Way

- a. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to formally approve a one-year contract for the supply of gas to 10 High Street and 2 Burgage Way.**
- b. Members noted an update on other arrangements regarding the gas supply to the property. It was noted that a local gas engineer would be required to provide additional information.
- c. It was noted that quotations for work to the rear gate of 2 Burgage Way were still awaited.

21) Linden Lodge

- a. It was noted that the order had been placed for levelling of the uneven paving slabs in the garden of Linden Lodge.
- b. It was noted that quotations were awaited for other work required.

22) Guildhall Staffing

Members noted that the Head Custodian at the Guildhall would be retiring at the end of the season. **It was PROPOSED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to formally thank her for her long service and to mark the occasion of her retirement with a gift.**

The meeting closed at 9.35 pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....