

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee Held on Tuesday 22nd May 2012 at 8.00pm in the Community Office

Present:

Councillors:

Ian Hill
Tony Williamson
Rhian Woods
Harvey Batten
Tim Horton

Officer:

Kristina Tynan

Members of the Public:

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14/12 Apologies for absence

Barry Adby, Roger Beattie, Charles Rowton-Lee

15/12 Election of Chairman

Rhian Woods nominated Tim Horton and this was seconded by Tony Williamson. There were no other nominations.

Resolved: That Tim Horton be unanimously elected as Chairman.

16/12 Election of Vice-Chairman

Ian Hill nominated Harvey Batten and this was seconded by Rhian Woods. There were no other nominations.

Resolved: That Harvey Batten be unanimously elected as Vice-Chairman.

17/12 Chairman's Remarks

Tim Horton gave his grateful thanks to Tony Williamson for all his hard work on the budget and other issues when he was Chairman of this committee. He said that he will continue in the same vein but will be looking to spend the accumulated reserves which have been built up over the last 5 years. The Operations committee are looking into working with other Chairs of Committees to attract grants and new sources of income to this Council. The Operations Committee are also looking into possible improvements to the conveniences. He will also be looking to outside resources for funding. The Neighbourhood Plan will have financial implications also.

18/12 To approve the Minutes from the Meeting on the 31st January 2012 which were received by Council on 14/2/2012 and Minutes from 13th March 2012 which were received by Council on 10/4/2012

Resolved: That these minutes were a correct record of this meeting and that they be signed by the Chairman.

19/12 Matters Arising

There were none.

20/12 Declarations of Interest

Tony Williamson declared a non-prejudicial interest in the Age Concern item. However he left the room for the discussion on this issue.

21/12 Budget – Final Year End Budget 2011/2012

The figures were noted and it was stated that we are in a much better position than was envisaged when the budget was set. Savings have been made on Election costs, There was a grant for grass cutting from the Public Charities of £1500 which had not been included in the budget. The Clerk is working on the figures for the auditor at the moment for the year end 2012. The first quarter figures for 2012/2013 will be available at the next meeting.

Letter from Tom Holden – Age Concern – Asking for reduction in rent for the West Room for Age Concern Thursday use.

Discussion took place on the two issues – one being the earmarked amount in our reserves for £2000 for a project. It was noted that this project is no longer going ahead and it was agreed that this amount to be put into our general reserves. The issue of a rent reduction was then discussed and it was noted that Age Concern are losing some funding. It was noted that at present Age Concerns pays £25 per Thursday session. It was thought that it could be reduced to £20 for this year and possibly £15 for the following year. This will be looked at next year.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That we reduce the Age Concern amount per session from £25 to £20 for the year 2012/13.

Grants

Resolved: That we look at re-instating a budget item for small grants in the future.

22/12 Reserves to be agreed as at 31/3/2012

The following earmarked reserves were agreed and below is shown the financial position at year end 31/3/2012.

| <u>Reserves</u> | <u>31/03/2011</u> | <u>31/03/2012</u> |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|
| Watlington Parish Council | | |
| Marlbrook and Mansle Gardens | 1000 | 1,000 |
| Utilities Reserve | | |
| Ian Donaldson's Bequest for Paddock (July 2007 has to be used within 10 years) | 2000 | 2,000 |
| SODC Public Convenience 4 years remaining | 12777 | 9156 |
| Car Park General Reserve | 0 | 2329 |
| Car Park Maintenance Sinking Fund | 5228 | 6728 |
| Car Park Lighting | 1000 | 2000 |
| Watlington Age Concern | 2000 | 2000 |
| General Grant (c/f from Youth Club unspent) be used towards general grants | 193 | 339 |
| Chalk Pit | 500 | 500 |
| Total Earmarked | 24698 | 26,052 |
| Uncommitted reserves | 28,539 | 53,153 |

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Reserves | 53237 | 79205 |
| Total in Bank | 53237 | 79205 |

23/12 Insurance – Renewal and Review – IH to prepare paper on this.

Ian Hill gave the following report:

Zurich are our current insurers, with a single policy covering the Community Office, Pavilion and public toilets. The Town Hall is covered separately. The policy is due for renewal by the beginning of June.

The changes since last year are that the

- Annual cost increased by 3% to £4321.24
- Insured value of buildings increased by 17% to £895,243 and of building contents increased by 26% to £61,112 (which we asked for increased cover) This includes addition of the new roller for the sports field (increased cover from £2,300 to £10,000) and temporary cover for the Portaloo at the recreation ground over the summer (at no extra charge) It also includes addition of the public toilets (sum insured £80,000) to the policy Legal expenses cover increased by 100% to £100,000. Contract dispute expenses are not covered, although I am not sure whether it was previously.
- Motor legal expenses and uninsured loss recovery added, but not clear what this covers.
- Motor vehicles includes loss on no claims discount but not occasional business use. This means individuals using their car for parish business need to have their own cover.
- Public liability insurance now includes environmental clean-up costs where liability arises under environmental directive, statute or statutory instrument.
- Public liability insurance now includes corporate manslaughter and corporate homicide following changes in the law.
- Employers liability insurance now includes corporate manslaughter and corporate homicide following changes in the law.

The quote also includes a price for a three year policy which has the same cover at lower annual cost. The agreement commits us to accepting a renewal each year unless they change the terms and conditions. They may only increase premiums in line with the Average Earnings Index, or if required to Government levy or tax. Premiums can of course be changed if we change the scope of the cover.

After discussion on this:

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Council enters into a 3 yearly contract with Zurich and that after this three year period Council to review other insurance companies as was done last year.

Insurance for Clerk's Car – The clerk to check her insurance as regards to using it for work purposes. Ian Hill said that if she need to increase her insurance cover, Council should consider re-imbursing her for the extra amount.

24/12 Clarification of Age Concern's position regarding Grant pledged over 3 years ago.

This was discussed above in conjunction with the rent issue.

25/12 Staff Annual Review Process – HB/KT

Harvey Batten reported that he and the Clerk had been through all the OALC guidelines.

RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That the following Staff Appraisal Procedure be followed:

1. Staff Members to be given a date of the appraisal and given a copy of the appraisal form to fill in 2 weeks prior to the meeting. If they need any help with this they should approach a member of Council who is not a chair of any committee person (Harvey Batten has offered to help in this role if required). It is important to elicit their views on the form prior to an appraisal.

2. Staff Appraisals to be carried out by the Chairman or Vice Chairman of the Council and the Clerk apart from the Clerks Appraisal which will be carried out by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The nominated councillors must be careful not to exceed the remit/authority given.

3. The purpose and description/objectives of the job to be filled in by the Clerk. These should be well defined.

4. The appraisal review period to be on the last year.

5. The appraisal to take place in an encouraging environment in a private room in an informal setting with refreshments. Some welcoming words should be considered. Asking lots of open ended questions to get appraisees thinking about their performance in the various aspects of the job is vital. Appraisees should be encouraged to think for themselves about how to utilise their strengths and how to solve any perceived problems (if any). The interview should end on a positive note. Appraisees will also have the opportunity to open up on any problems. The appraisee should ideally do 50-70% of the talking. The appraisers role is to prompt and control relevant discussion, listen actively and then summarise the main points to ensure that understanding has taken place. The summary can then form what is noted on the appraisal documentation.

6. The actions from an appraisal usually fall into 3 categories

a) Training or remedial action.

b) Further training, coaching etc to develop satisfactory or stronger areas or to broaden experience.

c) Objectives to focus the appraisees efforts in the coming months – these may be appropriate in both the stronger and the weaker areas of performance.

A combination of the above may be formulated and agreed with the appraisee to develop an action plan which is relevant and appropriate to the needs of the Council and the individual themselves.

7. Following the appraisal a date to be agreed for a short follow up meeting when the action plan and the notes taken during the appraisal can be signed.

It is just as vital to give positive aspects of performance as it is to highlight weaker areas (if appropriate)

8. All the written reports would be confidential.

It was agreed at the September meeting that we look at the needs of the Council and how the Clerk will need to delegate items and perhaps change duties of staff. Any big changes in job descriptions will be discussed by this committee.

It was noted that any changes to the duties of Town Hall caretaker will be discussed by the Town Hall Charity Body Trustees. The Town Hall issue will not be discussed in the appraisal procedure.

Training in giving Staff Appraisals – SEEMP will be holding a course in Winchester on the 18/8/2012 at a cost of £135. It was thought that this is not needed at this point in time.

26/12 Council Tax Leaflet 2013/14 – TH – Leaflet 2012/13 was attached

This was discussed and it was noted that this is the one opportunity of the year to get information at no charge to the community. SODC only allow 2 sides of A4 to be given to them.

It was thought that there could be a better and simpler layout. At present there is a lot of information on the pages.

RECOMMENDATION TO STRATEGY COMMITTEE: That the Strategy Committee discuss this issue and this committee suggests that it is kept to 2 sides of A4 and be made simpler and have a different layout.

- 27/12 **Election Costs** – We have received a letter today from Mr Buckle stating that he has not received a letter from WPC regarding non-payment of election costs. It was agreed that it is important that a letter be sent of immediately stating our questions and concerns and Ian Hill agreed to do this. Discussion took place on the breakdown of costs that we received and further to this the committee agreed the following:
RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL: That Council pay the Election Cost Invoice for £847.33

28/12 Correspondence

1. Angela Clark – re payment of £50 towards car park-Her points were noted that she is only in the Undercroft 3 days a week and which is why she has paid ½ the amount of full time businesses – **Discussed above.**

2. Tom Holden – Age Concern – Asking for reduction in rent for the West Room – **discussed above.**

29/12 Items for Next Meetings.

Quarterly Budget April- June to be reviewed
Reinstatement of Small Grants budget

30/12 Any Other Business

THERE BEING NO OTHER BUSINESS THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.54PM