

Finance and General Purposes Committee

29th July 2019 at 7.30pm

All Saints Room, Civic Hall, Didcot



Minutes

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a true and correct record by the next meeting of this Committee.

Present:

Councillor J Moody (Chairman)
Councillor P Siggers (Vice Chairman)
Councillor A Sandiford
Councillor M Walsh
Councilor V Haval
Councillor M McNeill
Councillor A Thompson

Officer:

Mrs J Wheeler, Town Clerk

Two members of the public plus another resident who arrived at 8pm.
Two Councillors

32. Apologies

None.

33. Declarations of interests

Cllrs A Sandiford and M Walsh declared a personal interest in the grant application from Didcot First and SOFEA – both Councillors had recently volunteered to help with the “Grub Hub” project. Cllr M Walsh also attended activities at the King Alfred Drive Community Centre. Cllr V Haval declared a disclosable pecuniary interest regarding the DACA Summer Band Concerts – she left the room for this part of the meeting.

34. Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held 24th June 2019

It was proposed by Councillor J Moody; seconded by Councillor P Siggers:

RESOLVED to agree the minutes held on 24th June 2019 as a correct record with no amendments, and to sign them as such.

35. Questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item

Cllr Haval had some queries on the accounts from the last meeting which she had not received an answer on. The Town Clerk apologised for not being able to answer those questions as she had not had a chance to sit down with the Finance Officer. However the Town Clerk was able to clarify that the Santander Bank Account with £3,81 is kept for mayoral activities such as the Civic Ball. Cllr Haval also queried the grant aid fund in the report which stated a sum of £37,174 available. However on the accounts the sum was 32,674.

Post meeting note: From the £38,000 grant fund, two grants had been awarded:

- *Finance meeting 29th April 2019 £4,500 to the Didcot Food Festival*
- *Finance meeting 24th June 2019 £826 to the Gobo Theatre Association*

This leaves the correct sum of £32,674 in the accounts.

36. Meeting suspended to allow audience and Councillors to address the Committee (Standing Order 97)

The Chairman acknowledged that two Councillors wished to speak and invited Cllr Davies first. Cllr Davies wished to speak on the accuracy of the Minutes of recent meetings. He did not like the exclusion of verbal comments and felt it was shameful that he had been ignored earlier in this meeting.

It was assumed that the other Councillor was now absent as she was not in the meeting room.

Mr John Sykes spoke to his grant application for £800 towards the Didcot Tea Dances. His application would be considered at the next Finance Committee meeting.

Mr Richard Kennell spoke on behalf of the grant application from SOFEA and Didcot First. The group was looking for the sum of £6000 towards the cost of providing the new initiative – “the Grub Hub” – hot meals for families twice a week throughout the summer holidays.

Standing Orders reinstated.

37. Grant aid applications

The Committee considered three grant aid applications:

- a) SOFEA and Didcot First**
Application amount £6,000

To help pay for a holiday scheme to provide a free meal for children that receive free school lunches.

Members of the Committee felt that this was an excellent initiative but noted that it was difficult to budget for costs when the scheme was so new. The Town Council

had already made a generous contribution by offering free use of the Civic Centre on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout the holidays. It was proposed by Cllr P Siggers; seconded by Cllr A. Thompson:

RESOLVED TO grant the sum of £2000 on the proviso that SOFEA come back to the August meeting to give some more detail of the numbers attending the event and the costs involved. One Councillor was against this proposal.

b) DACA Summer Band Concerts

Application amount £250

To support band concerts in the Didcot community.

It was noted that two of the three band concerts had now been held and the Council did not usually allow retrospective applications. It was proposed by Cllr Walsh; seconded by Cllr Thompson:

RESOLVED TO grant the sum of £250 – but the organiser would be asked to apply earlier in the year in future.

Standing orders were suspended to allow Mr Islam time to make a presentation on his grant application for £3,000 towards the repair and refurbishment of a community building.

Standing Orders reinstated.

c) King Alfred Drive Community Centre (KADCC)

Application amount £3,000

To provide funds towards the maintenance, management and improvement of the KADCC building.

Members of the Committee were pleased at the quality of the application which contained all the relevant information. It was proposed by the Chairman; seconded by Cllr A Thompson:

RESOLVED to grant the sum of £3,000.

38. Grant aid reports

Even though the Council had not given a grant to the Armed Forces Play day at Vauxhall Barracks – the event was supported by the Outside Services manager and report with photographs was received and **NOTED**.

39. Financial statements and budgets as at 30th June 2019

The Committee asked a series of questions regarding the accounts:

- 1132 – Outside service provider HR/HS - £3,536 – the Town Clerk confirmed that this was an annual sum for Ellis Whittam's HR and H&S services.
- 1160 – IT Maintenance/Website - £2,478 (budget £14,100)
- 1940 – Building maintenance fund - £14,767 (budget £10,000)

- 3165 - Ladygrove Lakes - £5,645 (budget £10,000)
- 4027 – Advertising/Marketing - £3,490 (over budget - £2,500)
- 4045 – Repair/up-grade PA system - £871 (over budget - £871)
- 4044 – Maintenance contracts - £6,021 (budget £8,500)
- 4046 – IT/website - £728 (budget £1,800)

The Town Clerk would confirm a breakdown of these cost centres before the next meeting if time – or at the next meeting.

A full report on the costs associated with the new Depot building was requested. Councillors wanted a list of verbal instructions; changes in specification; who authorised what; confirmation of written instruction; and did the architect act as the contract administrator. The cost centre – 90015 £240,526 (budget £198,091) would also need to be explained.

Credit control was also scrutinised and Councillors wanted to know more details of how this works in relation to bad payers.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial statements and budgets as at 30th June 2019 along with the bank reconciliation report.

40. Up-date from the Town Fayre working group

The report was noted.

41. To discuss the vacant space at Willowbrook and potential meeting dates of the working group

The Willowbrook working group have already met but they did not feel the need for the Finance Committee to approve their meeting dates as they were in the main gathering information on use for the vacant space. Cllr Haval wanted to know if there were any plans for Willowbrook . It was noted that Soll were interested in the vacant space as a children’s crèche. It was also noted that Soll should be providing the Council with a quarterly report.

42. Budget Timetable for 2020-2021 financial year

It was proposed by Cllr A. Sandiford; seconded by Cllr M. Walsh to agree the timetable circulated with the agenda.

43. To review the agenda for the NALC annual conference and whether it is worth attendance from Didcot Town Council

The agenda was discussed and many of the items were quite broad and could be useful. However the cost of sending two people to attend both days was considered very high and the money could instead be used to provide training for all Councillors to benefit from.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody; seconded by Cllr A Thompson not to send anyone to attend the NALC annual conference on this occasion.

44. Request for funding of speed surveys

The Planning Committee requested £120 to fund a week long speed survey on Avon Way between Brunstock Beck and Prestwich Burn. They also requested an

additional £720 be put into the speed survey budget. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody; seconded by Cllr A Thompson:

RESOLVED to approve £120 for the speed survey between Brunstock Beck and Prestwick Burn. More detail was requested about the other speed survey locations.

45. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Proposed by Cllr J Moody; seconded by Cllr P Siggers it was:

RESOLVED to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to Section 1 of the Public Bodies [Admission to Meetings] Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

46. To review the heads of terms regarding land at Fleet Meadow

The Town Clerk circulated some comments from the trustees of TRAIN who were wishing to lease the land to build their own building. There were several queries on the heads of terms which were discussed by the Councillors. The Town Clerk was asked to seek legal advice on the revised heads of terms and its implications to the Town Council.

47. To consider a Service level Agreement for contracting legal services to Oxfordshire County Council

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody; seconded by Cllr P Siggers:

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Council accept the terms in the Service Level Agreement.

48. To receive confidential minutes from the CCTV meeting at SODC

The Councillors noted the confidential minutes.

The meeting closed at 10.15pm.

Signed _____ Chairman Date _____