

Stonehouse Town Council



MINUTES (subject to agreement at the next Committee meeting)
OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 1ST
SEPTEMBER 2014 AT 7PM IN THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, STONEHOUSE

Present:

Simon Lewis (Convenor of Committee)
Pam Swain (Deputy Convenor of Committee)
Chris Brine (Chair of Town Council),
Theresa Watt (Vice-Chair of Town Council)
Rob Waite
Paul Stephens

Also Present: Town Clerk Gill Jennings

K1/137 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES

Councillor Brine had forwarded his apologies for late attendance due to commitments with Stroud District Council

K1/138 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are reminded of their obligation within the requirements of the Adopted Model Code of Conduct to declare any personal or disclosable pecuniary interests where applicable.

Councillor S Lewis declared an interest in K1/145 and left the meeting prior to discussions.

Councillor R Waite declared an interest in K1/144.1 and took no part in the discussion or vote.

K1/139 ADJOURNMENT FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

(Maximum of 15 minutes – Any member of the public may speak only once in respect of any business itemised on the Agenda for a maximum of 5 minutes)

No adjournment necessary

K1/140 TO FORMALLY APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 JUNE 2014

The Minutes were amended to delete Councillor P Swain from membership of the Communications Working Group and Staffing Committee. (Councillor Paul Stephens is a member of the Staffing Committee). **The Minutes were then approved.**

K1/141 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE GENERAL POLICY WORKING GROUP

The General Policy Working Group had met on the 23rd July and 15th August to discuss the following:

Pension Scheme Discretions – Following discussion of the interpretation and policy wording suggested by Glos County Council, Councillor Watt had further discussions with Alan Marshall, Scheme Administrator at Glos County Council and the discretions re-drafted are to be placed before Town Council on the 15th September **for Resolution and signature by the Chairman**

Hire Policy – The Policy on Hire of Facilities had been revisited and the Group would suggest that the word “voluntary” be removed. Each Committee to now confirm the scale of charges relevant to them. **(B/F)**

Councillor Brine arrived at the meeting.

K1/142 TO RECEIVE A REPORT FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

A report of a meeting held on 24th July was circulated.

1. To agree a Communications Policy – This was still a work in progress.
2. New arrangements for Newsletter publication and review of costs – A new volunteer publisher had been found, Jo Byrne takes the place of Jim Dickson and Vicki Walker. The Deputy Clerk was making progress with newsletter articles and a draft of the next edition is due. The Working Group had been asked to consider eco-friendly paper but this proved to be more expensive and less eye-catching. **The Finance Committee agreed that the supply of paper should be retained as it is.**
3. To consider arrangements for an internal media record of Council meetings – Guidelines were awaited from GAPTC but in the meantime costs of recording equipment would be explored.

K1/143 YOUTH MATTERS

1. To agree costs of fire exit ramp to youth centre – **the cost of installing a ramp at £1076.00 was agreed and to be financed from the current revenue budget.**
2. To receive a report from the Youth Working Group – the Group had last met on the 15th August and had agreed a timetable for use. It was also agreed that rules needed to be reinforced for use of the skatepark with additional signage inside the youth building. An end of session check list was agreed with the need for each group to clean the building and clear litter into black sacks at the end of each session. It was suggested that different coloured sacks might be used to encourage recycling. John Jeynes was present to explain the work of Community Festival Programme and the role of the Community Organiser.
3. To receive a report from Young Gloucestershire – The July report was circulated. Sessions are to be led by Laura and Matt, attendance at sessions was between 22 and 26 young people. One incident of theft had been dealt with by the police.

K1/144 FINANCE

1. To check expenditure/receipts totals against budget headings for June/July/August 2014
Expenditure and receipts were **checked and agreed** against budget headings:
June Payments £22270.92 Receipts £ 61813.23
July £ 69810.49 £ 10472.90
August £6481.77 £ 1394.05
and payments in August overall totalling £13101.41 were agreed.
2. To consider grant applications:
 - a. CAB £2000 towards outreach services – **The Committee agreed to provide a grant in the sum of £2000 but would request that CAB provides feedback on their outreach services for consideration at the next budget meeting.**
 - b. Glos Army Cadet Force £90 for attendance by Stonehouse cadets at French Battlefields Summer camp for WW1 centenary – **This grant was agreed.**
3. Changes to Audit arrangements – **A new model of delivery was circulated and noted.**
4. Quarterly report from Town Council internal control auditors – **The report of the internal control auditors was circulated and noted.**
5. Notice of Conclusion of External Audit – There were no matters affecting the opinion of the Auditor. **The Committee agreed with the Auditors suggestion that wording be added to the NALC financial regulations that “The Council checks payments are made within powers the Council may undertake and that PAYE & VAT regulations are complied with”.**

K1/144 Finance (continued)

6. To consider professional fees quotation in relation to West of Stonehouse – The Committee were asked to consider a quotation for £13000 for professional planning advice. This quotation had been obtained in the event that the Council decides to make a case against the Hitchins proposal at Appeal or Public Inquiry. The Clerk advised the Committee that it would be for the Planning Authority to fight an Appeal but the Council might make a joint case with other parishes at a Public Inquiry. Cllr. Brine suggested that there should be provision in each matter. Eastington Parish Council have set aside £7000. **The Committee agreed to recommend that the Council sets aside funding from reserves in the sum of £6000 for expenditure under the Regeneration & Environment Committee.**
7. Following change of data storage to 365 sharepoint – to consider purchase of a new laptop £500 and configuration £100. **The Committee agreed to this expenditure.**

The Council will by resolution exclude the public from item K1/145 due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted and publicity of the item would be prejudicial to the public interest.

K1/145 POST OFFICE LEASE & RENT REVIEW

The Committee were advised that the current tenants of the Post Office building had indicated a wish to be released from their lease. The vacancy of Postmaster had been advertised by Post Office Limited and applicants were being considered. One applicant was interested in continuing the Post Office in the current building. The current tenants had asked the Council to agree to transfer the existing lease to the applicant if successful but to also consider releasing them from their lease in any event. **The Committee were minded to recommend to Council that the current tenants be released from their tenancy on the 31st March 2015 provided that obligations under the lease continue to be met together with any legal costs incurred in any transfer or deletion. The Committee would also recommend that the Council considers any applicant interested in taking on the premises. For Resolution.**

The rent is due for review and the cost of a rent review survey is estimated at £800. – This was not discussed.
