

REPORT of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee
held on Thursday 12 September 2019

Present: Cllr Jayne Stansfield (Chairman)
Cllr Benj Emmerson (arrived late)
Cllr Bob Griffin (arrived late)
Cllr Clive Parkinson (arrived late)
Cllr Maggie Tyrrell (arrived late)
Cllr Matt Stringer
Cllr Shirley Holloway

Louise Powell (Town Clerk)
Hannah Cornford (Minutes)

1. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Chris Davies (out of Thornbury)
Cllr Guy Rawlinson (out of Thornbury)
Cllr Angela Symonds (indisposed)
Cllr Helen Harrison (another commitment)

(Cllr Benj Emmerson arrived)

2. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Benj Emmerson declared an interest in matters relating to item 13 on the agenda.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no representatives of the public present.

4. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FINANCE & POLICY MEETING OF 4TH JULY AND 11TH JULY 2019

The reports were adopted.

5. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON POLICING MATTERS

The Committee reviewed the reports for the last few months. It was suggested that it would be helpful if the Police could attend the meetings to discuss the issues. The Clerk agreed that she would see if this was possible or if Thursday evenings were always an issue with availability.

(Cllrs Maggie Tyrrell and Bob Griffin arrived)

6. TO DISCUSS ISSUES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR RAISED AT COUNCILLOR SURGERIES

The first surgery had been attended by three people and the issue of anti-social behaviour at Streamside Walk via Prowse Close was raised. There were reports of young people jumping onto cars and throwing things. It was requested that prickly bushes are planted in front of the wall being climbed over to discourage this behaviour. It was reported that the police are already aware, but residents are not satisfied action is being taken fast enough. It was agreed

the Clerk would write to the police and South Glos Council, copying in the anti-social behaviour team to try and move the matter forwards.

7. **TO DISCUSS FEEDBACK FROM THE COUNCILLOR TRAINING SESSIONS AND ANY IMPLICATIONS**

There had been two training sessions, 'Being a Good Councillor' and 'Planning in Plain English' which had been successful. There were a few items to consider, a key one being that 'Any Other Business' and 'Correspondence' should not be agenda items. Individual communications should be referred to the next meeting and be given an agenda item in their own right. The Clerk was working on gaining her CILCA qualification which would enable to Council to apply for the Power of Competency. Apologies should be sent to the Clerk and Hannah Cornford well in advance of the meeting to be missed. Absence regulations and the rules surrounding acceptance of apologies were also discussed.

(Cllr Clive Parkinson arrived)

8. **TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL MATTERS:**

(a) to approve the Accounts for Payment

Cllr Griffin queried the phone bill, which the Clerk reported she was looking at ways to reduce. She had got two quotes from other providers and was looking to make changes. Cllr Stansfield remarked that the clean-up operation by South Glos was reasonably priced and it was noted that comments made by the public on social media about the cost of this had been wrong. Cllr Parkinson queried the number of trees that had been damaged. The accounts were proposed for payment by Cllr Matt Stringer and seconded by Cllr Bob Griffin, with all in favour.

The Clerk reported that there had been issues with the change of bank for the Armstrong Hall which has led to a delay in the transfer of funds. She requested permission to do a temporary transfer of funds between the Town Council and Armstrong Hall in order that bills for the latter can be paid. Authorisation for this instance and any others until the situation is resolved, was unanimously agreed.

(b) To receive an update on progress to get a new financial system in place

The Clerk reported that it was taking longer than anticipated and was more difficult than expected. She would give feedback to the company regarding the incorrect installation of the software and failing to ask for necessary information at the right time. Staff are now inputting live data and have stopped inputting into the old system for the Town Council. It is hoped that there would be reports from the new system for the Town Council (not Armstrong Hall yet) at the next Council meeting, although it should be noted that the nominal codes won't match the previous system so a direct comparison with the previous reporting system may not be possible. It should however be easier to understand than previous reports and we will be able to see spend against budget. Cllr Emmerson felt that this should be considered a success.

9. **TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM THE ARMSTRONG HALL CHARITABLE TRUST REGARDING COMPLETION OF REDEVELOPMENT PHASE 2 WORKS**

The Hall have underspent against a contract that was issued for earlier work. The remaining money had not been carried over into the new budget so had gone into reserves. Cllr Parkinson proposed that £6322.50 be moved back to the redevelopment fund so it could be used. Cllr Emmerson seconded this proposal and it was unanimously agreed. There were queries as to why the redevelopment group had not started raising funds yet and it was explained that until the fundraiser was in place to present a cohesive strategy, it was not expected that significant amounts would be acquired.

10. TO DISCUSS THE REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2019

Cllr Matt Stringer requested permission to arrange the finance for the event at the Chantry after the service. It was queried where our wreath comes from that we lay each year and it was agreed the Clerk would investigate. Cllr Emmerson proposed that Cllr Stringer be given permission to arrange matters at the Chantry, and the Clerk be permitted to pay for a wreath if required. This was seconded by Cllr Parkinson and unanimously agreed. Cllr Griffin highlighted the importance of the seating arrangements during the service and the number of seats would be agreed shortly. Cllr Emmerson commented on how the order of wreath laying was decided, noting that the groups traditionally open to boys always went before those for girls.

11. TO CONSIDER ISSUES RAISED DURING THE CONSULTATION ON THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WHICH ARE OUTSIDE OF ITS REMIT

There is a list of items carried forward from the Public Consultation by the group writing the Neighbourhood Plan which were not considered to be part of its scope. Cllr Parkinson presented the document, suggesting that sections 12.1.1, 12.1.2 and 12.1.3 should become standing items on the Town Development Agenda, item 12.1.4 should be dealt with by environment and items 12.1.5 jointly by Playing Fields & Cemetery and Finance & Policy. There should be a working group to manage the progress of these items and this should be made up of the Councillors already on the Neighbourhood Plan group, plus the chairs of each committee and possibly other significant representatives from the town.

12. TO RESOLVE UNDER THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 THAT THE PUBLIC AND PRESS BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS OF BUSINESS AS PUBLICITY WOULD BE PREJUDICIAL TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST BECAUSE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

This was resolved.

14. TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF COSTS IN RELATION TO VACANCY MANAGEMENT (taken out of order)

The Clerk explained they were having difficulty filling one of their vacancies and wanted to consider the cost of involving an agency if they were unable to recruit on their own. Permission to do this was proposed by Cllr Matt Stringer, seconded by Cllr Shirley Holloway and unanimously agreed.

13. TO DISCUSS A LEASING ISSUE WITHIN THE TOWN HALL

A leasing matter with discussed, with the Clerk updating on progress. The Clerk was seeking quotes from solicitors to look at the leases.