

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2021

PRESENT

- The Mayor – Councillor Jones
- Deputy Mayor – Councillor Rushton
- Councillor Brady
- Councillor Hall
- Councillor Hart
- Councillor Hawley
- Councillor Perkin
- Councillor Rogers
- Councillor Sheldon
- Councillor Smith
- Councillor Swift
- Councillor Yates

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

a) Disclosable pecuniary interests and dispensations

Councillor Sheldon declared an interest in anything relating to Biddulph in Bloom.

b) Other interests

Councillor Smith declared an interest in the Green Tree House as her mother is the Treasurer of the charity. As she is not a member of this Committee; she will not be voting on the matter.

79. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Salt.

80. MINUTES

- A) The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 (approved at the Town Council meeting on 9 March 2021) were confirmed.
- B) The Minutes of the Emergency Planning Working Group meeting held on 4 February 2021 were received.

C) The Minutes of the Emergency Planning Working Group meeting held on 4 March 2021 were received.

81. TO RECEIVE FEBRUARY 2021 BANK RECONCILIATION

The bank reconciliation from February 2021 was received.

82. POLICY REVIEW

a) Reserves Policy

Councillor Hawley asked if the policy needed to refer to the level of reserves held by the Town Council and, if this was the case, asked whether it needed updating when the reserves change.

Councillor Hawley moved to remove section 2.6 from the policy and Councillor Perkin seconded.

Councillor Yates proposed to move section 2.6 to an appendix, which can be updated.

All Committee members voted in favour of the proposal; the policy would be adopted with the amendment.

b) Public participation in council meetings

The Chief Officer noted that legislation hadn't changed in recent years and the content of the policy had not changed, but it is a new accessible format.

Councillor Jones moved to accept the policy; Councillor Perkin seconded. All in favour.

c) Guidance on recording in public meetings

The Chief Officer outlined that the policy remained largely similar, but a new section was added at 2.8 that makes provision for recording of virtual meetings. The Town Council has no control over whether the public record virtual meetings or what they may do with the recordings, but urges the public to use any material responsibly.

Councillor Jones asked if there was any update on the emergency legislation that allows virtual meetings, which is due to expire in May. It was confirmed that no update had been received yet. Councillor Jones moved to accept the policy.

Councillor Hawley asked if the statement that is read at the beginning of meetings regarding the recording and streaming of meetings should be included in the policy.

Councillor Rogers said he had previously found it intimidating when a camcorder was used in the Council Chamber and wondered if there could be stipulations about how filming occurs in meetings. It was confirmed that it was not possible to make such restrictions.

Councillor Yates said that he would like the Town Council recordings to be uploaded to YouTube, where there would not be a need for the videos to be deleted; this could form an archive.

The Chief Officer stated that Facebook was used as the Town Council has a Facebook page. Posting the videos on Facebook fulfils the requirement to have the meetings within the public domain.

Councillor Hall suggested accepting the policy and the YouTube issue can be brought back for further discussion.

Councillor Hawley suggested that the videos can be archived on the Town Council website, as this may help the Town Council maintain control of the videos. The Chief Officer confirmed this may be possible.

Councillor Hart said he was concerned about the videos being on YouTube as he is aware of situations where issues on YouTube have escalated badly.

Councillor Hawley moved to accept the policy with an amendment to include the aforementioned statement at the beginning of virtual meetings. All Committee members voted in favour.

83. TO APPROVE THE GRANT EVALUATION FORM FOR ALL GRANTS AWARDED IN 2020-21

Councillor Jackson stated that the Town Council need to be vigilant regarding ensuring grant evaluations are completed and enforce this in the award of future grants.

Councillor Hart moved to accept the evaluation form; Councillor Hawley seconded. All voted in favour.

In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1, the Council is to determine which items, if any, should be taken with the public excluded.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

- 84. ITEM REQUESTED BY COUNCILLOR YATES – TO CONSIDER TOWN COUNCIL INTERVENTION IN RELATION TO THE FELLING OR MANAGEMENT OF A TREE AT BIDDULPH BROOK (PHOTO ATTACHED)**

It was agreed to pass on the recommendation of the Committee to Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.

- 85. TO RECEIVE THE GREEN TREE HOUSE ACCOUNTS AND APPROVE THE 2020-21 GRANT ALLOCATION**

The grant was approved.

- 86. TO APPROVE CONTRACTORS TO COMPLETE COMPLIANCE ACTIVITY ACROSS THE TOWN COUNCIL SITES IN 2021-22**

The Committee voted to proceed with the recommendations received for compliance activities. These will be reviewed on an annual basis.

- 87. TO APPROVE QUOTATIONS FOR EMERGENCY LIGHTING REPAIRS**

It was agreed to consider quotes for emergency lighting repairs.

- 88. TO APPROVE A QUOTATION FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT AT BIDDULPH TOWN HALL AND TWO BURIAL SITES IN 2021-22**

A quote was approved.

- 89. TO CONSIDER A RESPONSE IN RELATION TO THE CCLA INVESTMENT EMAILS**

It was agreed to continue with the current investment.

- 90. TO CONFIRM THAT FOLLOWING SUCCESSFUL PROBATIONARY PERIODS, PERMANENT CONTRACTS WILL BE OFFERED TO THE TWO CUSTOMER SUPPORT ASSISTANTS AND THE FINANCE ADMINISTRATION OFFICER**

It was agreed to offer permanent contracts.

The meeting ended at 7:01pm.

Signed..... Date.....