

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7.30 PM

Present: Councillors S Jones (Chair)
 A Dodwell
 D Bowater
 C Palmer
 R Berry
 M Freeman
 S Owen
 S Hemmings (substituting for T Morris)

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, Town Clerk
 S Sandiford, Head of Democratic and Central
 Services
 M Jahn, Committee Officer
 S Perry (Senior Administration Officer)
 C Payne (Inspiring Music) – part meeting
 Cllr V Harvey

Members of the public: 0
Members of the press 0

102/PF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor T Morris (substituted by Councillor S Hemmings), Councillor G Perham, Councillor R Goodchild and Councillor D Scott.

103/PF DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

Councillor C Palmer declared a personal interest in the agenda item on volunteering as a member of Friends of Leighton-Linslade in Bloom and Friends of Linslade Woods.

Councillors Dodwell and Berry declared a personal interest in the agenda item on volunteering as members of Street Watch.

Councillor M Freeman declared a personal interest in the multi-generational music project item as a member of the Leighton-Linslade Music Centre Trust.

104/PF QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (3 minutes per person; maximum 15 minutes)

There were no questions from the public.

105/PF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 20 January 2020 for consideration.

Minute reference 77/PF (Minutes of Previous Meeting, reference 61/PF (Community Governance Review)): a question was raised regarding whether a meeting had been arranged with Central Bedfordshire Council officers. It was confirmed an initial meeting had taken place with two officers and two councillors from Leighton-Linslade Town Council. It was anticipated that following this, Central Bedfordshire Council would be organising a meeting date with parishes affected by the eastern development.

Minute reference 91/PF (Draft Community Emergency Plan) – it was agreed to request a copy of the presentation made by Anglian Water at the public meeting held on 27 January 2020 in respect of the water shortage occurring in December 2019, as this contained details of the causes of the issue and what action Anglian Water had subsequently taken to improve the resilience of the system.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 20 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and were signed accordingly.

106/PF INSPIRING MUSIC "TIME MACHINE" CROSS-GENERATIONAL PROJECT

The Committee received and considered a request from Charlotte Payne, Music Director of Inspiring Music in respect of a cross generational project called 'Time Machine', which was hoped to bring together young and older people through music. The young people would gain new musical skills, the ability to work with others and a clearer understanding of issues facing people living with dementia. The older people would gain enjoyment and engagement over the course of the project which would decrease isolation and promote connections between older and younger generations.

It was hoped that after the initial project duration, links would have been forged between a local school and a local older person's facility, which could then help ensure the relationship and project continued thereafter.

RESOLVED to provide 50% of the required funding for the 8-week project (£2,266.25) 'Time Machine' due to take place in the Autumn Term 2020, to be funded from general reserves.

107/PF EVENTS BUDGET

The Committee received and considered a recommendation made by Cultural & Economic Services Committee on 9 December 2019 (minute reference 38/CE).

RESOLVED to endorse the recommendation made by Cultural & Economic Services Committee on 9 December 2019 that events budgets and associated Event salary budgets received a year on year increase in-line with inflation going forward from 2021/22.

108/PF YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECTS

The Committee received a report regarding feedback obtained from a small number of young people about their aspirations for the town.

Further engagement with young people would now take place to gather a greater number of views. This would then help inform future projects for young people. Information and recommendations would be taken to the Cultural and Economic Services Committee in the first instance, but it was noted that some projects would fall into the remit of other standing committees and therefore it was likely that there would be some overlap between committees and budgets.

Members agreed that a wider based survey would be beneficial and it was suggested to involve school councils and other organisations who support young people.

It was noted that the Community Forum, reporting to Partnership Committee, was also planning further engagement with young people.

The Committee agreed that the suggestion of tennis tables should be further considered by the Grounds & Environmental Services Committee and the suggestion was made to consider providing covered shelters to give young people a place to meet and socialise during inclement weather.

RESOLVED -

- (i) to note the report.**
- (ii) that in future, project ideas and their delivery in respects of the Young Person's Project be delegated to the Cultural and Economic Services Committee for careful consideration and delivery.**

RECOMMENDED to Grounds and Environmental Services Committee that they consider installing public access table tennis tables in the Council's parks.

109/PF CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Committee received a report to consider a potential application to the Central Bedfordshire Community Grant scheme for the installation of an adult outdoor gym in Linslade Memorial Playing Field. The scheme was supported by Central Bedfordshire Councillors R Berry, A Dodwell, D Bowater and V Harvey.

RESOLVED –

- (i) to note the report.
- (ii) that match funding of £22,500 (50% of the project cost) be sought from Central Bedfordshire Council for the purposes of installing an adult outdoor gym in Linslade Memorial Playing Field.

110/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

(a) The Committee received and considered the Work Plan and Objectives for 2019-2020.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Work Plan and Objectives for 2019-2020.

(b) The Committee received and considered the proposed format for the Committee Work Plan for 2020-2021. This was a more detailed document setting out the agreed Town Council objectives for 2019-2024 which were most applicable to the committee, future meeting dates, fixed deadline items, regular items and anticipated additional discussion items.

A question was raised regarding the staffing structure within the Town Council and whether a brief report could be brought to Committee at a future point.

RESOLVED to endorse the new format for the Committee Work Plan 2020-2021.

111/PF FEBRUARY 2020 PAYMENTS

The Committee received a schedule of payments which had previously been approved for payment by the Town Clerk and countersigned by two account signatories. There were no anomalies or matters of concern to draw to the attention of the Committee.

The schedule for February 2020 dated 22 January 2020, included BACS payments amounting to £148,438.11 (page numbers 2700, 2703-2713 and cheque payments amounting to £911.55 (cheque numbers 17488-17497), including White House petty cash amounting to £49.04, Astral Park £6.00 and TACTIC £35.76.

The monthly salaries listing for February 2020 amounting to £92,881.85

gross was received. A cash book report for February 2020, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

112/PF COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

(a) The Committee received a report and work plan in respect of communications, including the Town Council website, social media channels, electronic signage, branding, internal processes and overall communications strategy. The report included some statistics such as social media posts with greatest reach and most visited website pages.

It was noted that communications were becoming increasingly complex and time consuming, as the Council attempted to reach different demographic groups through the use of different media. It was agreed there was still a place for paper communications and the use of re-usable banners was also suggested. It was also suggested that a Town Council flag be flown at the White House to help reinforce brand awareness with residents.

Officers would continue to assess and evolve communications so all residents were able to have the opportunity to engage with the Town Council in the way most convenient to them.

RESOLVED to note the report.

(b) The Committee received a report and noted the Council's responsibility to comply with The Public Sector (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No.2) Regulations 2018.

The purpose of these regulations was to improve accessibility of public sector websites/mobile apps so they could be used by as many people as possible. Accessibility referred to website design and content and the ability for users to access content using just a keyboard, or with a screen magnifier or screen reader software. The structural work to make the site itself compliant had been done during the 2019 refresh project and was about to be undertaken for the separate market website.

The Committee noted the work to be undertaken in terms of checking and improving the compliance of documents and images on the website by the deadline date of September 2020.

The compliance deadline for Apps was September 2021 and this work would therefore follow on after the completion of the websites accessibility project.

RESOLVED to note the report.

113/PF DRAFT VOLUNTEER POLICY

The Committee received a report to provide information in respect of Volunteering and proposed amendments to the existing policy of 2013. A draft amended policy had been created to set out overarching principles for supporting volunteers in a clear and concise way. Members agreed the draft policy was a good informative document and that flexibility was essential in managing volunteers as individuals or groups.

Further feedback was awaited and it was anticipated that a final version would be brought to the next meeting for consideration.

The Committee suggested some minor amendments to the draft policy which would be given further consideration, in respect of insurance, risk assessments and making the policy suitable for both direct volunteers and volunteer members of other groups working with or on behalf of the Council.

RESOLVED to note the report and the proposed timeline of activity in respect of revisions to the Council's Volunteering Policy.

114/PF CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

The Committee received a report to provide information in respect of Customer Service and operational efficiency.

The purpose of the analysis was to assess the number of enquiries received via reception in one month, the day and time of day received, what form the enquiries took (i.e. walk in, telephone, email) and how many of these were on Town Council matters or Central Bedfordshire matters.

Following results from the analysis it had been proposed to undertake two more surveys in March and June/July to review and consider any changes which might be suggested in order to improve communications mechanisms and meet customer expectations.

RESOLVED to note the report and the proposed timeline of further activity.

115/PF HEALTH & SAFETY REVIEW

The Committee received a report to review the endorsed Health and Safety Policy remained fit for purpose and to seek quotes for the appointment to the role of retained Health and Safety consultant.

RESOLVED –

(i) to endorse the Town Council's Health and Safety Policy which had been the subject of its annual review.

(ii) To endorse that quotes be invited for retained Health and Safety Consultant role, ensuring that they have event experience.

116/PF REVIEW OF TOWN COUNCIL/EMPLOYEE MEMBERSHIPS

The Committee received a list advising of all current memberships of other bodies, for the Town Council and/or employees.

RESOLVED to note the report.

117/PF EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the public be excluded on the grounds of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information. The public and press to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of detailed discussion regarding the following: Debt Recovery

118/PF DEBT RECOVERY

The Committee received a report in respect of monies owed to the Town Council and the steps undertaken to try to recover outstanding debts.

RESOLVED by way of the Small Claims Court to recoup market rent owed as well as any costs associated with the recovery of the arrears.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A CORRECT AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2020.

Chair

DATE