

Workington Town Council

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Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Tuesday 17 September at 6.30pm in the Town Hall, Workington

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

In

attendance: Town Clerk.

FG19.28 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted as being for approved reasons under the terms of the Local Government Act 1972, s85, from Cllrs H Briggs, H Harrington, S Melton and P Scott. Cllr S Stoddart took the chair.

FG19.29 Declarations of Interest

There were no further declarations of interest at this point.

FG19.30 Exclusion of Press and Public (Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act 1960)

It was noted that Item 13 may relate to contractual matters which would not be in the public interest to disclose at this point.

Resolved: To exclude the press and the public from this section of the meeting.

FG19.31 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019.

Resolved: To affirm the minutes as a true record.

FG19.32. Schedule of Payments

The Committee considered the Schedule of Payments 1 July to 31 August 2019.

Resolved: To note the Schedule of Payments.

F19.33. Bank Reconciliation Statement

The Committee received the Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31 August 2019. There was some discussion about the relationship between the statement and the state of the Council's reserves. It was suggested that the Clerk arrange a training and familiarisation session for Committee members, prior to their budget-setting meetings in November

Resolved: To note the report.

Resolved: For the Clerk to arrange a training and familiarisation session for all Committee members, preferably on a Tuesday evening in late October, perhaps at Allerdale House.

F19.34. Budget Monitoring Statement

The committee received a report on the Budget Monitoring Statement for 2019–2020 to 31 August 2019. The Committee considered an issue relating to the earmarking of £5,000 for the Helena Thompson Museum. It noted that the Council had attempted to arrange for this to be paid direct to the Trustees of the Helena Thompson Museum, but that that matter had proved problematic, not least because there seemed to be some confusion over how such a 'gift' would be overseen by Allerdale Borough Council. As a compromise, it was suggested that the current managers of the Museum be offered a grant of £5,000, to be drawn down from the current year's Museum and Exhibitions budget, and this instruction should be passed to the Culture Committee. It was also observed that the Environment Committee had been meeting away from the Town Council's meeting room of late, and that Councillors at Full Council had queried where the budget for this could be found. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting expenses were being met from the Civic Functions budget, as they had been in the past for the hiring of the Trades Hall or Christ Central Church for meetings.

Resolved: To ask the Culture Committee to take steps to resolve the matter of the Helena Thompson Museum grant in a timely fashion.

Resolved: To report to the next Committee meeting room hire costs for the previous five years, to show their impact on the budget.

Resolved: To note the report.

F19.35 Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019

The Committee considered the report from the External Auditors in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), 2019. The Audited had no further comments. The Committee thanked the Clerk, and particularly the Finance and Administration Officer for her diligent work in securing this outcome.

Resolved: To note the report.

F19.36 Culture Committee Budget

The Committee received a request from the Culture Committee that additional funds be allocated for the installation of a temporary Christmas Tree outside the Town Hall. The current Christmas Lighting budget does not include sufficient headroom for the £3-5,000 required for the installation.

Resolved: To recommend the use of reserves to fund the installation, uplifting the Christmas lighting budget by £5,000.

F19.37 Financial Management Software

The Clerk reported that additional training had been received in the new software and it was now up and running, alongside the existing system. The existing system would now be wound down carefully.

Resolved: To note the report.

F19.38 Employment Issues

The Clerk reported that he did not feel the Council currently had the resources to continue giving secretarial support to the Workington and District Twinning Association.

Resolved: That the Clerk liaises with the Twinning Association over their need to resource their own secretarial support.

F19.39 Town Council Vehicle

The Clerk reported that the Town Council's van was nearing the end of its lease. Having reviewed its use, officers had concluded that its replacement could be electric, which would be more beneficial to the environment, but the current availability of electric vans was not yet sufficient to meet the Council's needs. It was understood that Ford would be releasing full electric version of the Transit in 2020, and the Council should wait until then to see what the market looked like. In the meantime the Clerk reported that he was reasonably confident that the lease company would allow an extension on the existing lease.

Resolved: To confirm this approach to the van lease.

F19.40. Policy and Procedures: Financial Regulations

The Committee noted that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had recently published new Model Financial Regulations. The guidance issued by government through the Practitioners Guide (Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England) recommends that Financial Regulations are kept under review in line with current best practice, so it would be appropriate for the Committee to review the Council's Financial Regulations in the light of the new model. It was suggested that this was not a suitable task for a committee meeting but that it was better suited to small task and finish group.

Resolved: For a Task and Finish Group consisting of the Clerk, the Mayor and Cllr Armstrong review the new Regulations and make a recommendation to the Committee within three months.

F19.41. Town Council Office Accommodation

The Committee resolved to consider this item after the exclusion of press and public, due to the matter concerning ongoing contracts. A separate Confidential Minute is kept on file.

F19.42. Cumbria Ballroom

The Clerk requested that the Committee witness the authorising signatures for the transfer of funds from Allerdale Borough Council to Workington Town Council in respect of the discharge of a Section 106 agreement associated with the development of the Cumbria Ballroom site in 2010.

Resolved: To confirm the authorisation.

F19.43. Issues for Future Consideration

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

The meeting closed at 19.47.