

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at 7.12pm**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors: S Hirst (Chair), S Ball, J Easterbrook, K Painter, A Walsh and J Williams

Observers: Councillors P Burrell, N Ind, J Turton

Officers: S Holley (Town Clerk), T Niblett (Deputy Clerk)

Members of Public: One

Meeting Start Time:

The start of the meeting had been delayed due to the over-running of a members' workshop on the Budget

**FS01. 2/19 Apologies for absence:**

No members were absent.

**FS02. 2/19 Public Consultation:**

Mr Colin Pearce spoke to disassociate himself from the grant application he submitted on behalf of the Dolphins Hall Management Committee (DHMC) the previous year and agreed that a new application should be submitted. Mr Pearce also spoke with regard to references in Council meetings about the DHMC accounts for 2018 not being correct and stated that they had been left in good order. He felt that members of the Council also on DHMC should not make such comments and noted that the new Committee had not published its accounts.

**FS03. 2/19 Declarations of Interest:**

Agenda/Minute Item 9 – Councillors Easterbrook and Ball both declared an 'Other' interest in the item to consider Financial Support to the Dolphins Hall in that they had both been appointed by the Council to serve on the Dolphins Hall Management Committee.

**FS04. 2/19 Minutes:**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 were approved as a correct record.  
Record of Voting: For – 5, Against – 0, Abstentions – 2, Absent/Apologies – 0.

**FS05. 2/19 Action points arising from the minutes:**

The circulated report on action taken since the last meeting was NOTED. In particular:

(a) FS12. 4/18 – Defibrillators – The Committee was pleased to note that match-funding had now been received from Cotswold District Council (£1,250) and from the Lions Club (£1,000) to install public access defibrillators on the outside walls of the Goods Shed and the Football Clubhouse at the Recreation Ground. R&J Pearce had been contracted for the installation and the Committee welcomed its generous offer to install one of the machines without charge. The Clerk had emailed all members to advise that the 'blue token' collection at Tesco was sufficient for AED Donate to supply two more defibrillators (of the same design as the first two) without any match-funding required from the Council, other than installation. Discussions were in hand for their installation on the Football Clubhouse at Preston Park and outside St Mary's Centre.

(b) FS08. 1/19 – TAYCT (Youth Club) request for £3,500 'top-up' grant - Councillor Hirst confirmed that either Cotswold District Council or Gloucestershire County Council would be able to make up this top-up grant.

**FS06. 2/19 Payments for February 2019 and Bank Reconciliation for January 2019:**

(a) The Committee unanimously APPROVED the following schedules detailing receipts and payments for February (Month 11):

Town Council Receipts	£
Town Council Payments	Nil
Visitor Information Centre Receipts	23,222.06
Visitor Information Centre Payments	Nil
Credit Card Payments	2,833.45
Credit Card Receipts	595.99
	595.99

(b) The Bank Reconciliation dated 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 was NOTED (Total Balances - £382,766.56). The Committee also noted the balances of the Council's Earmarked Reserves (£322,368.30) and, in particular, the advice that the Council's General Reserve was considerably lower than he could recommend. This would be considered in more depth when the Committee considered the Budget later in the meeting (Item 9).

**FS07. 2/19 Accounts for 2018/19 – Income and Expenditure (Month 11):**

The Committee NOTED the report and the Town Clerk's assurance that the monthly reports now accurately reflected expenditure and income against the approved Budget, following a full day of work by an RBS Omega Accounting Technician. Officers were requested to report on why the £10,000 payment for a Traffic Regulation Order did not appear in the Highways budgetline.

**FS08. 2/19 Claim for Loss and Damage – Police Museum:**

The Committee noted a claim from the Alex Nichols Collection for £3,130 in respect of three sets of handcuffs lost or otherwise unaccounted for by the Council and for water/rust damage to a number of other sets of handcuffs, apparently incurred over several years storage in damp conditions in the Basement to the Council Offices. Unfortunately, while the Council's insurance policy covered theft it did not cover items lost or unaccounted for. Also, while the policy covered accidental damage it excluded wear and tear and, specifically, rust. The Committee noted that liability for the loss/damage was not contested by the Council. There was a small positive side to the claim in that Officers had identified areas for improvement to the Police Museum's working practices and documentation. The Town Clerk was asked whether an itemised list was available and it was unanimously RESOLVED to make an initial offer of £2,000.

**FS09. 2/19 – Budget for 2019/20:**

The Committee was requested to note progress with preparing the Council's Budget for 2019/20 in the light of (a) the Council's resolution on 28<sup>th</sup> January to set a Precept of £354,400 (an inflationary increase of 2.9% for the Band D Council taxpayer) with work on the detailed Budget to follow; (b) the Budget Workshop event open to all members held immediately before the present meeting and (c) a report on the Council's Accounts and specifically on its Reserves, by an RBS Omega Accounting Technician. The following was RESOLVED: (i) That the Committee notes the outcomes of the Workshop held immediately prior to this meeting; (ii) that, in view of the updated Accounts following the RBS Omega Accounting Technician's visit on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and his work on the Accounts and Reserves, the Committee agrees that some additional work is now required to identify a way forward for the Budget for 2019/20, with particular attention to be given to the Council's General Reserve (formerly the Emergency Reserve); (iii) that, until such time as a list of affordable projects can be agreed, all surplus funding be returned to the General Fund at the end of the 2018/19 Financial Year; (iv) that the list of high value /major projects still in need of formal decision be added to the Budget for 2019/20 with zero funding allocation, with the exception of £10,000 for the Wild Towns Project (to which the Council has previously committed); (v) that the Council be recommended to open a new bank account for S106 Reserve holdings, in order to keep them clearly set apart from the General Reserve and other available funding; and (vi) that this Committee will make recommendations for improved financial controls and a new Grants application process for implementation with effect from the 2019/20 Financial Year. It was AGREED that a Special Meeting of the Committee was required to progress further work on the Budget at the earliest opportunity. Unanimous.

**FS10. 2/19 – Conditions attached to grant to St Mary's Playgroup:**

The Committee RESOLVED to remove 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 as the deadline for transfer of the remaining grant to St Mary's Playgroup, which could call on the funds on an 'as required' basis. Unanimous.

**FS11. 2/19 Recommendation to the Council on handling ‘Brief reports from County, District and Town Councillors’:**

The Committee considered comments that this Agenda item took too much time in Council meetings in that it was frequently used for reporting minor matters that could have been dealt with more promptly by the Office between meetings, for reporting multiple activities and occasionally for ‘grandstanding’. It was agreed to RECOMMEND that Councillors be confined to a maximum of three minutes each (to match the allowance in the Public Consultation session) and that, for those members who genuinely had a lot to report, they be given the opportunity to provide a written report for circulation with the Agenda papers. Unanimous.

**FS12. 2/19 Correspondence:**

None

**FS13. 2/19 Brief Councillor Reports:**

Councillor Sandra Ball thanked everyone for the support given to her following the recent death of her husband Brian.

**FS14. 2/19 Agenda items for future consideration:**

(i) Drafting an ‘Open Spaces Policy for the Council; (ii) reviewing/revising the Council’s Code of Conduct, with particular attention on handling ‘Other’ interests.

**FS15. 2/19 Date and time of the next meeting:**

11<sup>th</sup> March 2019 – NOTED.

**FS16. 2/19 Exclusion of the Public and Press to allow discussion of Confidential business:**

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 paragraphs (1) of Part I of Schedule 12A to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 [Information relating to an individual]), and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information concerned.

**FS17. 2/19 Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019:**

APPROVED as a correct record. Record of Voting: For – 3, Against – 0, Abstentions – 3, Absent/Apologies – 1.

*Note: the business covered by Minute FS17. 2/19 was considered in Closed Session for the reasons agreed in Minute FS16. 2/19, but the decisions in these Minutes are not Exempt/Confidential.*

The Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Chairman ..... Dated .....