



TORPOINT TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee held on Monday 28th June 2021 at 7.00pm in the Council Committee Room, 4 York Road, Torpoint.

PRESENT: - Councillor Mrs. J M Martin (Chairman), Councillor G J Davis (Deputy Town Mayor), Councillors Mrs. K Brownhill, Mrs. C E Goodman, M Thomson-Neall and J Tivnan BEM plus the Town Clerk & RFO (Clerk).

	ACTION
<p>27-21F&P Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Miss R A Evans BEM (Town Mayor).</p>	
<p>28-21F&P Declarations of Interest relating to items on the Agenda None.</p>	
<p>29-21F&P Minutes of the previous meeting It was resolved that the minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on Tuesday 1st June 2021 were, taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.</p>	
<p>30-21F&P Matters arising from the minutes a) Council Staffing Report: - Pursuant to minute 18-21F&P (a) the Clerk explained the Operations Manager is reviewing the hand arm vibration syndrome (HAVS) values for the employees who use brush cutters. Councillor J Tivnan BEM highlighted that HAVS is detailed in the council's Health and Safety Policy.</p> <p>The Clerk is arranging training in the HSE Emergency First Aid at Work qualification. The course cost is £360.00+VAT for the day for up to 12 people and those employees who want to undertake the qualification are being offered a place. Should there be any remaining spaces available, then these will be offered on a first come, first served basis to members. The course is being delivered in the Committee Room at the Council Chambers with the course date being arranged for September.</p> <p>The Clerk explained all employees (in work) are undertaking Lateral Flow Testing twice per week, as per government guidance.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs. K Brownhill raised a question about the high number of annual leave hours/days remaining for Council employees and particularly the Officers, the Clerk explained all employees are being encouraged to book annual leave, re-iterating that any annual leave to be carried over to the holiday year 2021-22, will need to fall within contractual arrangements. The Clerk confirmed that four weeks leave had been agreed today for two employees, with the Clerk planning to take three weeks' leave in a six week period, during the summer school holidays. The Chairman requested a report detailing employees annual leave is provided for future meetings of this committee.</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

i) Update on replacement / vacancy for Town Council Support Officer (minute number 57-21 June '21 council minutes refers): -

The Chairman and Clerk met the day after the June council meeting to agree the job description, personal specification and advert for the vacancy of Town Council Support Officer. The advert was immediately published on the council's website and social media pages, as well as being advertised on Indeed. The deadline for submission of applications is midday on Tuesday 6th July 2021, with interviews scheduled for the following week.

b) Civic Functions: -

Pursuant to minute 18-21F&P (b) the Clerk explained the Town Mayor will lead the town in the inaugural celebration of NHS, Social Care and Frontline Workers' Day on 5th July 2021.

c) Markets – advice: -

Pursuant to minute 18-21F&P (c) the Clerk summarised an in-depth conversation with the Manager from Plymouth Market. The council would usually call on the powers of a Royal Charter in order to enforce the Markets Policy, however the council does not have a Royal Charter. Alternatively, if the council can provide evidence that historically it provided the service of providing and regulating markets, then arguably the council has 'adopted' the right due to historic virtue. The Clerk re-iterated the only approach to enforcing regulations is via a court process and has sought further guidance from NABMA (The National Association of British Markets), including reading their Market Rights booklet. Members were cognisant of ensuring the council's primary functions and legal duties are maintained and will review the decision whether or not to renew membership of NAMBA in advance of the budget/precept discussions later this year.

d) Section 137 grant application – St. Columba & Torpoint RFC: -

Pursuant to minute 113-20F&P (virtual meeting held Monday 29th March 2021), the Clerk explained having taken receipt of more recent bank statements from St Columba & Torpoint RFC which cite funds ring-fenced for specific projects. Members considered this additional information and it is **recommended** the council awards St. Columba & Torpoint RFC the sum of £1,000.00 of Section 137 grant funding, towards the cost of portable flood lighting.

e) Additional signatory: -

Pursuant to minute 19-21F&P (a) the banking arrangements for Councillor Mrs. K Brownhill to be the fourth signatory for the council bank account are now completed, with Councillor Brownhill having online banking access and therefore permitted to authorise online payments.

f) Regalia proposal: -

Pursuant to minute 22-21F&P (f) members continued the discussions about suitable regalia for Honorary Freeman and Honorary Burgess and agreed the Clerk undertakes research as follows:

- i) Contact Vaughton's to enquire about suitable regalia/badge of office for a Freeman of the Town and Honorary Burgess;
- ii) Contact Vaughton's to ascertain if the council's logo can be exchanged on the existing Former Mayor regalia.
- Contact Plymouth City Council for details of their Honorary Alderman and Honorary Freeman appointments, which can then be considered for implementation.

Clerk

Council

Clerk

g) DWP Kickstart Scheme update: -
Pursuant to minute 9-21F&P (b) of the virtual meeting held on Tuesday 4th May 2021, members considered the updated information and agreed to re-consider joining the scheme in January 2022.

31-21F&P Policies Reviewed by this Committee

a) Standing Orders: -
Following consideration, it is **recommended** the Council's current Standing Orders are adopted, with no amendments and are reviewed again in 12 months' time, or sooner if necessary.

Council

32-21F&P To consider the Council Business Risk Management

a) Overtime Report: -
Noted. The Clerk explained the increase in hours can be accounted for, highlighting the Service Level Agreement in place with Millbrook Parish Council.

b) Creditors / Debtors Report: -
Noted.

c) Budget Variance– Finance Committee Responsibilities: -
The May 2021 Budget Variance, as previously circulated, was considered with no current concerns.

d) Section 137 Grants – consideration for additional advertising and promotion: -
Members expressed their enthusiasm to promote that Section 137 grant funding is available from the council and agreed that should the Development and Localism Committee consider compiling and issuing a flyer/leaflet, then information on grants should be included. Additionally, this information should be made available on the website and a social media post published.

Clerk

Clerk

e) Millbrook Parish Council – Service Level Agreement: -
The Clerk explained the amount of weekly work being undertaken as part of the Service Level Agreement is less than originally agreed, however, with one month remaining of the trial period, Millbrook Parish Council appear to be content with the work being provided by the Caretaker/Enforcement Officer.

f) Report for the Internal Auditor and Exercise of Public Rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations: -
The Clerk presented the report, in response to the Internal Auditor (copied here).

	SUGGESTION/OBSERVATION	RESPONSE	Target date for completion & who
1.	B. Now that the Council has joined NALC, we would suggest a review of Financial Regulations based on the Model Documentation they provide – this will help to ensure that proper practices are embedded within them.	Chairman/Vice Chairman of F & P Committee and Clerk & RFO to undertake a review of Financial Regulations.	Next F & P Committee meeting, 31 st August 2021.

2.	D. The general reserve stands at £307,254 equating to 78% of gross expenditure, within generally accepted parameters.	Clerk & RFO, along with F & P Committee to monitor the general reserve/expenditure.	Review at all Committee & Council meetings during the financial year. Overview at the budget/precept meeting.	
3.	E. Room hire, in two instances VAT has been incorrectly applied.	Credit notes issued.	Actioned by Town Council Support Officer.	
4.	E. A small discrepancy in the charge to one Licensee between the fee and the service charge and an error in applying VAT to another.	Licensees advised and discrepancy detailed and a repayment plan agreed.	Actioned by Town Council Support Officer.	
5.	E. There is room for improvement in the Library income audit trail.	Weekly income record sheet implemented.	Actioned by Town Council Support Officer plus the Community Hub & Library Manager	
6.	E. Year-end debtor in the balance sheet that does not reflect the final VAT claim for the year.	To be rectified in the next VAT claim.	To be actioned by Town Council Support Officer.	
7.	I. A suggestion to print at the end of each month the bank reconciliations from the Xero system and that they are reconciled with the bank statements and retained as evidence, that a review has taken place and as a record of what has been reported to Members.	A monthly print out is being implemented, to be reconciled with the bank statements.	To be actioned by Town Clerk & RFO, supported by the Town Council Support Officer.	
<p>Members considered and recommend implementing the advice and suggestions from the Internal Auditor, with the Chairman (Councillor Mrs. J M Martin) and Deputy Chairman (Councillor Mrs. K Brownhill) volunteering to assist the Clerk and RFO to undertake a review of Financial Regulations based on the Model Documentation provided by NALC (National Association of Local Councils).</p> <p>It is resolved to instruct the Clerk and RFO to publish the Exercise of Public Rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</p> <p>g) Update on Hirers and Lettings: - i) Licensees advised likely increase 2022/23. The Clerk explained all current licensees have been corresponded with advising there is likely to be an increase in room rates in 2022/23. ii) Market review/room valuation. The Clerk has contacted Miss L Hocking who is willing to support the council to undertake a market view/room valuation. The Clerk will liaise with Miss Hocking and should there be any concerns will contact the Chairman.</p>				<p>Council Cllr Martin/Cllr Brownhill/ Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>33-21F&P Items Referred to this Committee None.</p>				
<p>34-21F&P Correspondence a) CCLA – update on the Public Sector Deposit Fund 31st May 2021: -</p>				

Noted.

b) Section 137 Grant – Report of use of grant funding (inc. invoice) – Torpoint Athletic Juniors FC: -

Noted.

c) Employer Newsletter June 2021 – Cornwall Pension Fund: -

Noted.

d) Section 137 Grant – Update on use of grant funding – St Columba & Torpoint RFC: -

Noted.

e) Code of Conduct Training for Councillors – Cornwall Association of Local Councils: -

Noted.

f) Chairmanship Training – Cornwall Association of Local Councils: -

Noted.

g) Benchmarking Support – Cornwall Association of Local Councils: -

Noted.

h) 'The future of high streets and town centres' virtual conference – National Association of Local Councils: -

Noted.

35-21F&P Planning Applications

None.

36-21F&P Accounts for payment

Contact Name	Invoice Number	Total (£)	VAT (£)	NET (£)	Description
BS Embroidery Plus	inv no 2706	124.46	20.74	103.72	Staff Uniform - Rachel
ASG Security	Inv no 36187	318.54	53.09	265.45	Annual fee Fire Alarm System Maintenance and monitoring Council Chambers

37-21F&P Date of next meeting

Tuesday 31st August 2021, the Chairman submitted her apologies in advance for this meeting.

38-21F&P Any Business that has been disclosed to the Chairman and members prior to the meeting.

None.

Meeting closed at 8.05pm _____ Chairman