

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Finance and Management Committee held in King's Hall Community Centre, Kings Avenue, Prestatyn on Wednesday 25th September 2019 at 6.55pm – 8.40pm.

PRESENT

Councillors: J. Thompson-Hill (Chairman), R. Flynn, G. Sandilands, G. Davies, M. German, T. Jones, B. Murray, G. Frobisher, A. Sampson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N. Acott -Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Mrs C. Evans – Assistant Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Mr T. Brown – Internal Auditor. Mrs L. Hewitt – Committee Support Assistant.

APOLOGIES

Councillors: A. Frobisher, T. Flynn, K. Jones, M. Poller, S. Frobisher, T. Flynn, L. Muraca.
Mrs L. Hewitt – Committee Support Assistant

79 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillors were reminded of need to declare personal and/or prejudicial interests in tonight's proceedings.

80 PAID ACCOUNTS

Details of paid accounts and quarterly statements had been circulated to Councillors with agenda papers and no items or queries had been raised with Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Chairman or Internal Auditor prior to tonight's meeting. Both Town Clerk/Financial Officer and Internal Auditor also arrive early to all Finance and Management Committees to assist with any questions regarding accounts.

Cllr J. Thompson-Hill explained that Schedule of Payments were prepared retrospectively and payments subject of budget setting process and Committee approval of new items. In response to Member's question it was explained that Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations also governed arrangement for payments, quotations and tender procedures.

May 2019

Councillors raised questions on a number of payments:-

BACS 280 King's Hall – query about use of King's Hall for meetings when other community centres may be available. Town Clerk/Financial Officer explained Committee had agreed to meet at Kings Hall for temporary period whilst new meeting room was being built at Council offices. Cllr J. Thompson-Hill also advised several options had previously been considered by Committee for temporary accommodation including use of community centres, however most were fully booked and less convenient for all parties.

BACS 306 Survey – query about cost of double replacement doors fitted at Jubilee Community Centre plus apex following survey and building control regulations. Management Association had kindly donated funds towards recent refurbishment works.

Barclays Bank Commission Charges – query about bank charges that had appeared following recent introduction of BACS payment system. Discussions ongoing with bank about charges and report to be prepared about future banking arrangements.

BACS 276 Ty Pendre – query about DCC rates and other bills that were paid by Town Council. Phase Radio were current temporary occupiers and paid a rental fee that covers costs as agreed by Committee. Review of all Community Centres underway and report to be considered later in tonight's meeting.

June 2019

BACS 332 My Tidy Garden – query about monthly charge and why it changes. Monthly payment is made but cost can vary according to works undertaken in that period e.g planting out beds, watering regime.

BACS 394 Routemaster Bus – query about how many people use this bus and Council spend on events. The Big Red Bus is part of towns attractions as agreed by Committee. The planning of future town event activities is part of both budget preparation work, and also service planning undertaken by Community Development and Regeneration Committee (CDRC). Details of all PTC events and participation is regularly reported back to CDRC.

BACS 350 Pottles Premier Plants – query why/how floral beds provided. Deputy Town Clerk reported that following recent changes in service provision as approved by CDRC, a number of contractors were now engaged in this area of work e.g. supply of plants only (Pottles), planting out, maintenance and watering (My Tidy Garden); planting troughs and hanging baskets (Plantscape), Ty Pendre Gardens/Broadway maintenance and grass cutting (Greengrass). A progress report on the new arrangements will be reported to next CDRC meeting.

RESOLVED That Schedule of Payments for May, June, July and Quarterly Budget Statement be approved.

81 NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF AUDIT 2018/19

Cllr J. Thompson-Hill, Chairman reported that Notice of Conclusion had been received and there were no issues or concerns raised by Welsh Government appointed BDO External Auditors.

RESOLVED That Committee record its thanks to Town Clerk/Financial Officer, all Staff and Mr T. Brown, Internal Auditor for their excellent work.

82 FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported that new Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioner's Guide had been jointly published by Society of Local Council Clerks and One Voice Wales 2019. In addition new Model Financial Regulations for Wales 2019 had also been published. Both papers are currently being reviewed and will lead to changes in Council's Financial Regulations and practices.

Notice had also been received from Welsh Assembly Government that Wales Audit Office (WAO) will be taking the External Audit Services back "in house" from 2019/20.

83 FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2019/20

Committee was invited to identify any significant items of expenditure or change of service provision that will need consideration during preparations of financial estimates. A suggestion for CCTV/webcam for broadcasting of council meetings was raised, but Committee felt this would not be cost effective and perhaps better use could be made of social media immediately following Council meetings.

84 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED That Public and Press be excluded in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Parts 1,9,12 during the following items: Community Centres; Staff Report.

85 COMMUNITY CENTRES

Cllr G. Davies, Vice Chairman introduced item and invited Deputy Town Clerk to present her report (copy circulated with agenda). Historically Council had provided long term lease and subsidised rental fees at Jubilee Community centre, Ty Caradoc Community Centre and Meliden Community Centre. In return voluntary Management Associations have been responsible for day to day management of centres and payment of service costs.

The service had worked well for many years, but unfortunately age of buildings had resulted in a significant refurbishment programme raising the issue of landlord/tenant responsibilities. All three centres were currently in good order, but it was felt appropriate time to review existing arrangements.

Committee discussed its approach e.g. continue present arrangements, adopt cost neutral approach, seek commercial return. Following discussion it was considered that community centres provided a valuable community service; landlord and tenant responsibilities need review and updating; any changes in service/rental needs agreement and goodwill of both parties; that present rental agreement continue pending outcome of review.

In respect of Ty Pendre Community Centre this building was owned by Denbighshire County Council and leased to Town Council. The lease is due for renewal soon and both Prestatyn Town Council and Denbighshire County Council will need to determine their future plans for this small community building.

RESOLVED

- 1) That respective Community Centre Management Associations be invited to send representatives to a service users management forum to discuss future landlord/tenant proposals. Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk to lead review and report back to Committee.
- 2) That Deputy Town Clerk be thanked for her comprehensive report.

(Cllr J. Thompson-Hill and Cllr Sampson declared personal and prejudicial interest as officers of Ty Caradoc Community Centre and retired from Committee during this item. Cllr G. Davies, Vice Chairman for this item)

86 STAFF REPORT

Cllr T. Jones, Chair of Staffing Sub Committee submitted her report on evening (copy circulated). Committee asked that future written reports be circulated with agenda if possible. It was explained that monthly staff meetings are being held with Chair/Vice Chair of Sub Committee attending on quarterly basis.

Unfortunately several staff members had experienced illness this year and additional resources had been necessary at times, but all staff had coped admirably in difficult and unforeseen circumstances.

A new I.T. and telephone system had also been installed and several new service contractors had commenced 1st April 2019. Work on the new community room extension at Council offices had also started earlier this month.

Town events continue to form part of town's services/community/business activity and future plans include Urdd Proclamation Ceremony, Halloween and Traditional Christmas events.

Staff 1:1s and appraisals have all been undertaken and are being regularly reviewed. Training plans include Kate Thew Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA); Nigel Acott – Society of Local Council Clerks Conference (cpd requirements); Sue Edwards – refresher course on Dementia Friends; Debbie Hughes – British Lung Foundation Study Day. All training costs are contained within Council's training budget.

RESOLVED That all Staff be thanked for their sterling efforts and commitment during a difficult transition period.

Chairman _____

