

TORPOINT TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Monday 2nd December 2013 at 7.00 pm in the Council Committee Room, 4 York Road, Torpoint.

PRESENT: - Councillor Mrs. R A Southworth (Chairman), M N Pearn (Town Mayor), Councillors B Hobbs, J F Creek, Miss J L Kinsman and J Tivnan (as substitute for Councillor M J Crago) plus the Town Clerk.

57-13FGP Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors M J Crago and Mrs. C I A Trueman.

58-13FGP Declarations of Interest relating to items on the Agenda

Non registerable interests were declared by:-

Councillor J Tivnan – as a Committee member of the Torpoint Festive Lighting Company.

59-13FGP Minutes of the previous meeting

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the meetings held on Monday 2nd September 2013 and Monday 4th November 2013 were taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

60-13FGP Matters arising from the minutes

a) Town Clock:-

Pursuant to minute 43-13FGP (a) the Clerk confirmed that he has written to the clock winder to ascertain if he could implement the recommendations in the retired engineers letter. It was reported that a reply is awaited.

b) Accounts for payment:-

Pursuant to minute 49-13FGP the Clerk reported that he will be writing to the Chairman of the Torpoint Town Partnerships to confirm that any proceeds from selling the old millennium coins are accounted for and that it is clearly demonstrated that any finances so raised are used for the benefit of local projects.

c) Budget:-

Pursuant to minute 54-13FGP the Clerk reported receipt of an email from Cornwall Council that the Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) for 2014-15 will be £20,655.70. It was reported that a reply from Cornwall Council on the anticipated Public Convenience support grant is still awaited. Councillor Hobbs however warned that after the 2014-15 financial year Cornwall Council might not be in a position to subsidise the public conveniences. Councillor Hobbs suggested that some local councils were increasing the precept and consequently the Council tax by a substantial amount in anticipation of a 2% cap that is likely to be imposed by the government. He warned that Torpoint might not be in a position to respond to increased delegation of services if the precept was kept too low and the cap applied. Members then considered the recent email confirming Cornwall Councils intention not to continue with herbicide application on the highways and footways in the town. Councillor Hobbs was of the opinion that this was a form of double taxation and the Chairman suggested that the Council look carefully at services delivered and if the residents really wanted it. The Chairman warned that the Council could not just put the precept up without sound justification. The Clerk précised the situation by confirming that Torpoint had by far the lowest precept of any of the former Caradon towns and has implemented strict financial controls, robust procedures and sound housekeeping as core to the processes. The Clerk reported that currently the cost of the garage (estimated at around £550 per annum) and any costs associated with a weed control programme in the town had not been factored into the budget and should be considered as additional items. Following further discussion it was **recommended** that the Council consider the possibility of undertaking the weed control service and the Clerk was asked to ascertain an estimated cost from Cornwall Council. The Clerk would also try and ascertain Cornwall Council's Japanese Knotweed eradication control programme in the town.

61-13FGP To Consider Policies Delegated to this Committee

a) Data Protection Policy:-

The Committee considered the Data Protection Policy (as circulated) following which it is **recommended** that the Council adopt the policy.

b) Records Management Policy:-

The Committee considered the Records Management Policy (as circulated) following which it is **recommended** that the Council adopt the policy.

62-13FGP To consider the Council Business Risk Management Plan

The Clerk reported that following the creation of the Development and Localism Committee the Business Risk Management Plan needed to be modified to reflect the new Committee. The Clerk also observed that whilst the plan included HR matters, principally none of the Committee's had HR matters within the terms of reference or dealt with it terms of policies, staff development and items within the Business Risk Management Plan. Currently any HR matters were being considered by the Systems and Procedures Working Party and this was a reactive approach to the subject. It was suggested that consideration is given to formalising HR or Personnel matters within the Committee structures and it is **recommended** that the Clerk considers the current arrangements and produces a paper on the way forward on these matters for consideration by members.

63-13FGP Items referred to this Committee

a) Terms of Reference:-

The Committee considered the terms of reference that was agreed in principle at Council. Following discussion it was **recommended** that the terms of reference (as circulated) are formally adopted.

64-13FGP Correspondence

a) Cornwall Council – Public Convenience Grant 2014-15.

Noted. The Clerk confirmed that he is awaiting a response on his request for the actual amount to be communicated to the Council by Cornwall Council. To date there was no response to his email.

b) Cornwall Council – East Sub Area Planning Committee.

Noted.

c) Cornwall Council – Garage Rent.

The Clerk confirmed that the current rent of the garage will be £47.76 for four weeks (this figure includes VAT).

d) Louise Slee – FOC Use of Kitchen.

Noted. It was further noted that the proposed date was unsuitable as a result of a major booking the evening before. It is also understood that the Town Administrator has informed the author. The Clerk suggested that the Council did not have any procedure or process in place to benchmark applications for FOC use of Council facilities. The Clerk suggested that this is put in place and it is **recommended** that the Clerk produces a policy and procedure for consideration at the February meeting of this Council. In the absence of the policy it is further **recommended** that the Town Administrator seeks additional information on financial matters and beneficiaries of the event if the facilities are required prior to a procedure being put in place.

e) CORY Environmental – Wheelie Bin Charges.

Noted. Members were informed that the increase is as a result of the 10% rise in the penalty for depositing waste in land fill sites.

65-13FGP Planning Applications

None

66-13FGP Accounts for payment

PAYEE	REASON	GROSS	(VAT)	NETT
*Festive Lighting Company	Wire/Retaining Screws/Eyelets etc	401.76	66.96	334.80
Firewatch	Alarm Tests - 6 monthly	177.00	29.50	147.50
BNP Parabas	Photocopier (Quarterly)	486.72	81.12	405.60
Loc Doc	Fit Fire Escape Bars	105.00	0.00	105.00
Quick Fit Scaffold (MN Pearn)	Wheels for tower	49.00	8.17	40.83
G W Brown	Roof Repairs	45.00	0.00	45.00
Torpoint Archives	Occupiers Fee Refund	152.00	0.00	152.00
Cornwall Council	Garage Rent (4 weeks)	47.76	0.00	47.76

- *At the request of the Chairman for an explanation of the invoice from the Festive Lighting Company, Councillor J Tivnan confirmed that the Highways Act had stipulated an increase in wire thickness from 6mm to 8mm and that to comply the additional wiring and fixing implements were required and purchased. Councillor Tivnan reminded members that the Council leased the lights from the Festive Lighting Company and this equipment was deemed essential to erect the lights. Councillor B Hobbs supported the request being of the opinion that if the council did not support this purchase then lights might not go ahead. The Chairman reminded members of the procedures including obtaining the purchase order from the Town Administrator and on s137 purchases following which it was **resolved** that the purchase would be an extension to the lighting lease arrangement with the company (a section 137 expenditure) and the cable remains the property of the Town Council (3 votes in favour with 3 abstentions).

67-13FGP Date of next meeting

Monday 3rd February 2014.

68-13FGP Any business that has been disclosed to the Chairman and members prior to the meeting.

- The Town Mayor reported that £925.89 had been raised toward the purchase of shelter boxes to be used to assist those victims of the Philippines disaster.

Meeting closed at 8.25 pmChairman