

TORPOINT TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee held on Monday 3rd November 2014 at 7.30pm in the Council Committee Room, 4, York Road, Torpoint.

PRESENT:- Councillor (Chairman Mrs R A Southworth), Town Mayor (Councillor M N Pearn MBE), Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor M J Crago), Councillors J F Creek, P R Edwards, Miss J L Kinsman and Mrs J M Martin plus the Town Clerk and the Assistant Town Clerk.

Also present for participation and voting in agenda items 2-5 inclusive (minute 96-14 refers) Councillors E H Andrews, Mrs K Brownhill, G J Davis, Mrs C E Goodman, L E Keise and J Tivnan.

66-14FGP Apologies for absence:-

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf Councillor Mrs C A Jackson.

67-14FGP Declarations of Interest relating to matters on the agenda:-

Non Registerable Interests were declared by

Town Mayor – Councillor M N Pearn MBE– Agenda item 4 (As a member of the Torpoint Archives)

Councillor J F Creek – Agenda item 4 (As a Friend of the Torpoint Archives).

Councillor Mrs R A Southworth – Agenda item 4 (As the treasurer of the Torpoint Archives).

Agenda item 11(a) (As related to the treasurer of the TMA).

Councillor B Hobbs – Agenda item 11(a) (As a member of the TMA).

68-14FGP To co-opt a new member to fill the casual vacancy in Torpoint West Ward

The Chairman introduced this item and reminded the meeting that all members of the Council were invited to be present, participate and vote (Council resolution in minute 96-14). The Clerk reported that 2 applications had been received and the Assistant Town Clerk had circulated the details to members. Members voted by secret ballot and the votes cast were as follows:-

Andrea Irene Johnson – 10 votes

Martin Thomson-Neall – 2 votes

2 spoilt papers

It was therefore **resolved** that Andrea Irene Johnson is duly co-opted to serve on Torpoint Town Council (West Ward). In response to questions on information from candidates, it was confirmed that the standard format notice for filling a casual vacancy by co-option as supplied by Cornwall Council was used and that if this Council wished to have a standard template or specific information to be supplied by candidates then the Council could give directions to the staff and underpin this process by writing it into protocols. Some members suggested that this was unnecessary and the Council should allow applicants to submit an application using their own discretion on what was supplied.

69-14FGP To consider rental and hire charges for the 2015/2016 financial year.

Members considered the hire charges using the circulated working paper as a basis for discussion.

Key points in the debate included: -

- a) Square Footage Charges for occupancy fees. Whilst some members wished the charges to remain the same it was suggested by others that for those operating commercial businesses then a rise should be implemented.
- b) Torpoint Archives – The Town Mayor suggested ending the convoluted system of charging the Torpoint Archives and then asking the group to recover the charge. The Mayor spoke on the very useful service provided by the organisation for the town both socially and educationally providing some very useful learning and information resources. It was **resolved** that the Archives would be able to use the rooms free of charge and the Clerk was asked to investigate legislation allowing the Council to provide the rooms.

(The Chairman declared a non-registerable interest and left the room whilst this item was debated. The Town Mayor and Councillor J F Creek both declared a non-registerable interest (minute 67-14FGP refers). Councillor B Hobbs took the chair whilst this matter was discussed.

- c) Hiring Charges (Benodet Park) – Following discussion it was resolved that the charge levied at Benodet Park would only be for the tea hut and sound system and the charge would be amended to read £25 per day or part of day for use of these facilities. Use of the park without use of the facilities would be free.

The final **recommended** proposed rental and hire charges to Council are attached as appendix "A" to these minutes

70-14FGP To recommend the budget for the 2015/2016 financial year.

Members considered the budget proposals for the forthcoming fiscal year using the circulated actual budget and development plan working papers as a basis for discussion. The Council also considered a draft budget prepared by the Clerk that included the revenue costs from the development plan.

Points of note:-

- a) Services Expenditure - The Clock winding expenditure has been added to this cost centre.
- b) Christmas Lights – now included in the Tourism and Marketing cost centre.
- c) Salaries - The salary scales for staff were confirmed as Town Clerk Sp pt 39 full time plus superannuation, Assistant Town Clerk Sp pt 22 30/37 plus superannuation, Caretaker Sp pt 10 – 20/37 hours - opted out of superannuation) and also Sp pt 10 –15/37 hours – Opted out decision not yet taken) and Cleaner Sp pt 5 – Opted out decision not yet taken (from 1st October 2014 on minimum wage pending spinal point pay negotiations between LGA and Unions). The Clerk informed members that a proposal from the LGA was being considered by the unions representing public sector workers. This would have the effect and impact of a 2% rise for workers on spinal point 10 and above with other workers having a minimum hourly rate of £7 per hour. This would take effect from January 2015 with a further increase in October 2015. It was also noted that spinal point 5 would disappear and it was therefore **recommended** that the Council would commence the casual cleaner at sp pt 6 when the new proposals are implemented. Councillor G J Davis argued that additional clerical support was required citing proposals to increase the services and assets that this Council would take on and also additional internal work for example writing funding applications. The salary budget was therefore increased to £100,000.
- d) Tourism and Marketing (formerly Marketing) – It was noted that the charges to this budget would include Armed Forces Day and Freedom of Torpoint Ceremony. The Christmas Lights project has also been charged into this cost centre.
- e) Mayors Allowance – As in previous years the Clerk raised the methodology in paying the Mayors allowance taking in suggestions from the SLCC and NALC and requested that this matter and process should be discussed at this forum. Methods to remunerate the Mayor (LGA 1972 s 15(5) and 35 (5)) were discussed and it was finally **recommended** that the Mayor's Allowance should be paid as a one-off payment with the Mayor being responsible for an audit trail should this become an issue with HMRC.
- f) Civic Functions – The mechanics of the civic function cost centre would be referred to the next meeting of the Finance and Personnel meeting for further consideration.
- g) Subscriptions – Councillor G J Davis spoke of the need for this Council to become a Quality Council with the opportunity to gain powers of competence. This would allow the Council to undertake and take on more powers and greater opportunities. The budget was increased to £2,000 to accommodate any possible membership of CALC or for any relevant use).
- h) Training – This budget was increased to £1,500 to facilitate additional training for the Assistant Town Clerk in pursuit of the localism agenda and also for other members of staff if required.
- i) Localism /Neighbourhood Plan – Councillor Davis noted that additional expenditure was required to undertake some of the regeneration proposals and £7,000 was added to the cost of the Neighbourhood Plan within this cost centre.
- j) Parks Improvement – Councillor J Tivnan spoke on the need for this Council to become involved with the removal of Japanese Knotweed from areas leased by this Council. It was therefore agreed to remove expenditure for the top of Thanckes Park project but to retain the expenditure in this budget that would now include provisions if required for the removal of the Japanese Knotweed in the area leased by this Council.

- k) It was further noted that no finances had been allocated for any project connected with the Library or other possible localism projects. It is understood that there is no likelihood of the Library closing within the next financial year and that this hiatus allows for the Council to consider this initiative further.

Following further discussion it was **recommended** to implement an imbalanced revenue budget with expenditure at £263,800 and income at £238,800. This would result in a net precept of £202,925 an increase of £29,257 (16.85%) over the previous year. The imbalance of £25,000 would be taken from the reserves for highlighted areas in the development plan. The recommended budget is appended to these minutes as "Appendix "B".

(The Deputy Town Mayor (Councillor M J Crago) together with non-Finance and Personnel committee members Councillors E H Andrews, Mrs K Brownhill, Mrs C E Goodman, L E Keise and J Tivnan left the meeting at this point).

71-14FGP To consider the implications of the Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

The Clerk drew attention to the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 (as circulated to the Committee Chairman and Mayor). The Clerk briefly spoke on the matters within the new legislation and how it affected the operations of this Council. The Clerk suggested that this item fell within the remit of the Marketing and Communications Working party and that an element of the Marketing and Publication policy should refer to this document and should also contain standard procedures. It was therefore **recommended** that the document is referred to the Marketing and Communications Working Party for further consideration.

72-14FGP Matters arising from the minutes.

It was also **resolved** to consider this matter along with the other requests for financial assistance and each request is therefore listed within this minute.

- a) Torpoint and Rame Youth Project – Request for financial assistance (£1,680):-

It was noted this request is being considered by the Committee following a presentation by the group to Council. Councillor B Hobbs spoke out strongly in favour of supporting this group citing the supportive work the group undertook to benefit the youth of Torpoint and the Rame peninsula. Councillor Hobbs also reminded the Council that a parish council on the Rame peninsula made a regular contribution to this organisation. After further discussion a proposal to grant £1,500 was defeated with the Chairman's casting vote (3-3) but a further proposal to grant £1,000 was supported and therefore it is **recommended** that this Council grants £1,000 to this organisation subject to the usual terms of reference.

- b) 2nd Torpoint Brownies – Request for financial assistance (£350)

The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that the organisation had submitted the required documents. Following discussion it was **recommended** to grant £150 subject to the usual terms of reference.

- c) Torpoint Moorings Association - Request for financial assistance (£1,400).

The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that the organisation had submitted the required documents. Councillor B Hobbs spoke to the request given permission by the Town Mayor who took the Chair for this agenda item in compliance with section 3.5A within the Code of Conduct adopted by this Council, before retiring from the meeting. The Town Mayor also spoke on the history of this matter and suggested support for the request. Following further discussion it is **recommended** that this Council grants £1,400 to this organisation. Subject to the usual terms of reference.

(Both the Chairman (Councillor Mrs R A Southworth) and the Vice Chairman (Councillor B Hobbs) declared a non-registerable interest (see minute 67-14FGP) and left the Chamber. The Town Mayor took the Chair for this agenda item).

73-14FGP To consider the Council Risk Management Plan.

- a) Overtime Overtime/Casual Hours – (Assistant Town Clerk).

Noted. It was **resolved** to consider this item with the public and press excluded from the meeting.

- b) Creditors/Debtors - (Assistant Town Clerk).

Following the presentation of the creditors/debtors report (as circulated) it was **recommended** that the report as presented is approved by Council.

c) Gorsedh – Sale of Mugs.

The Assistant Town Clerk presented the audit trail of the Gorsedh Mugs (as circulated). It was reported that 102 mugs had been sold with 29 gifted to participants of the Gorsedh ceremony leaving a net total of 19 mugs remaining. After considering the report the Committee **recommend** that the report is approved by Council and that the 29 mugs gifted to Gorsedh participants is confirmed by Council.

d) Internal Audit Review and Terms of Reference.

The Clerk referred to the terms of reference detailing the minimum standards and scope of the internal audit as detailed in a template from the SLCC and in compliance with the 2014 edition of the Governance and Accountability in Local Councils in England and Wales – A Practitioners Guide. After reviewing the matter and subject to the insertion of the words and receipts after the word invoices (Within the section headed "Standing Orders and Financial Regulations") and with the request that the Internal Auditor also reviews compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2014 it is **recommended** that the terms of reference are approved. It was noted that the providers for the internal auditor had received the terms of reference against which to submit estimates and in line with the minimum standards of this Council setting a minimum qualification of AAT qualified quotations received were from Cornwall Council (quotation £750), Ken Abraham (former District Auditor) (£583) and Hudson Accounting (CIPFA/AAT qualified and Chief Internal Auditor) (£450). It was noted that both Ken Abraham and Hudson Accounting were both appointed Internal Auditors at major town councils in the county. It is therefore **recommended** that the Council appoint Hudson Accounting as this Councils Internal Auditor.

(Councillor B Hobbs left the meeting at this point).

74-14FGP Correspondence:-

a) Taylor Cowell – Request to use the Council facilities at no cost (Fashion Show).

Noted. It was also noted that no financial information was forthcoming as the group were students from the Plymouth College of Art wishing to raise money toward the end of year fashion show and had no bank account or financial background. However the students did produce a letter from the College lecturer and in the circumstances members accepted this in place of the financial information. As the event was before the next Council meeting (Friday 14th November 2014), after considering the matter members **resolved** to allow use of the facilities at no cost for the event.

75-14FGP Planning Applications:-

None.

76-14FGP Date of Next Meeting.

Monday 3rd December 2014.

77-14FGP Any Business that has been disclosed to the Chairman and members prior to the meeting.

None.

78-14FGP Exclusion of the Press and Public.

It was **resolved** to exclude the Public and Press as items to be discussed involved staff and contracts (Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960). The minute is listed as confidential and appended to these minutes.

Meeting closed at 9.55pmChairman.