

## TORPOINT TOWN COUNCIL

**MINUTES** of a meeting of the Finance and Personnel Committee held on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 at 7.00 pm in the Mayors Parlour, 1-3 Buller Road, Torpoint.

PRESENT: - Councillor M N Pearn MBE (Town Mayor), Councillor M J Crago (Deputy Town Mayor), Councillors Mrs. K Brownhill, J F Creek, B Hobbs, Mrs. J M Martin and Mrs. R A Southworth plus the Town Clerk.

**Also present (for agenda item 5 [minute 18-15F&P]):**- Councillors E H Andrews, G J Davis, P R Edwards, Mrs. A I Johnson, L E Keise and J Tivnan.

### **14-15F&P. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs. C A Jackson (for agenda item 5).

### **15-15F&P. Declarations of Interest relating to items on the Agenda**

None.

### **16-15F&P. Election of Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16**

The Town Mayor called for nominations for the position of Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16. The Deputy Town Mayor proposed that Councillor Mrs. R A Southworth is elected Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16. Councillor B Hobbs seconded the proposition and there being no other nominations the motion was put and Councillor Mrs. R A Southworth was duly elected Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16.

### **17-15F&P. Election of Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16**

The Chairman called for nominations for the position of Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16. The Deputy Town Mayor proposed that Councillor Mrs. J M Martin is elected Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16. Councillor J F Creek seconded the proposition and there being no other nominations the motion was put and Councillor Mrs. J M Martin was duly elected Vice Chairman for the Civic Year 2015-16.

### **18-15F&P. To consider the terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Plan/Vision Consultant.**

Councillor G J Davis briefed members on the documents (as circulated) that had been previously considered by a sub group of the Steering Group. Councillor Davis explained that annex "C" would refer to the tender references within the Council's Financial Regulations. Councillor Mrs. J M Martin whilst offering congratulations on the format of the documents sought assurance that the document would not become another item gathering "dust" on the shelf. This point was echoed by Councillor E H Andrews who reminded members of previous documents that had not progressed past the production stage. Councillor Mrs. R A Southworth sought assurance that previous consultants were not to be consulted on this project voicing concern that the council could get a similar reports or replicated previous reports. Councillor Davis informed the meeting that the proposed list of those being invited to tender comprised of a group of professionally qualified planners as identified by a member of the Steering Group. Councillor Davis then detailed the documents content to the meeting including the various strands within them. The cost was also discussed with Councillor Davis suggesting that the Steering Group might have undertaken some of the relevant work that would reduce the final projected cost. Councillor Mrs. Southworth voiced concern that the tenders might come back in excess of the amount of money budgeted although members conceded that the proposals to be considered at the meeting were on the terms of reference not approving expenditure. After further discussion it was proposed by Councillor J Tivnan and seconded by the Deputy Town Mayor and duly **resolved** that the documentation and annexes (as circulated) are circulated to appropriately qualified tenderers to invite quotations to undertake the work.

(At this point Councillors E H Andrews, G J Davis, Mrs. A I Johnson, L E Keise and J Tivnan all left the meeting).

### **19-15F&P. Minutes of the previous meeting**

It was **resolved** that the minutes of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2015 are taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

## **20-15F&P. Matters arising from the minutes**

### a) Civic Functions:-

Pursuant to minute 4-15FGP (a) it was reported that there are no civic functions planned for the month of June with the next civic function being the Civic Parade and Service scheduled for the end of July.

## **21-15F&P. To consider policies delegated to this Committee**

None.

## **22-15F&P. To consider the Council Business Risk Management Plan**

### a) Overtime/Casual Hours:-

Members scrutinised the document (as circulated) as prepared by the Assistant Town Clerk. Members reviewed the hours worked by each members of staff and expressed satisfaction at the report.

### b) Debtors/Creditors:-

The report (as circulated) and compiled by the Assistant Town Clerk was presented to members. It was noted that the Council has one debtor in the 60-90 days category which it is understood the Assistant Town Clerk was actively chasing this debt. It was noted that the other debtors were all within net trading terms. Members suggested that the debtor should not be offered Council facilities until the debt is settled.

### c) Operation Liabilities – Review of the Insurance Schedule.

The Clerk reported on the current insurance values. It was reported and **recommended** that the insurance value of assets should be increased in value at the rate of inflation for the foreseeable future. On non-assets it was reported that the following rates are in operation:-

i) Public Liability - £15 million.

ii) Employers Liability - £10 million

iii) Hirers Liability - £2 million.

iv) Fidelity Guarantee - £500,000 (balances plus ½ the precept =£389,673)

It is **recommended** that the insurance cover as detailed above is approved as adequate for the Town Council requirements.

## **23-15F&P. Items referred to this Committee**

### a) Internal Auditor Report (Including paper on the Mayors Allowance – as circulated).

The Committee considered the relevant points from the Internal Auditors report (as approved at Council – minute 31-15 refers). It was reported that the values on the asset register have been adjusted to the recommended proxy/historical value. Receipt was reported of a quotation from the webmaster to install a backup system for the main computer at a cost of £250. It was noted that this amount was within the parameters of the Best Value statement and it was further noted that the Council will proceed with this system or a similar up to this value. The Clerk reported that he would review an operational manual. On the subject of the Mayors Allowance members reviewed the paper (as circulated by the Clerk) together with the other advice as previously discussed. It was acknowledged by members that traditionally the Council had worked on an "expense illustrated allowance" with the Civic Functions being solely expense led but the Mayors Allowance had been paid as a lump sum, although the Council had asked the Mayor to keep his/her own records for HMRC purposes and had not insisted on an audit trail being produced for Council (LGA 1972 15(5) refers). The Internal Auditor was of the opinion that the Council should not rely on the Mayor to retain records and respond to HMRC but that the Council should be the accountable body. It was confirmed that the key was differentiating between expense and remuneration.

Councillor Mrs J M Martin the Council practitioner on HR, was of the opinion that putting the Mayor on the payroll was not really appropriate and therefore the Council or Mayor had to demonstrate that the expenditure was expense led and contained no remuneration element. Councillor Mrs Martin suggested that the Mayor retain receipts for any expenditure and this is contained within an expense log. The Council Pay and Conditions policy would be used for mileage calculations. The log can then be presented to Council and Audit to demonstrate that the Allowance is expenses led and contains no remuneration element. Councillor Mrs Martin suggested that the payment could therefore be paid as a lump sum with the expenditure audit trail produced as an expense log. After further consideration and discussion it is **recommended** that the Council adopt this method of paying the Mayor's Allowance but that other towns are also asked for comparison.

b) Torpoint and St Columba RFC – Request for financial assistance.

Noted. It was noted that no details of gross expenditure was given on the application form although the Mayor understood the total cost of fencing in the ground to be around £12,000. The amount of financial assistance being sought was £1,000. After careful consideration it was **recommended** that the Council are sympathetic to providing the £1,000 assistance but if clear and detailed accounts were received, consideration might be given to increasing this amount.

#### **24-15F&P. Correspondence**

a) CORY Commercial – Paperless Invoicing.

Noted. **Recommend** that the Council accept invoices from this organisation by email but continue with paying the invoice by cheque.

b) Coastal Community Initiative – Use of facilities at No Cost.

Noted. **Recommend** that the initial and inaugural meeting is permitted free of charge.

c) Cornwall Deaf Centre – Request for Financial Assistance.

Noted. **Recommend** that the application is declined. It was suggested that residents in Torpoint are referred to the centre in Plymouth and not Truro.

d) British Gas – Care plan Maintenance Agreement.

Noted. Members concur that the Council continue with the plan at £882.73 (plus VAT).

#### **25-15F&P. Planning Applications**

a) PA15/03726 – 3, Kempton Terrace, Torpoint – Demolition of existing detached garage and re-build with garden room.

No objections or observations.

#### **26-15F&P. Accounts for payment**

PAYEE	REASON	GROSS	(VAT)	NETT
Community Dev Foundation	Return of Unspent Grant	2,087.96	0.00	2,087.96
Nisbets	Highball Glasses (96)	42.72	7.11	35.61
BNP Paribas (Direct Deb)	Photocopier Lease	522.72	87.12	435.60
North Cornwall Advertiser	Armed Forces Day (Advert)	78.00	13.00	65.00
CORY Environmental	Wheelie Bin	94.99	15.83	79.16
Royal Mail	Neighbourhood Plan Returns	156.24	26.04	130.20
C F Southworth (Aldi)	Mayor Making Reception	67.73	9.32	58.41
British Gas	Gas Supply	1479.48	246.58	1232.90
CE Builders	Repairs Floor/Ladies Toilet	276.00	46.00	230.00
BTE Services (SW Hygiene)	Sanitary Disposal	707.95	117.99	589.96

#### **27-15F&P. Date of next meeting**

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2015

#### **28-15F&P. Any business that has been disclosed to the Chairman and members prior to the meeting.**

- The Mayor confirmed that the tennis courts at the Lawn have been cleared and tidied and he has received confirmation that Cornwall Council are happy for the courts to be used. It is understood that Cornwall Council public liability insurance would be operable for the site. The Mayor requested that the Council Caretakers open and close the site and assured members that the Council were not responsible for any matters relating to the site as a result of the staff opening and closing the site. Members raised no objections to the Mayor's proposals.

- The Deputy Town Mayor reported that one of the benches adjacent to the St John Ambulance Hall had been removed as the bench had deteriorated and importantly had not been secured correctly. The Deputy Town Mayor reported that the removed bench was located in the grounds of the Carew Lodge. It is understood that the Contractor undertaking maintenance for the area had offered to re-instate the bench at no cost to this Council. After considering the matter it is suggested that the bench is repaired and re-instated preferably using the current contractor.

Meeting closed at 8.17pm .....Chairman