

REPORT of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee
held on Thursday 10 September 2020

Present: Cllr Chris Davies (Chairman)

Cllr Jayne Stansfield
Cllr Clive Parkinson
Cllr Matthew Stringer
Cllr Maggie Tyrrell
Cllr Bob Griffin
Cllr Benj Emmerson
Cllr Guy Rawlinson
Cllr Shirley Holloway

Louise Powell (Town Clerk)

(Cllr Eva Fielding – absent)

(Cllr Helen Harrison – absent)

1. TO RECEIVE ANY APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY MEMBER'S DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No member's interests were declared.

3. TO RECEIVE ANY REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

4. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON AND CONSIDER MATTERS ARISING FROM THE FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING OF 4 AUGUST 2020 NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

The report of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting of 4 August 2020 had been circulated, was noted and item 5 was discussed.

Cllr Parkinson reported that meetings had been had with South Gloucestershire Council, to provide some of the money for Krunch's rent and Turnberries, to provide new terms, but neither had advanced. This left little option, should the Committee wish for Krunch to continue to provide youth services in Thornbury, but to agree to Krunch's request for further funding to cover their rent.

Cllr Parkinson proposed that the Committee agree to cover the extra funding required for Krunch to remain in Turnberries from reserves and this was seconded by Cllr Stansfield. The Committee voted in favour of the proposal with one Councillor abstaining.

5. TO RECEIVE A REPORT ON POLICING MATTERS

There was no new report from the Police. The Clerk will check that they are aware that meetings have restarted.

6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING FINANCIAL MATTERS:

(a) To approve the Accounts for Payment

The Accounts for Payment were tabled. There were some queries about the size of the museum bill. It was explained that although the building is empty, they still have heaters and dehumidifiers working to preserve the museum artefacts. It was noted that this cost will have to come from the grant that is given to the Armstrong Hall.

Cllr Bob Griffin proposed that the accounts be approved for payment. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Jayne Stansfield and unanimously agreed. Cllr Bob Griffin and Cllr Jayne Stansfield agreed to sign a cheque being held in the Town Hall.

ACCOUNTS PAID OUT OF MEETING

HMRC	Tax Payment	5738.33
Avon Pension UK	Pension Payment	4607.35
Salaries	Staff Wages	17002.72
Gas Deduction	(PLR)	35.00
Public Works Loan	(DD)Loan Repayment	6037.35
Info Commissioner's Office	(DD)Data Protection Fee	55.00
**Amazon	Headphones – Staff Training	41.52
**Amazon	Sanitiser / Bins	57.94
**Commercial Washrooms Ltd	Soap Dispenser	52.20
Ecotricity.co.uk	Electricity – Museum	1102.03
Ecotricity.co.uk	Electricity – Bakery	400.21
Clutton Cox Conveyancing	Lease Work	240.00
Professional Fees	Temporary RFO	635.20

**Credit Card Payments

ACCOUNTS NOW DUE FOR PAYMENT – 10th SEPTEMBER 2020

Central Services

Abbey Lifts Ltd	Lift Repairs	2116.80
Acorn Recruitment Ltd	Temporary Staff	31.01
ALCA Association	Course – Planning	50.00
Alexander	Workwear	26.78
Biffa Waste Services	Waste Disposal	88.61
Consortium	Cleaning Materials	148.20
Consortium	Office Equipment	43.14
MCL Ltd	Photocopier Charges (August)	93.41
MSP Group Ltd	IT/Phone/Broadband	449.02
Pass & Totterdell Plumbing	Repair Works	422.40
Water2Business	Water/Sewage – Fountain Castle St	17.99
Water2Business	Water/Sewage – TH	169.13

- (b) To receive the income and expenditure report for August 2020 and any matters arising

The income and expenditure report for August 2020 had been circulated and was noted by the Committee.

As there are no longer Armstrong Hall Committee meetings where a detailed report of the accounts would be received, Cllr Clive Parkinson asked the Clerk, if she and the locum RFO could give the Armstrong Hall Trustees an up-to-date picture of the Armstrong Hall accounts. The Clerk agreed to send this out to the Trust.

- (c) To receive and approve the reconciliation report for August 2020

Cllr Clive Parkinson agreed to attend the Town Hall to sign bank statements

The Clerk reported that the RFO has been looking into the insurance of the Council bank accounts and has found that unfortunately, our Council isn't covered by even the standard £85K cover as our council precept is too high. The locum RFO has spoken to ALCA about the risk and the only way to cover it is to spread the risk across different bank accounts. The Council already use Barclays and Unity and the RFO is looking at a third option. The Clerk may need known signatories to present at the bank to update the mandate/signatory list but she will let Councillors know if this is the case.

- (d) To review the Council's financial regulations and system of internal control

The Clerk reported that the financial regulations and systems of internal control need reviewing once a year.

Cllr Clive Parkinson had reviewed the regulations and had a number of points to raise but suggested that, due to time constraints, he do so with the Clerk at another time and bring the results of his discussions to the next Finance and Policy meeting. This was agreed to by all.

- (e) To consider Council debtors

The Clerk reported that following a large amount of work by both the RFO and a member of staff, there are now only 4 council debtors. One has time still to pay and the other is from a local funeral director who always pay in bulk. However, she asked the Committee to write off a £6.40 debt which was for an interment of ashes sent from the USA. The lady requesting the interment paid but some confusion with the exchange rate has left us with the small debt. It was unanimously agreed by all to write off the £6.40 dept.

- (f) To discuss the effect of Covid-19 on the Council's budget

Cllr Clive Parkinson thanked the Clerk for the useful report and agreed that next years' expenditure should not be based on this year but rather 2019.

Cllr Clive Parkinson expressed concern that a sum from reserves had been agreed to cover Town Hall staff who otherwise would have been charging some of their time to the Armstrong Hall Trust and the Committee may need to review how the surplus staffing capacity should be used or whether it will be needed at all in the future.

The Clerk reported that she had been talking to the Staffing Committee regarding the capacity of Town Hall staff and explained that there is no shortage of work to do within the

council with health and safety, asset management and paperwork taking up more and more of the office's time. She reported that had the capacity not become available, she would have been asking the Committee for more staff hours.

The Clerk will put together a report for the Council to show how the extra capacity is being used, to be reviewed as part of the budget setting process.

- (g) To agree delegated authority to the Chair and Vice Chair for the approval of a quote for the Council's condition survey of its property

The Clerk reported that she was expecting at least two quotes for the council's condition survey of its property having sent the tender out to a substantial number of building surveyors. She would like to have agreement that the Chair and Vice Chair would have delegated authority in order to progress quickly.

Cllr Clive Parkinson proposed delegating authority to the Clerk, Chair and Vice Chair to enlist a suitable surveyor, this was seconded by Cllr Jayne Stansfield and unanimously agreed.

- (h) To receive an update on any further financial matters

There were no further financial matters to report.

7. TO REVIEW PROGRESS AGAINST THE COUNCIL'S INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The report had been circulated and the progress noted. The Committee were pleased all areas raised by the auditor had or were being actioned.

8. TO CONSIDER A DRAFT COPY OF THE COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 19-20

The draft copy of the Council's annual report for 19-20 had been circulated. The Committee liked the new format and agreed that it should be published on the Town Council website and displayed in the High Street notice board. The Committee asked that minutes also be displayed in the notice board, immediately after approval.

9. TO AGREE THE COUNCIL'S DRAFT ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT FOR THE NEW WEBSITE

The Council's draft accessibility statement had been circulated and Cllr Benj Emmerson proposed that it be agreed and made available on the Council's new website. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Matt Stringer and unanimously agreed.

10. TO CONSIDER ANY MATTERS ON THE GROUNDS OF URGENCY.

There were no matters to be raised on the grounds of urgency.

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 remaining 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 proposed and unanimously agreed.

12. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING LEASING COSTS

(a) Printer Lease Costs

The Clerk reported that the existing provider had given the best quote and therefore proposed that we stayed with them. This was unanimously agreed.