

CLEVEDON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL POLICY COMMITTEE ZOOM MEETING HELD ON
THE 19TH AUGUST 2020 AT 7.30PM DUE TO COVID-19

Present: Committee Chairman Cllr H. Young
 Cllrs B. Cherokoff, A. Everitt, C. Francis-Pester, A. Goodliffe, G. Hill, D. Shopland,
 J. West, R. Westwood
 Ms Paula Heath Town Clerk

FGP 20/1008 RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Barton due to a family commitment.

FGP 20/1009 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There was no declaration of interest for items on the agenda at this point. Members were asked to declare at the appropriate time in respect of small grants applications.

PART 1

FGP 20/1010 RECEIVE & AGREE GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR SMALL GRANTS – PART 1

Proposed, seconded, and **RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL** by 8 votes to 1, that for the financial year 2020/2021 only, the balance of the small grants budget, £ 1500, be held pending any requests later in the financial year to 31.03.2021, due to the disruption caused by Covid-19.

FGP 20/1011 DISCUSS THE DRAFT RISK REGISTER AND AGREE AMENDMENTS

A copy of the draft risk register, and report had been circulated with the agenda, the register of the risks faced by the Council will form part of the discussions and determination of reserves held by the Council. The members discussed the use of the risk register and considered the proposals in the report.

Proposed, seconded, and **RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL BY 8 votes to 0**; That the Committee approve the adoption of the risk register, amending as necessary

Proposed, seconded, and **RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL by 8 votes to 0**; That Committee Chairmen consider the significant risks in the areas of their Committee that may need to be included in the general Risk Register

Proposed, seconded, and **RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL by 8 votes to 0**; That each Committee should incorporate their individual risks into one town council register

Proposed, seconded, and **RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL by 8 votes to 0**; That all Councillors identify any significant risks for inclusion on the register and suggest any mitigating actions required

Proposed, seconded, and **RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL by 8 votes to 0**; That the Register becomes a standing item on F&GP Committee Agenda

It was noted that the Risk Register is complementary to and not in place of the individual risk assessments.

FGP 20/1012 DISCUSS AND AGREE THE POLICY, AND LEVEL OF ALL COUNCIL'S RESERVES

A report had been circulated with the agenda detailing the reserves held by the Council as at 31.03.2020; the current bank balances are shown on the budget sheets circulated with the agenda. In response to a question it was explained that the Accountability and Governance guidance defined the level of reserves retained by the Council. The Risk Register should define areas of concern and designate if any reserves should be earmarked for that risk, while it exists.

Members noted that the reserves are reviewed annually although the council should amend if required between the annual reviews.

In response to a question it was explained that the NS& I allotment investment account was ring fenced for the purchase of new allotments as part of the agreement with NSC, and by Council statute; the money cannot be reallocated to be spent on other areas of the Council's services or even on the general maintenance of the current allotments. It was noted that the monies held in the Allotment Current Account still form part of the council's cash balances, and subject to Councils financial regulations. Members were reminded that the allotments are a statutory duty of the Town Council.

Proposed, seconded, and **AGREED to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL by 9 votes to 0** the Council accepts the reserves as at 31.03.2020, and agree that the Council will monitor the reserves between annual reviews via the budget spreadsheets and amend if needed.

FGP 20/1013 REVIEW THE INVESTMENT POLICY OF THE COUNCIL

Proposed, seconded, and **AGREED to RECOMMEND to Council by 9 votes to 0**; that the Council accepts the Investment policy as circulated with the agenda.

In response to a question it was explained that the property investments by CCLA was in their Property Fund and not the Public Sector Deposit Fund, which is where the Council's money is held.

PART 2

FGP 20/1014 RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24TH JUNE 2020

The minutes of the Finance & General Policy Committee meeting held on 24th June 2020, were ratified at the Council meeting held on the 8th July 2020, were approved, and agreed that they will be signed by the Chairman as a true record, when Covid-19 regulations allow.

FGP 20/1015 RECEIVE THE FGP COMMITTEE BUDGET/ACTUAL SPREADSHEET 2020/21.

Members received and noted the FGP Committee spreadsheet of the accounts covering budget and actual payments.

FGP 20/1016 RECEIVE AND AGREE GRANT APPLICATIONS FOR SMALL GRANTS- PART 2

The Committee followed the agreed procedure 1) Whether an organisation qualified for a grant. 2) decide the amount to award. There were 5 applications for grants
Clevedon Junior FC – Cllr Shopland declared a personal interest.

- 1) Qualifies YES - 8 votes to 0 – Cllr Shopland abstained
- 2) £500 - 8 votes to 0

Gt Western Air Ambulance

- 1) Qualifies YES – 9 votes to 0
- 2) £2000 8 votes to 0

Home Start North Somerset

- 1) Qualifies YES 8 votes to 0
- 2) £1000 8 votes to 0

Land Yeo Friends - Cllr West & Cllr Westwood declared interest as the Town Councils representatives.

- 1) Qualifies YES – 8 votes to 0
- 2) £100 by 9 votes to 0

Wellspring Counselling

- 1) Qualifies YES 8 votes to 0
- 2) £900 by 7 votes to 0 with 2 abstentions

FGP 20/1017 REVIEW THE COVID 19 RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR THE OPENING OF THE OFFICE AND FOR HIRING; AGREE ASSOCIATED COSTS.

Proposed, Seconded and **AGREED by 8 votes to 0** with 1 abstention to accept the risk assessments for the opening of the office and the opening of the building for hire as circulated with the agenda.

Proposed, seconded and **AGREED by 8 votes to 0** to authorise the purchase of equipment and materials for the office and building risk assessments for the opening for hire on 1st October; as circulated, subject to guidance and legal requirements at that time.

FGP 20/1018 DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE CONSULTATION FOR THE BUDGET / COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The Chairman explained that the Council had agreed to review the pre-budget communication/consultation prior to the setting of the 2021/2022 budget. Members discussed the various forms of consultation. It was agreed that, as no undertaking or preconceived ideas could be consulted on without the Councils discussion and agreement, it was decided to hold a series of zoom meetings with key stakeholders on a range of community themes such as young people; wellbeing; traders and businesses; cultural. The Chairman asked for volunteers to assist with this and also if there are any other themes.

It was proposed, seconded and **AGREED by 8 votes to 0**; That the Town Clerk as RFO contacts NSC finance Officer to establish what service reductions are being proposed, or possible transfer of services in the sort term considering the adjustments needed in NSC budgets over the current and future years caused by COVID-19.

Proposed, seconded, and **AGREED by 8 votes to 0**; That Councillors would undertake community conversations with recognised stakeholders as an information gathering exercise and to increase the members knowledge of the community needs ahead of the budget discussions. The Members would provide a written report on those discussions to enhance all members information pool.

FGP 20/1019 RECEIVE A VERBAL REPORT ON THE IT COMMITTEE IN RESPECT OF THE WEB SITE AND COSTS.

The Chairman of the IT committee presented a verbal report on the IT meeting held at 9.30am that morning. The recommendation from the IT committee following detailed investigation and discussion was that the hosting of the new web site should be on the council's own server; This was **AGREED** by 8 votes to 0.

As part of the ongoing maintenance programme it was recommended that the Council incorporates SSD hard drives in the computers to increase flexibility and to implement a roving profile at a budget cost of £25 per machine; this was **AGREED** by 8 votes to 0.

FGP 20/1020 DISCUSS AND REVIEW THE COUNCILS EQUALITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES.

Copies of the Councils equality policies and procedures had been circulated with the agenda, these covers the councils areas of control, the relationship with Staff, with each other, and with members of the public both as a council and as individual councillors. Members noted that the representation on the Town Council does not mirror the population of Clevedon, and that this should be taken into consideration when promoting the opportunities of becoming a Town Councillor.

Members discussed the lack of control on Facebook of discriminatory information and comments. It was noted that this was beyond the Councils control although all individuals had the right to counter any negative comments, and as a Council we had a duty to encourage treatment of all people equally but we cannot enforce or govern others behaviour. Proposed, seconded, and **AGREED by 9 votes to 0** to defer the alteration or amendment of the policies to the staffing committee; before being presented to a future FGP committee for referral to Council.

FGP 20/1021 RECEIVE VERBAL REPORTS ON THE CLEVEDON AID FORUM MEETING ON THE 18TH AUGUST AND THE TOWN AND PARISH FORUM MEETING 29TH JULY AND DISCUSS THE COUNCILS ROLE IN THE WELLBEING AGENDA.

Cllr Young and Cllr Westwood reported on the two meetings which had the same theme of community infrastructure in community wellbeing. There is an increased movement towards the use and support of the voluntary sector, as well as the coordination of service providers, following the issues raised by Covid-19. Members agreed that the Council would continue to monitor and facilitate, if appropriate, the coordination of the service providers and volunteers.

Cllr Cherokoff left the zoom meeting during the following discussion

FGP 20/1022 DISCUSS INVESTIGATING THE COST AND PROVISION OF CONTACTLESS PAYMENTS IN THE OFFICE.

A report and details of the costings for the provision of contactless payments had been circulated prior to the meeting. In response to questions the Town Clerk explained that the cash payments would still be accepted but in order to safeguard staff member, any cash payment would be put into an envelope, with a disclaimer that the amount would only be accepted as what is in the envelope, that would have been sealed by the payee, at the point it was opened.

Following a discussion, it was proposed, seconded, and **AGREED** by 7 votes to 0 go with Squarepay purchasing the necessary equipment for telephone payments.

FGP 20/1023 RECEIVE AND AGREE TRAINING REQUESTS

1023.1 Proposed seconded, and **AGREED** for the Town Clerk to attend the South West Councils webinars at a cost of 5 sessions x £25 each= £125.00

1023.2 Councillors – NALC Rebuilding Communities - no councillors had expressed an interest in attending NALC's rebuilding communities conference.

1023.3 SLCC Annual Conference, with the permission of the Chairman, members were informed that the annual conference for the SLCC had been changed from a 2-day residential to 5-day virtual sessions at a cost of £25 per person. Proposed, seconded and **AGREED** by 7 votes to 0 that the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk attend at a cost of £50; members noted that the conference runs from the 12th – 16th October and that during this week the office may be closed on occasions.

Cllr Cherokoff returned to the meeting

FGP 20/1024 CHAIRMAN ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

The Chairman raised an item in respect of an email circulated to all councillors on 13th August in respect of the Rural Market Towns Group offer of a free membership to 01.04.2021 with an annual fee of £150 thereafter if the Council finds the group useful. Proposed, seconded, and **AGREED by 8 votes to 0** to accept the free membership and to review the subscription in December prior to the renewal date.

FGP 20/1025 DETERMINE PART I AND PART II ITEMS.

Agenda item 5 in respect of the retaining of the budget balance

Agenda item 6 in respect of the Risk Registers recommendations.

Agenda item 7 & agenda item 8 for the recommendation of reserves and investment policy.

Meeting Closed at 9.15pm

Chairman Date

DRAFT MINUTES TO BE RATIFIED BY THE COMMITTEE AND COUNCIL