

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2018**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 7.24 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Clive Webb (Chairman), Ray Armstrong (S), Roger Bailey, Peter Crew, James Davis, Peter Fox, Denise Hunt, Michal Kus, Richard Nightingale and Lisa Pilgrim.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm L Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO) Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer) and Vicky Angear (Weston Mercury).

<b>113.</b>	<p><b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Canniford and Catherine Gibbons with no substitutions and Councillor Robert Payne who was substituted by Councillor Ray Armstrong.</p> <p>It was noted that Councillor Peter Crew may be late joining the meeting.</p>
<b>114.</b>	<p><b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p> <p><i>Councillor Peter Crew joined the meeting at 7.01 pm.</i></p>
<b>115.</b>	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2018</b></p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Fox</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<b>116.</b>	<p><b>The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance</b></p> <p>Both sets of minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance held on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2018 (approved) and 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018 (unapproved) be noted.</p>
<b>117.</b>	<p><b>Monthly Financial Reports: January and February 2018</b></p> <p><b>a) For Approval</b></p>

	<p>Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for May &amp; June 2018 be approved.</p> <p><b>b) For Noting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Bank Reconciliations</li> <li>ii. Budgetary Control Report</li> <li>iii. Bank Interest Report</li> <li>iv. Schedule of Receipted Income</li> <li>v. Income Analysis</li> <li>vi. Overspend Month End Report</li> </ul> <p>A member highlighted that the Blakehay bar was still in deficit and anticipated discussion at the next Expenditure &amp; Governance Working Party meeting where it would be discussed.</p> <p>In response to this, a member explained that until any investment in the bar was made, there could be no real improvement.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That reports 5b i – vi for May &amp; June 2018 be noted.</p>
<p><b>118.</b></p>	<p><b>Milton Road Cemetery wall</b>  The covering report of the Deputy Town Clerk and quotation report of the Town Council’s Surveyor had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk advised that both reports were self explanatory making a recommendation to enter into negotiations with contractor who had submitted the lowest quote, received at £27,000, which was within budget.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed that the council had worked satisfactorily with both contactors mentioned within the report before and was happy to endorse the recommendation.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Clive Webb  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve the recommendations within the surveyors report and appoint SM Babbage Ltd to undertake works as per the specification to the value of £27,000 with works commencing as soon as possible.</p>
<p><b>119.</b></p>	<p><b>Blakehay Buddies Report</b>  The report of the Theatre Manager had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p>

	<p>At present the Blakehay had 20 active ‘Buddies’ signed up to the scheme at an annual cost of £10 for a years membership of which they received;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Buddy Card</li> <li>2. A plaque in the foyer (costing £5 to purchase the plaques)</li> <li>3. A copy of the Brochure sent to them in the post</li> <li>4. Invite to a Social evening in January</li> </ol> <p>As the Blakehay now bought in its own shows, the Theatre Manager would like to be able to give the buddies a few more incentives to sign up and therefore suggested;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Raise the cost of an individual Buddy to £15.00</li> <li>b) Introduce a Couples’ Buddy at £20 (including 1 plaque)</li> </ol> <p>The increased perks of this would be;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A Buddy Card</li> <li>2. A plaque in the foyer</li> <li>3. A copy of the brochure sent to them in the post</li> <li>4. Invite to a social evening in January</li> <li>5. 50p off tickets at Film Nights</li> <li>6. £1 off tickets for buyout shows</li> </ol> <p>This was hoped to encourage more people to sign up for the scheme and be regular visitors to the theatre, starting the new charges from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018.</p> <p>The Deputy Town Clerk explained that because it was a change to the approved charging schedule, it needed committee approval. It was a promotional scheme to encourage more people through the doors of the Blakehay and she was happy to support the recommendations of the Theatre Manager.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To Raise the cost of an individual Buddy to £15.00</li> <li>2. Introduce a Couples’ Buddy at £20.00</li> <li>3. Introduce a discount system for shows.</li> </ol>
<p><b>120.</b></p>	<p><b>Easement for Cable Across Allotment Sites</b></p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that a company called Surf Telecoms wished to erect a new fibre-optic cable on the overhead pylon lines which traverse land the Town Council owned and managed at Old Mill Way and Hutton Moor allotment sites.</p> <p>Surf Telecoms were a subsidiary of Western Power Distribution and wanted to replace the earth wire (the top wire on the pylon) with an earth wire with a</p>

	<p>fibres optic cable wrapped around it. The proposed cable would have no practical effect on allotment holders, however the consent of every landowner over whose land it passed was required to grant the necessary legal 'easement'.</p> <p>They were therefore offering a one-off easement payment to each landowner of land that the easement crossed, including North Somerset Council. North Somerset Council and other landowners had appointed Greenslade Taylor Hunt, chartered surveyors who were experienced in such matters, to represent them. It made sense for all the land owners to act together to negotiate a common payment sum per metre length and their costs would be paid by Surf Telecoms. Following informal consultation with group leaders the Town Clerk had therefore appointed Greenslade Taylor Hunt to also represent the Town Council.</p> <p>In response to members querying the payment amount, the Town Clerk verbally reported that the payment sum should be in the region of £14,000.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Fox</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To authorise the Town Clerk to grant an easement to Surf Telecoms for a fibre optic cable across the Old Mill Way and Hutton Moor allotment sites.</p>
<p><b>121.</b></p>	<p><i>At this point in the meeting, Councillor Richard Nightingale declared a personal interest as he sponsored 3 of the dig bins.</i></p> <p><b>Review of the Dog Bin Contract</b></p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk was available to view at the meeting which requested an instruction from members.</p> <p>The report gave the background of the dog bin emptying contract since 2003. In 2014 indication had been received from North Somerset Council that their current dog bin emptying service was being heavily subsidised by them. Consequently, they confirmed that in April 2015 the cost for the service having increased from £1 per bin per empty would triple from £2 to £6.</p> <p>After work was carried out including investigation of alternative providers, a survey of dog bins, and discussions with Clevedon and Portishead Town Councils, it was agreed to conduct a joint procurement process on behalf of all three town councils, who between them had around 100 bins.</p> <p>By far the most professional and thorough bid received was from Bin-It Ltd of London. Accordingly a contract had been awarded to Bin-It Ltd for three years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.</p> <p>The contract had largely been carried out, however there had been blips. There were three missed collections in March 2018 and one late collection and the Town Clerk had demanded a reduction in the bill. It was understood that the heavy snow caused particular difficulties but in the light of this the contract</p>

had been extended from 1<sup>st</sup> April for 6 months rather than 3 years.

Unfortunately the council had experienced continuing problems with the service with a number of further dates of missed collections: In addition complaints from the public had been received of dog bins overflowing and not being collected for over a week (and in some cases two weeks) on several occasions.

What had been particularly frustrating was the lack of communication from Bin-It when there were genuine problems. On more than one occasion, most recently on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> July, the officers had only found out that Bin-It were unable to make the collection following complaints from members of the public. When Bin-It were contacted, they had promised that the bins would be emptied early on Wednesday, but this did not happen and the bins were eventually emptied only on the Friday of that week.

The council had since received communication from the company's new office manager, apologising for the lack of communication and promising to be contactable in future.

The distant location of the contractor had undoubtedly led to some of the problems and informal enquiries had been made to see if more locally based operators may be interested in providing the service. At the time of writing the report no definite offers had been received.

North Somerset Council had been contacted but had indicated that their contractor may not be able to provide a bin emptying service. If they did so the cost would likely be significantly higher than at present. In the meantime a decision was needed as to how long to extend the current contract from 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and the following options were available to the committee:

1. Commence a fresh procurement process with decision at Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> October for service to commence 1<sup>st</sup> December.
2. Extend the Bin-It contract for 12 months to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and in the meantime further review performance and other options
3. Extend the Bin-It contract for 6 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and meantime review performance and other options

By liaising with Clevedon and Nailsea Town Councils the number of bins would double to make a bid worthwhile and cost effective for a potential contractor. Informal discussions with Clevedon had suggested a fresh procurement process. Nailsea however had stated that Bin It were 'doing a good job in general'.

Every option carried some risks. A fresh procurement process risked a cost increase or not being able to procure a service at all, but may result in a better service longer term. Extending the contract for 6 or 12 months risked further patchy or poor performance but would give an opportunity to further evaluate Bin-It's service with their new office manager in post.

The Town Clerk informed that at present, he had no alternative solution and therefore leaned towards option no.3 as felt it was the most prudent option at this time.

	<p>Debate ensued. A member supported extending the current contract, however would like the council to focus on improving the contractor's performance as she regularly received complaints regarding emptied bins</p> <p>In response to a question, the Town Clerk informed that specific bins were emptied according to usage either once or twice a week.</p> <p>A member specifically requested monitoring in relation to bins sited at Spinners End, Worle.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Denise Hunt <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To extend the Bin-It contract for 6 months to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 and in the meantime to review performance and other options.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.25 pm</p>

Signed.....  
Chairman

Dated.....