

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

20 NOVEMBER 2017 AT 1930 HOURS

Present: Councillors: R Berry
A Dodwell
K Ferguson
J M Freeman
S Jones
C Palmer
G Perham
E Wallace – in the Chair

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford (Head of Democratic and Central Services)
Clare Cummins, (Finance Officer)
M Jahn (Committee Officer)
Tabitha Park (Citizens Advice)

Members of the public: 0

290/PF APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor S Cotter, Councillor K Cursons, Councillor S Cursons and Councillor F Kharawala.

291/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 agenda item 9 (Payments for month 6) as the list of payments included a payment relating to Leighton-Linslade in Bloom, of which his wife was a committee member.

Councillor K Ferguson declared a personal interest in agenda item 5, Citizens Advice, where he was involved as a volunteer.

292/PF QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

293/PF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee received the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 18 September 2017 for consideration.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 18 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed accordingly.

294/PF CITIZENS ADVICE

The Committee received an update from Tabitha Park of Citizens Advice in respect of services and grant funding.

In 2017-18 the CAB had experienced a steady month-on-month increase in people using the service, which was provided by approximately 45 volunteers and six paid staff.

In terms of finances, there was a deficit of £20,150 for the year, and fundraising events and applications to various charitable trusts had been made with a view to meeting this deficit. This would not be sustainable in the longer term, so the organisation was looking at means of consolidating and maximising income streams, and possibly reconfiguring some of the services offered. It was noted that, while grant funding from the Town Council and Central Bedfordshire Council was secure until 2020, future funding was not confirmed. Concerns were raised about introduction of Universal Credit and the impact this would have on the resources and services offered by Citizens Advice, when the organisation was already stretched to meet demand within the town.

Councillors expressed concerns and hoped that a means could be found to fund the continuance of the existing level of service provided by the CAB in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, as the needs within the town would be likely to increase in the future.

RESOLVED that the presentation from the Citizens Advice Bureau be noted.

295/PF MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Committee received the draft minutes of the following Sub-Committees for consideration.

(a) Personnel Sub-Committee 16 October 2017

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee 16 October 2017.

(b) Police Liaison Sub-Committee 9 October 2017

Minute reference 077/PL: the Town Clerk advised the purchase of the radios for use by the Street Watch patrols was in-hand, funded from the Watch Schemes Budget.

RESOLVED to receive the draft minutes of the Police Liaison Sub-Committee 9 October 2017.

(c) Grants & Awards Sub-Committee 13 November 2017

Minute reference 051/G: The Committee considered the recommendation that returned funds of £2,031.78 from FORATAIL be vired from the Guaranteed Grants budget to the General Grants budget in order to meet the shortfall for approved 2017-2018 General Grants.

RESOLVED:

- a) That returned funds of £2,031.78 from FORATAILL be vired from the Guaranteed Grants Budget to the General Grants budget to meet the shortfall for approved 2017-2018 General Grants.**
- b) To receive the draft minutes of the Grants and Awards Sub-Committee 13 November 2017.**

Minute reference 053/G: Honorary Burgess Nominations - The Committee was advised that the recommendation in respect of nominees for the 2018 Honorary Burgess award would be deferred until the next Committee meeting on 15 January 2018, in order that further information could be requested about the nominees.

296/PF COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES AND WORK PLAN

The Committee received the Work Plan and objectives for 2017-2018 and received a verbal update in respect of Town Council office accommodation and the communications strategy document. The Communications Strategy Document would now be two separate documents one for Internal Communications Protocol and a revision of the Communication Engagement Strategy.

RESOLVED to note the Committee Objectives and Work Plan for 2017-2018.

297/PF FEES & CHARGES FOR TACTIC

The Committee received a report regarding community use and charges of the TACTIC building. Questions were raised on whether there was a demand for this and how the staff costs would be covered for weekend hire. The Committee agreed with the proposal and the charges given. It was requested that an update on the success of the scheme be brought back to committee at a future date.

RESOLVED to endorse TACTIC facility hire charges for the local community, charity and voluntary organisations during non-service delivery hours.

298/PF AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2017 PAYMENTS

The Committee received three schedules of payments which had previously been approved for payment by the Town Clerk and countersigned by two account signatories.

The schedules for August included BACS payments amounting to £154,025.92 (page numbers 2194-2195, and 2198-2208) and cheque payments amounting to £13,609.25 (cheque numbers 17081-17089), including White House petty cash amounting to £26.30, Astral Park £117.72 and TACTIC petty cash amounting to £87.43.

The monthly salaries listing for August 2017 amounting to £101,208.03 gross was received. A cash book report for August 2017, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

The schedules for September included BACS payments amounting to £299,405.84 (page numbers 2209-2211 and 2214-2227), and cheque payments amounting to £3,090.03 (cheque numbers 17090-17101) including White House petty cash amounting to £73.40, Astral Park £110.27 and TACTIC petty cash amounting to £68.47.

The monthly salaries listing for September 2017 amounting to £28,695.06 gross was received. A cash book report for September 2017, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

The schedules for October included BACS payments amounting to £131,243.21 (page numbers 2228-2229 and 2231-2242), and cheque payments amounting to £4,446.52 (cheque numbers 17102-17110) including White House petty cash amounting to £97.55, Astral Park £245.70 and TACTIC petty cash amounting to £58.54.

The monthly salaries listing for October 2017 amounting to £96,952.75 gross was received. A cash book report for October 2017, including details of all direct debit payments, was also received.

RESOLVED to note this schedule of accounts for August, September and October 2017.

It was noted that all payments had been made within the budget and that there were no irregularities to be drawn to the attention of the Committee. A couple of minor queries were raised and clarification would be provided by email after the meeting.

299/PF SIX MONTH BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received a six month budgeting report for the period April – September 2017. No questions were raised.

RESOLVED to receive the report.

300/PF INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee received the internal audit report for 2017-2018 and it was noted that the report cited positive assurances in all areas. Thanks were expressed to all those concerned for a superb report.

RESOLVED to note the report.

301/PF 2018-2019 BUDGET AND FIVE YEAR FINANCIAL PLAN

The Committee received the first iteration of the overall draft budget for the financial year 2018-2019. The draft budget would now be presented to each standing committee for consideration, prior to a final draft coming to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee noted that the Council Tax base for Leighton-Linslade had increased since the previous year, but not as much as expected.

RESOLVED to note the draft budget for 2018-2019.

302/PF DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL FIGURE

The Committee received a report providing a draft protocol based on national guidelines for how to react in the event of the death of a senior national figure.

RECOMMENDED to Council to approve the draft protocol for Marking the Death of a Senior National Figure (see Appendix A).

RESOLVED:

- 1.0 To authorise expenditure of up to £400 from the Future Projects earmarked reserve (920/9033) for the purchase of black ties, armbands, Mayoral ribbons, In Memoriam condolence binder and In Memoriam paper packs.**
- 1.1 To endorse that any future costs associated with this matter (e.g. binding of Book of Condolence) be met from the same budget (920/9033), subject to funds being available.**
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Town Mayor and Leader of the Council, to determine an**

appropriate response in the case of other incidences such as the death of a local figure or an event of national significance.

303/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:

- (i) Data Protection Regulations**
- (ii) Modern.gov document and meeting management**
- (iii) White House lease**

304/PF DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS

The Committee received a report in respect of the new data protection regulations coming into force in 2018. It was noted that some questions had yet to be answered, including what support if any would be available from the local authority and clarification on whether an appointed Data Protection Officer should be an internal officer or external to the organisation. To provide support in the meantime, it was proposed to seek a limited amount of consultancy to provide guidance on privacy statements, privacy impact assessments, data mapping and compliance.

RESOLVED to appoint an external consultant to provide Data Protection advice and auditing services for the Town Council at a cost of up to £1,600 (to be funded from Professional Fees budget 12/4384).

305/PF MODERN.GOV. MEETING MANAGEMENT

The Committee received a report regarding Modern.gov software and its potential benefits for the Town Council and its residents. Discussions had been taking place since 2013 in respect of “paperless” agendas. The proposed system would not only facilitate this process, but significantly streamline internal procedures, automating existing manual processes, reducing human error and providing faster access to meeting papers for both Councillors and the public. Greater transparency would also be offered by way of the ability to free text search content of meeting agendas and minutes on the website.

The Committee agreed unanimously to support introduction of the software. It was agreed that training would be provided and that options for each town councillor to access meeting documents would be discussed in more detail on an individual basis.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To Purchase Modern.gov software (to include its set-up) with the Year 1 cost of £9,000 to be met from the I.T. Future Projects Budget as identified within the Town Council's 5 Year Plan**
- (b) That the Year 2 cost of £7,010 be met from the I.T. Future Projects Budget as identified within the Town Council's 5 Year Plan**
- (c) That the future cost of £7,010 per annum (Year 3 and beyond) to be met from existing revenue budget by offsetting against savings made in consumables and resources**
- (d) That the software be accessed through either existing privately owned devices or where this was not possible, through Town Council owned devices.**

306/PF WHITE HOUSE LEASE

The Committee was advised there was no update in respect of the lease.

The meeting closed at 2115 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2017.

Chair

15 JANUARY 2018

APPENDIX A

**PROTOCOL FOR MARKING THE DEATH OF A SENIOR NATIONAL
FIGURE
OR LOCAL HOLDER OF HIGH OFFICE**

This protocol sets out the action to be taken in the event of the death of:

- HM The Queen
 - HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
 - HRH The Prince of Wales
 - HRH The Duchess of Cornwall
 - HRH The Duke of Cambridge
 - HRH The Duchess of Cambridge
 - HRH Prince George of Cambridge
 - HRH Prince Henry (Harry) of Wales
 - HRH The Duke of York
 - HRH The Earl of Essex
 - HRH The Princess Royal
 - HRH The Countess of Wessex
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- The Prime Minister
 - The serving Member of Parliament for South West Bedfordshire
 - A serving Town Mayor
 - A serving member of the Council
 - A Former Town Mayor of the Council

This protocol was agreed by Council on XXXXXXXX

It is due for review not later than XXXXXXXX

Action Required	Authorised by
Leighton-Linslade Town Council's mourning protocol will be implemented on the formal announcement of the death of any one of those persons name on page 1 of this protocol.	Implementation will be authorised by the Town Clerk or in his absence, the Head of Democratic & Central Services

Flying the Flag

Action Required	Implemented by	Other Notes
Immediately , at the request of the Town Clerk or his deputy, the flag	Head of Grounds	See Appendix A in this protocol setting out the

<p>at the White House will be lowered to half mast.</p>		<p>correct procedure for flying a flag at half mast</p> <p>If the death falls on St George's Day or the period of mourning includes St George's Day, the flag of the patron saint should be replaced by the Union Flag at half mast.</p>
<p>In the case of the death of the Sovereign, the day following the death will be the Proclamation Day (the day when the new Sovereign is proclaimed). On Proclamation Day flags will, at the start of the day, be flying at half mast. All flags will be flown from the Mast Head from 1100 hours on Proclamation Day (D + 1) to coincide with the Reading of the Principle Proclamation and until 1300 hrs the following day (D + 2). After the day of Proclamation, all flags are to be lowered to half mast until 0800 hours on the morning following the State Funeral (day of death plus 11 days).</p> <p>For any other prominent figures or local holder of high office, the flag should fly at half mast only on the day of death and the day of the funeral.</p>		<p>The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the funeral will take place eight days after the day of death.</p>
<p>At Leighton-Linslade Town Council, following the death of the Sovereign or other members of the Royal Family identified in the list on page 1, flags will continue to be flown at half mast until 0800hrs on the day following the funeral.</p> <p>For all others identified in the list of page 1, flags at Leighton-Linslade Town Council will fly at half mast on the day of the announcement of the death. On subsequent days, the usual local arrangements will resume (see the note opposite)</p>	<p>As above</p>	<p>The funeral of the Sovereign will take place 10 days after the day of death. For other senior members of the Royal Family, the number of days will be fewer.</p> <p>The phrase 'Usual local arrangements' should be read as meaning that where a flag is usually flown it can, on the day following the funeral,</p>

until the day of the funeral when they will again fly at half mast.		again be flown at full mast. If no flag is usually flown, the flag can be taken down.
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Book of Condolence

A quiet location for the book should be considered so that those signing the books can have a moment of privacy and quiet reflection whilst doing so.

A loose leafed folder will ensure that pages can be re-ordered in case the Mayor and others cannot be the first to sign the book; their signatures can be the first page of the bound book.

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
<p>On the day following the announcement of the death of the Sovereign, The Duke of Edinburgh, The Prince of Wales or The Duchess of Cornwall, a Book of Condolence will be opened at the Town Council offices.</p> <p>Book of Condolence will be open from 1000hrs – 1600 hrs Monday to Friday and will remain open until the day following the funeral.</p> <p>A table and chair should be made available for members to sign the Book of Condolence.</p>	<p>Head of Democratic and Central Services.</p>	<p>The officer should ensure there is adequate paper available in the book. Pages that have been defaced or include offensive or other questionable comments should be quietly removed until such time as a decision can be taken at senior level (Town Clerk) on whether or not they should be permanently excluded.</p> <p>Books of Condolence should be opened on the first working day after death. Depending of anticipated demand, consider whether one or two books should be available. It should be an easily accessible place.</p> <p>Downloadable images of the Royal Family are available from www.royal.gov.uk</p>

<p>The Mayor will issue a statement via the Town Clerk expressing the sadness of the Council and people of Leighton-Linslade at the news of the death of The statement will also appear on the home page of the website.</p> <p>The statement will confirm that flags are to be flown at half mast and will give details of the Books of Condolence. In the case of the death of the Sovereign or a member of the Royal Family it will also mention any arrangements for an e-Book of Condolence on the Royal Website.</p> <p>On the death of any other significant person, the Town Clerk will discuss with the Town Mayor whether an e-book of Condolence should be opened on the Council's website.</p>	<p>Statement to be issued by the Town Clerk.</p> <p>Senior Administration Officer to ensure copy of the statement appears on the home page of the Council's website.</p>	<p>Guidance on the content of the statement is set out in Appendix B.</p>
<p>When the Book of Condolence has been closed, the Town Clerk will arrange for the pages to be bound and make arrangements for the final bound version to be lodged in the Town Council/county archives.</p>	<p>Head of Democratic and Central Services</p>	

Civic Engagements

From the day of death until the day after the funeral, careful thought should be given to the type of events and activities the Town Mayor should host or attend. Lunches, dinners and receptions may not fit in with the mood of the nation and as a mark of respect may need to be cancelled or postponed.

Where school visits are scheduled it might be helpful to for the Town Mayor to spend time with the children to talk about the events that are unfolding. This should not be pressed upon a Town Mayor who is not comfortable with taking on such a role.

Action Required	Authorised /Implemented By	Other Notes
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To review the programme of engagements undertaken by the Town Mayor to ensure it is appropriate in a time of national mourning and that it sits comfortably with the national mood.	The Town Mayor in conjunction with the Town Clerk. Any decisions/changes to be implemented by the Democratic Services team.	Consider working with local faith groups to arrange some sort of service on the eve of the funeral.
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Dress Code

If a full Council meeting falls during the period of mourning it might be felt appropriate for Councillors to wear a black tie or black arm band.

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
A stock of black ties and black armbands will be held in and available from the Mayor's Office for use by the Councillors and officers following the death of a senior figure.	The stock to be issued and maintained in good order by the Democratic Services team.	At the time of the annual review of this protocol, consideration will be given to the number of items in stock, their condition and the need for cleaning, repair or replacement.

Public Observance of Silence

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
When the death of a senior member of the Royal Family is to be marked by a Silence, an announcement will be made by Buckingham Palace. Consideration to be given to whether it would be appropriate for the Town Mayor to lead a Public Silence. If so, the location to be determined and all those listed in Appendix C to be invited to be present. Councillors to wear black ties/arm bands/rosettes.	The Town Mayor in conjunction with the Town Clerk.	

If not, the Silence will be observed at the White House by Town Council Members and staff.		
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Letter of Condolence from Leighton-Linslade Town Council

Action Required	Implemented By	Other Notes
As soon as practical, a letter of condolence will be drafted and circulated to the Town Mayor before dispatch.	Town Clerk.	

Appendix A

Full details for on the correct way to fly flags at half mast is given on the website of the Flag Institute (www.flaginstitute.org).

It is important that the guidance given by the Flag Institute is adhered to strictly.

Half mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole with at least the height of the flag between the top of the flag and the top of the flagpole. Flags cannot be flown at half-mast on poles that are more than 45° from the vertical but a mourning cravat can be used instead.

When a flag is to be flown at half mast, it should first be raised all the way to the top of the mast, allowed to remain there for a second and then be lowered to the half mast position. When it is being lowered from the half mast, it should again be raised to the top of the mast for a second before being fully lowered.

Appendix B

The statement should begin with a suitable expression of sadness of the Town Council on hearing the announcement.

It might go on to state that flags will be flown at half mast.

If is an occasion when Books of Condolence will be opened, then reference could be made to that.

When a decision has been taken on the Council's programme of events and engagements, it might be stated that events are being cancelled as a mark of respect or that they will begin with a period of silence.

If in doubt, do not rush out a statement with commits the Town Council to action before that action has been discussed and has the necessary agreement from the political leadership.

Appendix C

All members of the Council

Town Clerk and other senior officers

Past Mayors