

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Monday 15th January 2018 at 7pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: S Ball, S Hirst, K Painter, T Walsh (Chair) and J Williams (Deputy Chair).

Observer: Councillor P Burrell

Officers: S Holley (Town Clerk)

Members of Public: Mrs Sue Doidge (Tetbury Girl Guides) and Mr Chris Marais (Tetbury Mini Rugby Football Club)

FS02. 1/18 Apologies for absence

Received from Councillor J Easterbrook.

FS02. 1/18 Public Consultation

None.

FS03. 1/18 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Walsh declared an 'other' interest in the application for a grant received from Tetbury Mini Rugby Club, in that he was the President of Tetbury Rugby Club.

FS04. 1/18 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2017 were approved as a correct record.
Record of Voting: For – 4, Against – 0, Abstention – 1, Absent/Apologies - 1

At this point in the Meeting, the Chairman agreed to amend the order of business in order to accommodate the invited speakers for two grant applications.

FS05. 1/18 Requests for Grants

(i) Tetbury Girl Guides - Mrs Sue Doidge, District Commissioner, spoke in support of the application and answered a number of questions from members. She explained that the Grant requested would allow the Guides to buy a shed for storage of essential equipment at St Marys School, as the Malt House had become unsafe. Mrs Doidge confirmed that the need was not urgent and the Committee agreed to DEFER the decision until 16th April 2018, being the date of first meeting in the next Financial Year, by which time the Committee would have its new Grant budget.

At this point in the Meeting, Councillor Walsh reminded the Committee that he had declared an 'other' interest in the grant application and vacated the Chair; Councillor Williams assumed it for the following item of business only. Councillor Walsh did not vote on the grant application.

(ii) Tetbury Mini Rugby Club – Mr Chris Marais, Vice-Chairman of the Club, spoke in support of the application and answered a number of questions from members. He explained that the Club was arranging an International Tour for its Under-11s and was requesting a grant of £500 to assist with players expenses regardless of their economic circumstances. It was explained that the Committee had made full use of its grant funds for 2017/18 so any extra awards would need to be authorised by the Council; although the Committee would consider a recommendation. The Committee was minded to RECOMMEND approval by the Council, subject to the Club providing evidence of a fund-raising plan specific to the proposed tour. Mr Marais was also informed that other grant-giving bodies in the Town might be similarly inclined to provide financial assistance. Record of Voting: For – 4, Against – 0, Abstention – 1, Absent/Apologies - 1

FS06. 1/18 Action points arising from the minutes

Ref	ACTION	WHO	STATUS
FS14 06/16	To consider utilising Coombe House office space	Town Clerk	Completion of Lease on the Agenda for this meeting. ONGOING
FS10. 10/16	Request quotes re windows and stonework of courthouse	Town Clerk	Project now with H&R Committee, following approval by the Council. ONGOING.
FS10. 01/17	Contact volunteers of emergency plan to see if they are still willing to volunteer	Deputy Clerk / F&S Committee	Subsequent meeting held 21 st November 2017. ONGOING
FS07. 07/17	Concerns regarding the way the accounts were presented.	Town Clerk/RFO and Finance Officer	8 Nov. Clerk accepts £150 quote for review ONGOING
FS09. 07/17	Email Risk Management Plan to insurance broker for guidance.	EO	(i) Awaiting response from Insurance Co
FS16. 07/17	(i) An advertisement to be placed in the Tetbury Advertiser explaining all dogs to be kept on a lead in the Recreation Ground and both churchyards. Discussed signage on the Recreation Ground requiring that all dogs be kept on leads.	Office staff	Notice drafted for comment, publication expected in November Advertiser
FS16. 07/17	(iii) Staff Review.	Town Clerk and F&S	Staff Review approved by Council 26 Sept. SIX MONTH REVIEW IN MARCH
FS06. 08/17	Council Credit Card - Recommended amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations	Town Clerk	ADOPTED by the Council on 25 th September 2017. DELETE
FS09. 09/17 FS10. 09/17 and FS11. 09/17	Review of the Complaints Procedure Proposed Member/Officer Protocol Statement on Councillor Behaviour	Town Clerk	ADOPTED by the Council on 25 th September 2017. DELETE
FS11. 10/17	Review of the Council's Investments.	Town Clerk and Finance Officer	ONGOING
FS17. 11/17	Recommendation to the Council to ring-fence £78,912 in S106 receipts from Highfield Farm for Pre-School Provision	Town Clerk	AGREED by the Council on 27 th November 2017. DELETE

FS07. 1/18 Payments and Bank Reconciliations

The Committee ratified the month 9 (December) schedule of payments for the Town Council amounting to £33,152.94 and for the TIC amounting to £2,274.09 issued by the Clerk under

the authority granted by the Council on 27th November 2017 (Minute TC17. 11/17 refers). The Committee approved the payments for month 10 (January) amounting to £19,614.46 for the Town Council and £3,648.98 for the TIC. Record of Voting: For – 5, Against – 0, Abstention – 0, Absent/Apologies - 1. The Bank reconciliations dated 5th December 2017 and 3rd January 2018 (ending £308,629.33 and £305,418.21 respectively) were duly noted.

FS08.1/18 2017/18 Accounts to 31st December 2017 (9 month/Quarter 3 budget review)

The Committee noted the presented Accounts and the accompanying notes on significant variances. Of particular interest was that a typographical error had been made in December 2016 when drafting the 2017/18 Budget, in that the Council's grant to the Visitor Information Centre had incorrectly been entered as £1,250 instead of £12,500. This had resulted in the Precept being issued for a figure £11,250 less than required. Also, the Committee noted that the Visitor Information Centre had bought in £4,378 of merchandise by the end of Quarter 3, against an annual budget of £20,000 and requested that Officers find out when the last stock-take had been done. Record of Voting: For – 5, Against – 0, Abstention – 0, Absent/Apologies - 1.

FS09. 1/18 Reserves Policy

The Town Clerk and RFO had consulted the Internal Auditor on whether the General Reserve (usually used to fund emergency or contingency expenditure) could be less than 25%-100% of budgeted expenditure. The advice received was that the Council could set its own figure as long as it considered the risks. Earmarked Reserves might be also be usable in certain circumstances, and subject to a plan to restore depleted reserves when appropriate. It was agreed that the circulated Reserves Policy should be RECOMMENDED to the Council for incorporation in the Draft Budget for 2018/19 and with effect from 1st April 2018. Record of Voting: For – 3, Against – 0, Abstention – 2, Absent/Apologies - 1.

FS10. 1/18 Fees and Charges for 2018/19

The Committee was requested to approve the Council's Fees and Charges for implementation with effect from 1st April 2018. Record of Voting: For – 4, Against – 1, Abstention – 0, Absent/Apologies - 1.

FS11.1/18 Final Budget Recommendations for 2018/19 and Arrangements for Public Consultation Event

The Committee was requested to consider a Draft Budget recommending a Precept of £295,000; an increase of 6.2%. Due to the increasing number of households in the town, the effect on the Band 'D' Council Taxpayer was an increase of £2.16, or 1.75%. The Draft Budget was accompanied by a new Three Year Capital and Revenue Plan (a supplement to the Five Year Business Plan) to assist in future financial planning. The Committee unanimously APPROVED the Draft Budget for consultation purposes and it would be RECOMMENDED to the Council for consideration of approval, along with the consultation responses received.

FS12. 1/18 Internal Auditor's Initial Report on 2017/18 Accounts

The Town Clerk and RFO reminded the Committee that the Council had appointed a new Internal Auditor. Mrs Bridget Bowen had carried out her first visit in December in order to obtain an overview of the Council's accounting systems, procedures and related documents. No significant problems were identified during the visit. A second visit had been arranged for February. The report was noted.

FS13. 1/18 Completion of Lease over Coombe House, New Church Street and Sub-Tenancy Agreement with Tetbury Model Railway Club

The Committee resolved to APPROVE (a) the terms of the lease from the Bromford Group over Coombe House, New Church Street and (b) the terms of the Sub-tenancy Agreement with Tetbury Model Railway Club (TMRC) in respect of its continued occupation of the first

floor. The Town Clerk and RFO drew attention to the terms of the Sub-tenancy Agreement with TMRC which allowed the Council to apply a charge as a 'contribution to costs' and explained that he was discussing with the Bromford Group extending that principle to the casual users/hirers of the ground floor. Record of Voting: For – 4, Against – 1, Abstention – 0, Absent/Apologies - 1.

FS14. 1/18 Renewal of Lease over Visitor Information Centre premises at 33 Church Street, Tetbury

The Committee was requested to consider approving the renewal of the lease over the Visitor Information Centre premises at 33 Church Street, Tetbury. It was explained that the Council had occupied the premises for a number of years on a succession of three-year leases; the most recent of which had expired on 13th March 2017 without the landlord's agent or the Council noticing. The landlord's property agent had offered to renew for another three years, backdated to 14th March 2017. They proposed to keep the rent unchanged at £4,650 for Year 1 (i.e. from March 2017 to March 2018) and to increase it to £5,000 for the subsequent years. Over the three years, the increase equated to 4.9%. The Committee unanimously RESOLVED to approve the renewal of another three-year lease on the terms proposed, and requested the Clerk to look for renewal over a longer term.

FS15. 1/18 Meeting to Discuss Proposed Town Twinning Arrangement

Councillor Hirst reminded the Committee that, as Mayor, he had signed an accord with the Mayor/Maire of the French town Chatillon-sur-Indre when a party from that town had stayed in Tetbury in May. The town was now looking to strengthen its links and had invited Tetbury to enter into a formal town-twinning arrangement, which might be part of a plan to link the Cotswolds with Berry-Touraine (the area around Chatillon). The Committee was aware that although the formality of signing twinning charters was usually undertaken by town councils, it was usual practice for community based town-twinning groups to undertake the ongoing organisation and funding of twinning activities and it was understood that there was significant local support. With that in mind, the Committee was content for the Mayor, the Chair of this Committee and the Town Clerk to enter into further discussions at a meeting later in the week.

FS16. 1/18 Correspondence

(i) A resident had written to express concern about the potential danger of the Beaufort Hunt and quadbikes using the bridlepath on the former railbed. This would be discussed at a meeting with representatives of the Hunt, the Feoffees and Tetbury Rail Lands Regeneration Trust.

(ii) The Deputy Chairman of the Dolphins Hall Committee had written to confirm that the Committee had had a re-think of its planned use of the £11,316 held by the Council as Sole Trustee to Charity 301633. The Clerk would arrange a meeting of the Charity to consider the request.

FS17. 1/18 Brief Councillor Reports

Councillor Painter requested that Officers look into progress with regard to a grant application received from another social group in St Marys Day Centre.

Councillor Walsh explained that he and the Chair of the Dolphins Hall Committee had looked into a complaint that the Hall fire doors were badly fitted. This had been resolved swiftly.

FS18. 1/18 Agenda items for future consideration

No new items were identified.

FS19. 1/18 Date and time of the next meeting

12th February 2018 at 7pm - Noted.

FS20. 1/18 Exclusion of the Public and Press

It was RESOLVED that under Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the Public and Press be excluded from the Meeting for the following item of business on the grounds it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information (as defined in paragraph (2) of Part I of Schedule 12A to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 [Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person]), and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned.

FS21. 1/18 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 20th November 2017

The Confidential Minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2017 were approved as a correct record. Record of Voting: For – 4, Against – 0, Abstention – 1, Absent/Apologies - 1

Note: the business covered by Minute FS17. 11/17 was considered in Closed Session for the reasons agreed in Minute FS16. 11/17, but the decision in this Minute is not Exempt/Confidential.

Meeting closed 9.10pm

Chairman Dated