

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 19TH FEBRUARY 2018**

Meeting Commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Clive Webb (Chairman), Roger Bailey, Mark Canniford, Peter Crew, Clive Darke, James Davis (S), Peter Fox, Catherine Gibbons, Mike Lyall, Richard Nightingale and Lisa Pilgrim.

IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm L Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Deputy Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer), Helen Morton (Responsible Financial Officer) Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Beverly and Sarah Milner Simonds (Eat: Weston) and Sarah Robinson (Weston & Somerset Mercury).

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| 350 | <p>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michal Kus who was substituted by Councillor James Davis; and from Councillor Robert Payne with no substitution.</p> |
| 351 | <p>To receive Declarations of Interest Councillor Richard Nightingale declared a future pecuniary interest in item 8 Contract Renewal of Dog Bin Emptying and would leave the room while it was discussed.</p> |
| 352 | <p>To approve the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 18th December 2017 The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Mike Lyall</p> <p>It was noted that minute number 286.4 the word ‘aided’ needed to be deleted.</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That with the above amendment the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p> |
| 353 | <p>The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance To note the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance held on 4th September 2017 (approved) and 6th November 2017 (unapproved)</p> <p>Both sets of minutes had previously been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> |
| 353.1 | 1. That the minutes of the 4 th September 2017 meeting be approved. |
| 353.2 | 2. That the minutes of the 6 th November 2017 meeting be noted. |

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| | <p><i>At this point in the meeting at 7.04 pm, Standing Orders were suspended to enable members of the public to address the meeting.</i></p> <p>Beverly Milner Simonds addressed the meeting in support of the grant application for Eat: Weston for a festival which was being discussed under agenda item 10 and added that she was happy to answer any questions.</p> <p>Beverly confirmed that the festival was fully signed up to the cleaner coastal campaign and would be a completely single use plastic free event.</p> <p><i>Standing Orders were resumed at 7.07 pm</i></p> |
| <p>354</p> <p>354.1</p> | <p>Monthly Financial Reports: November and December 2017</p> <p>a) For Approval Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for November and December 2017 be approved.</p> <p>b) For Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Bank Reconciliations ii. Budgetary Control Report iii. Bank Interest Report iv. Schedule of Receipted Income v. Income Analysis vi. Overspend Month End Report <p>A member requested a clarity on vi. Overspend Month End Report, particularly in respect of Museum stock/café/shop and cleaning materials at Grove House and Lodge.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer explained that the Museum budget for the year 2017 /2018, when set in January 2017, did not reflect the current operation with regard to the Café. Subsequently a model was being worked as later approved by the Committee but not reflected in the original budget. The amounts were in line with the business plan that had been submitted prior to opening the café.</p> <p>In relation to the retail stock budget – the original £7,000 was intended for start up stock and it was felt that for this year stock would only be replenished when sold which was what had occurred. Budget provision for 2018 / 2019 reflected needs based on performance this year.</p> <p>The reason for the overspend on cleaning materials at Grove House and Lodge was to reflect the decision made to contract out the cleaning rather than directly employ a cleaner. A counteracting saving had been made in staffing costs.</p> |

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| <p>354.2</p> | <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That reports 5b i – vi for November and December 2017 be noted.</p> |
| <p>355</p> | <p>To Approve the Museum Charging schedule for 2018/2019 The Museum charging schedule had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer had worked with the Museum team to present the charges and that various changes had been made as follows:</p> <p>The learning space packages. A daytime only package had been added and an option to include flasks of tea and coffee.</p> <p>Refreshment packages now to include Children’s parties of which there had been four held to date and were proving popular. These included a Twilight Package, home schoolers taking advantage of the facility and the Rusty Club (Saturday morning club).</p> <p>Menus had not been fully costed as the Museum was awaiting the new Café Supervisor, who would develop new menus, to take up her post in late March.</p> <p>A member was concerned that the package prices to include tea and coffee were considerably cheap and recommended that they be reviewed.</p> <p>A further member explained that the cost of tea and coffee could be built into the cost of the hire price therefore, conceptually looks more attractive to the customer.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Museum Charging schedule for 2018/2019 be approved subject to any amendments by the <i>Museum</i> and Heritage Sub Committee at their next meeting on 12th April 2018.</p> |
| <p>356</p> | <p>Homelessness Project The Town Clerk’s report had been previously circulated with the agenda. At its meeting on 22nd January the Council had made provision of a sum of £25,000 in the Council’s budget for 2018/19 towards the issue of rough sleepers and homelessness.</p> <p>The report indicated that there were a number of existing services that were working to try and target the issue. The report suggested that it was not the Town Council’s role to replicate existing statutory or voluntary sector services. However there did appear to be a growing consensus that there were a number of rough sleepers in Weston (although the exact numbers are</p> |

disputed) who would benefit from provision of a night shelter. Therefore, the Town Clerk had researched the position with particular reference to rough sleeping in Weston and the possibility of a night shelter being established.

The Town Clerk had met with Kevil Lilwall and Joe Heslop from the YMCA who provided the 'Nightstop' service of emergency accommodation for young people aged up to 25. In addition the YMCA undertakes a regular count of rough sleepers in the town.

He had also met with Lynn Trigg and a colleague who headed up North Somerset Council's Housing team who take the view that rough sleeping has not increased in Weston but agree that provision of a night shelter would be desirable. Following a 'Homelessness Summit' in 2017 North Somerset has set up a strategic Single and Street Homelessness Partnership. At the meeting David Ingerslev from St. Mongos, a homelessness charity operating in Bristol, was present and had advised that the Town Council should be invited to send a representative.

Thirdly the Town Clerk had met with Gary Hoare and Margaret and Mike Cooper of Churches Together, who currently ran the Winter Warmth service. Under this seven churches on a rotating basis provide a hot meal for homeless people at zero or very low cost every night. He had also met with representatives of Somewhere to Go which was a charity based at St John's Hall on the Boulevard. Somewhere to Go provided a day service on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays where hot meals and washing facilities are available. In addition statutory and voluntary sector advice services are made available. They agreed that Weston needed a night shelter and were working with Churches Together to seek to achieve that aim.

The Town Clerk had made contact with the Weston Homelessness Facebook Group and a number of other concerned individuals who had approached the Town Council having read press reports of the financial allocation made.

A Weston-super-Mare Night Shelter Project Group had held its first meeting in December 2017 involving 44 members of the public and statutory bodies representing many of the key agencies engaged in supporting the homeless in Weston. The Town Clerk had attended the second meeting on 8th February 2018. The group had affirmed its aim to get night shelter provision up and running by Autumn 2018. The potential availability of £25,000 from the Town Council had been warmly welcomed by all groups. The Town Clerk had made it clear that his role was to research the current position and report back to town councillors who would decide exactly how the money was to be spent. The Town Council did not intend to set up its own service but to make the money available to the community, but councillors would have to be satisfied that a viable and sustainable night shelter project could be achieved.

The Town Clerk advised that the Council can most usefully contribute by focussing its resource on one specific project of establishment of a night shelter in Weston rather than attempting to support a number of different areas. He believed that given the work already being undertaken, primarily by members of the public in the local community, this is a realistic goal.

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| | <p>The Town Clerk was happy to continue researching the matter and reporting back. However it would be helpful to have a small and informal group of town councillors, if available, to accompany him and directly engage with the community groups above rather than by holding formal working party meetings at Grove House. He suggested three councillors would be the ideal group to do this.</p> <p>Debate ensued.</p> <p>A member confirmed that a meeting of the Single and Street Homelessness Partnership had taken place which she had attended in another capacity and that it had been questioned why the town council had not been invited.</p> <p>The town council needed to be more ambitious and look to help provide a Healthy Living Centre like the one provided in South Ward.</p> <p>It was reported that North Somerset Council were working towards providing a facility within central ward by 2020 and that all the town council needed to be working collaboratively with them to achieve this.</p> <p>Members were invited to be part of the working group also. It was suggested that as a central ward Councillor, Robert Payne may like to be part of the working group.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To agree that the £25,000 be targeted at the specific project of establishing a night shelter for rough sleepers. 2. To establish a small informal working group of three/four councillors (Catherine Gibbons, Richard Nightingale, James Davis and possibly Robert Payne) to work alongside the Town Clerk in researching the issue of rough sleeping. 3. To appoint one or two representatives (TBA) to the Single and Street Homelessness Partnership. |
| <p>357</p> | <p><i>At the point in the meeting, Councillor Richard Nightingale left the meeting at 7.39pm</i></p> <p>Contract Renewal for Dog Bin emptying The Town Clerk's report had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that the Council had entered into a contract with Bin-It Ltd for the dog bin emptying service for a period of three years to 31st March 2018. Clevedon and Nailsea Town Councils had also accepted the quotation and since then a number of other parish councils had come on board with them.</p> <p>The contract is therefore now due for renewal on 1st April 2018. Normally under Standing Order 39 the council would seek competitive quotations for a</p> |

contract of this scale. However no large waste contractors had been interested in 2013 and very few small companies offered the service, the nearest that could be found being in London and the Midlands. With a few hiccups the council have had a generally good service from Bin-It. Changing at this time would also result in uncertainty in a continued reliable service as the new contractor, if the council could find one, would have to come from a long distance to set up the service, locate all the bins and set up safe and practicable working methods. In addition, most service contracts, for example for Christmas Lights or Planned Maintenance, are for longer than 3 years.

Standing Order 39.2 9 (d)(iv) contains an exception for the purchase of materials normally supplied by specialist contractors. This was analogous to the position with dog bin emptying but technically did not apply to a contract for a *service* supplied by a specialist contractor.

For their part Bin-It Ltd had confirmed that they are happy to continue the contract on existing terms and at the existing price, subject only to annual inflation (CPI) as at present. This therefore offered cost certainty to a contract that had been competitively tested only 3 years ago.

The contract might not be viable unless it was satisfactory to Clevedon Town Council and Nailsea Town Council, the two biggest partners by far, which between them roughly double the number of bins to be emptied. The Town Clerk had therefore consulted with Clevedon Town Council and Nailsea Town Council, both of whom had confirmed in writing that they would want to extend the contract with Bin-It Ltd.

The Town Clerk had consulted with the Responsible Financial Officer who agreed that in the circumstances and for the reasons set out above an exception should be made to Standing Orders to permit the extension of the contract with Bin It Ltd for a further three years to 31st March 2021.

Sufficient budget provision had been made in the Council's budget for 2018/19.

Debate ensued. The service performance of the company was queried to which the Town Clerk informed that this had been mostly satisfactory. He confirmed that the main point of contact for dog bin queries was the Community and Grounds Administrator.

Complaints were voiced about the state of some of the bins and the way in which the vehicles access the bins with no care for the grass in Ashcombe Park. The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council's bins were cleaned under the contract agreement and the bins referred in the park to were those of North Somerset Council. A dual hatted member would bring this up at North Somerset Council's Waste Committee.

It was queried whether the council had looked into the possibility of anaerobic dog waste disposal. A member requested details of this, which he promised to bring up at North Somerset Council's scrutiny committee.

PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew

SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey

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| | <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That as an exception to Standing Order 39 the contract with Bin-It Dog Waste Solutions Ltd for emptying of dog bins be extended for a period of three years from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2021.</p> <p><i>Councillor Richard Nightingale re joined the meeting at 7.49 pm</i></p> |
| <p>358</p> | <p>To note the change to the payment method for the Chairman’s allowance 2018/2019</p> <p>The Civic Consultation Minute Extract had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer clarified that ‘Chairman’ referred to the Town Mayor and informed that that a best practice audit had identified that the Mayor’s honorarium must be paid via the PAYE system and comply with HMRC regulations. The Council had been advised that Mayors should declare the honorarium as income. The impact on possible taxation was a matter for the individual and HMRC. The Council had a duty to police the matter in the future.</p> <p>A member suggested why expenses could not be claimed quarterly to which the Responsible Financial Officer advised that not all expenses were tax deductible.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford SECONDED BY: Councillor Richard Nightingale</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the payment would now be called the ‘Chairman’s Allowance’ and would be paid quarterly via the PAYE system with the first payment under the new system to be made on 30th June 2018.</p> |
| <p>359</p> | <p>To consider the grant application from Eat Festivals</p> <p>The Finance Officer’s report and the grant application had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Eat:Weston was a community festival promoting local food and drink. It was free to attend, sited in the town centre, with entertainment and education stalls. Each festival will cater for around 25,000 visitors, bringing them to the centre of the town.</p> <p>The application was asking for Town Council support for two Eat:Weston community events, to be held on the Italian Gardens and Weston High Street on Saturday April 7th and Saturday September 22nd 2018. The grant of £1,250 for each event would cover costs associated with entertainment and educational elements.</p> <p>The grant application had been brought to the Policy and Finance Committee for discussion based on the nearness of the 7th April event to the financial year end on 31st March 2018. There had been no budget set aside for Tourism and</p> |

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| | <p>Leisure events in the 2018/2019 budget, already approved by the Town Council on 22nd January 2018 and therefore the application could not be an item for discussion at that committee.</p> <p>The balance of the 2017/2018 Tourism and Leisure events budget, at the end of January 2018, was £4,500.</p> <p>A grant had previously been awarded, from the Tourism and Leisure events budget to the organisation of £1,500, for another event in August 2017. As stated under the Town Council grant criteria, normally (<i>3. An organisation may only make one application for a grant in each financial year</i>). This was considered by the Committee to be unnecessarily restrictive.</p> <p>With regard to the 2018/2019 budget, all grant applications from 1st April 2018, including Tourism events grant requests, are to be considered at Community Services committee meetings. The Committee had a grant budget of £7,500 for 2018/2019.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Mark Canniford SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support and award the grant request for the 7th April 2018 event at a cost of £1,250, to be allocated to the 2017/2018 Tourism and Leisure events budget. 2. That criterion 3 (<i>3. An organisation may only make one application for a grant in each financial year</i>) be removed from the Town Council grant criteria. 3. That the 22nd September 2018 event grant request be taken for consideration to the Community Services committee meeting on 14th May 2018. |
| | <p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.00 pm</p> |

Signed.....
Chairman

Dated.....