

REPORT of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee
held on Thursday 23 January 2020

Present: Cllr Jayne Stansfield (Chairman)
Cllr Chris Davies
Cllr Benj Emmerson
Cllr Bob Griffin
Cllr Clive Parkinson
Cllr Maggie Tyrrell (arrived late)
Cllr Guy Rawlinson
Cllr Matt Stringer
Cllr Helen Harrison (arrived late)

Louise Powell (Town Clerk)
Hannah Cornford (Minutes)

1. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Angela Symonds (indisposed)
Cllr Shirley Holloway (indisposed)

2. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Clare Fardell, representing the Over 60's Tea Room wished to address the committee regarding the structure of the organisation and how this affected their potential to lease a room within the Town Hall.

(Cllr Harrison arrived)

4. TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES FROM THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF 19th DECEMBER 2019

The report of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting of 24 October 2019 had been circulated and was noted.

The Clerk reported that the police had responded to her on item 7. They had given a list of things they could do to deal with the problem, but they needed more detailed information on when the incidents were happening. Cllr Parkinson, who had received the complaint, would suggest that the member of the public raising it should speak to the police directly.

(Cllr Tyrrell arrived)

5. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON POLICING MATTERS

There was no police representative present at the meeting but they had sent through their crime statistics and these were noted.

6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL MATTERS:

(a) To approve the Accounts for Payment

The accounts were proposed for payment by Cllr Stringer and seconded by Cllr Rawlinson, with all in favour.

THORNBURY TOWN COUNCIL

ACCOUNTS PAID OUT OF MEETING

Thornbury Heritage Trust (Museum)	Grant to be used for rent	3450.00
R J Lift Services Ltd	Town Hall Lift Service	540.00
British Telecommunications	Telephone Bill	519.18
*Total Workwear	Bib & Brace Waterproof Trousers	66.59
*Amazon	Coat Stand for Town Hall	26.37
*Amazon	Recycling Bin Stickers	20.13

ACCOUNTS NOW DUE FOR PAYMENT – 23RD JANUARY 2020

Central Services

MSP Group Ltd	New Telephone Installation	1057.38
Corona Energy	Gas Supplied to Town Hall	913.88
Siemens	Photocopier Lease	181.20
G B Sport & Leisure	Playground Inspection Training	660.00
Pitney Bowes	Franking Machine Charges	107.00

Playing Fields & Cemetery

Sullivans	Strimmer Heads	72.19
Corona Energy	Gas Supplied to Kington Lane	184.91
Yate Supplies	Refuse Sacks	110.22
The Mower Doctor	Husqvarna LC 153S	400.00
Abbey Loos	Portable Toilet – Rental	105.60
Savery & Son	Digital Door Latches	70.14
Savery & Son	Mortice Lock & Keys	76.51
Alexandra	Work Wear	127.98
Andersons Waste Management	Empty Sewage Tank	150.00

Land & Property

Severn Plumbing & Heating	Landlord Gas Safety Certificates	200.00
---------------------------	----------------------------------	--------

Grants & Contingencies

xxx	xxx	xx.xx
-----	-----	-------

Environment

Landcare Tree Nursery	MPF – Tree Planting	668.58
Tony & Sue's Flower's Ltd	Ground Cover Fabric	9.00
**Thorn District Heritage Trust	Heritage Trail Guides	45.00

*Credit Card Payment

**Cheque Payment

- (b) To receive the report for December (month 9) and any matters arising

Various clarifications and comments were made on the report received. It was approved.

- (c) To consider a request from the Armstrong Hall Trust for up to £6000 towards plans for Miss Saises' Cottage

The Clerk explained there is no budget for this and it would need to come from reserves. It was highlighted that although the members are the same, the Council and the Armstrong Hall Trust are two different organisations and so it is important the money is transferred appropriately and legally. It was felt that money given to the Trust should be paid back to the Council if the building should in future be sold or receive an income through lease. It was queried whether if the money were to be repaid, could it still be classed as a grant or would it be a loan? The Council not being a lending organisation, Cllr Stansfield proposed that the Clerk research the legalities surrounding a lending agreement and potentially interest payable, with the decision being made at the next Finance & Policy Committee meeting. Cllr Griffin seconded this proposal, with a total of 7 councillors in agreement and 2 abstaining.

- (d) To note the internal audit date of 3-5 March

The date was noted. The staff were working on gathering the evidence required.

7. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ARISING FROM COUNCILLOR SURGERIES

There were no new issues.

8. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON PLANS TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

The Clerk and various councillors had attended a meeting with South Glos Council. The speaker had given recommendations and examples of what other councils are doing, including plastic free initiatives. The Clerk reported that a number of these things are already started in Thornbury. Cllr Tyrrell outlined a tool the South West Energy Hub are developing which shows base line emissions. Council could apply to be a part of this scheme. Council would need to express interest if wishing to apply, which Cllr Parkinson proposed, Cllr Rawlinson seconded and all were in favour of.

Cllr Tyrrell also had outline information on a possible scheme to install solar panels on car parks in the area. She felt this was something that may also be possible in Thornbury.

Cllr Parkinson felt it was important that Council are strongly proactive in tackling climate change. He wished to form a working group of councillors and other relevant parties. Cllrs Rawlinson, Davies and Tyrrell expressed an interest in being a part of this and it was agreed this would circulated to all councillors to see if others wished to join.

9. TO CONSIDER COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE FOLLOWING CONSULTATIONS:

- (a) NALC consultation on 'Strengthening Police Powers to tackle unauthorised encampments'

Cllr Stansfield felt that it was a leading questionnaire. After discussion, it was agreed that Cllr Rawlinson would write a statement to be inserted into the comment box at the end and the other questions would be left blank.

10. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY

The Clerk reported that the Neighbourhood Plan group had met last week and wanted to order some material to help with consultation. There would not be time to take the figures to the next Finance & Police meeting for approval, so she asked for permission to go ahead and order the materials needed. Cllr Parkinson proposed she be allowed to spend up to £2500, although it was not expected that all of this would be used. This was seconded by Cllr Emmerson and all were in favour.

The Clerk also reported that the Armstrong Hall accounts were being finalised and it had been discovered that Council had not charged the Hall for their proportion of the insurance bill. There were two years owing. The Clerk proposed that the 2017/18 amount should be written off, but the 2018/19 should be considered. It would be properly accounted for from 2019/20. Councillors discussed, with Cllr Stansfield proposing that 2018/19 also be written off, Cllr Stringer seconding and all in favour.

11. 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

Resolved

12. TO DISCUSS LEASING ISSUES

The Clerk reported there would be increase in solicitors fees as a result of the additional work that they had needed to do. Cllr Griffin proposed that the additional fees should be agreed and paid, with Cllr Tyrrell seconding and all were in favour. One tenant was a non-incorporated body and so the individuals signing the contract would be personally liable. They were unhappy about this so the solicitor had suggested a clause that may help. The Clerk pointed out the risk highlighted by the solicitor. It was voted on and all were in favour of including the clause.

13. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUOTATIONS

(a) Repairs to the fire doors at the Town Hall

The Clerk had obtained three quotes with a large variance. She would be seeking a fourth quote as a result.

(b) To consider updating internet routers as part of the new phone/broadband system

Our IT provider had suggested this was strongly advisable for the Town Hall and necessary for the Armstrong Hall. Cllr Stringer proposed his advice be followed, with Cllr Tyrrell seconding and all were in favour.