

Workington Town Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 23 July 2019 at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Workington

Cllr C Armstrong	Apologies
Cllr H Briggs	Apologies
Cllr G Glaister	Present
Cllr H Harrington	Present
Cllr P McCarthy	Apologies
Cllr S Melton	Apologies
Cllr B Sansom	Apologies
Cllr P Scott (chair)	Present
Cllr S Stoddart (vice chair)	Present
Cllr W Wilkinson	Present
Cllr J King (Mayor)	Present

In

attendance: Town Clerk.

Also present: Cllr B Miskelly as a member of the public

FG19.15 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted as being for approved reasons under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972, s85, from Cllrs C Armstrong, H Briggs, P McCarthy, S Melton and B Sansom.

FG19.16 Declarations of Interest

There were no further declarations of interest at this point.

FG19.17 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

It was noted that Item 5 and Item 10 related to Staffing Matters, which were confidential.

Resolved: To exclude the press and the public from these sections of the meeting.

FG19.18 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2019. The Mayor suggested her lack of presence at a particular meeting should not be marked as an absence in the attendance record, in keeping with procedures in previous years. The Committee concurred.

Resolved: To amend the attendance record and affirm the minutes as a true record.

FG19.19. Root and Branch Staffing Review

Consideration of this item followed the Resolution to exclude the press and the public. Any further confidential information relating to the minute is kept on file.

Resolved: To bring any concerns arising from a review of the Report to the next meeting.

F19.20. Schedule of Payments

The Committee considered the Schedule of Payments 1 May to 30 June 2019. The Clerk explained the presence of 'in/out' figures in the schedule and the relationship between the Council's finances and the Mayor's Charity account. There were a number of observations and suggestions relating to payments:

- Annie Pit water bills appeared very high - it was suggested this was a result of underestimates on previous bills, and a possible leak;
- Fuel bills for vehicles could be reduced by using red diesel in the mower
- The Twinning Association grant was a matter for the Culture Committee, alongside any funding for the Carnegie Theatre.
- Should there be a bond for allotment holders to offset the cost of renovating derelict sites – the number of skips seems to be excessive, even if this is just for plot renovation. The Clerk explained that the cost in the schedule included VAT, but there were few options open to the council for reducing waste, since on-site burning was now restricted to brash only.
- The price of Climbing Walls was discussed. The expense of bringing in a private Climbing Wall in the absence of the GLL one seemed very high.
- Ad spending could be considered as a whole.
- Civic functions seemed on the expensive side and perhaps the Council should look at ways of reducing the burden on Council Tax payers for non-essential items such as expensive flowers and wine at Mayor Making.
- Procurement for events and the like could be done on an annual basis in a bloc, which would assist in budgeting and could help reduce overall costs.

Resolved: To bring these issues to the relevant Committees or staff for their attention.

F19.21. Bank Reconciliation Statement

The Committee received the Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30 June 2019.

Resolved: To note the report.

F19.22. Budget Monitoring Statement

The committee received a report on the Budget Monitoring Statement for 2019–2020 to 30 June 2019.

Resolved: To note the report.

F19.23 Finance Management Software

The Clerk reported that the Rialtas Omega system was now installed and inputting was roughly parallel in the current financial year. There had been a few understandable hurdles to surmount and additional training for staff will be necessary, but he hoped to free of the manual systems by

November. A sample of the reporting showed the reconciliation figures from the Schedule of Payments to match the manually created version.

Resolved: To note the report.

F19.25. Employment Issues

The Clerk reported that he had covered any issues he may have in previous items.

F19.26. Policy and Procedures

The Committee considered a draft procedure for the use mobile phones, social media, filming and recording at meetings. The Clerk explained that the issue had arisen because a Councillor had kindly notified him that he intended to exercise his public right to record meetings, and he was conscious that the Policy and Procedure was still in a draft, prepared form but had not yet been presented to Council. It was suggested the Procedure be amended to show that the public right extended only to the Meeting itself, not any preliminary conversations or general chatter around the meeting room. This would continue to be covered by existing privacy legislation relating to private premises.

Resolved: To amend the procedures as discussed and commend them to the Council.

F19.27. Issues for Future Consideration

There were no specific further issues brought forward at this stage.

The meeting closed at 19.54.