

## Didcot Town Council

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### **Finance and General Purposes Committee** 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 7.30pm All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



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

#### **Present:**

Councillor J Moody (Chair)  
Councillor P Siggers (Vice Chair)  
Councillor A Dearlove  
Councillor V Haval  
Councillor D Chandran  
Councillor A Thompson  
Councillor E Hards (sub for Councillor A Sandiford)

**Officer:** Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk

#### **120. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr A Sandiford (Cllr E Hards subbing).

#### **121. Declarations of interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

Cllr A Thompson enters the meeting.

#### **122. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record. There were two amendments accepted by the Committee: In Minute 107 there is no “h” in John – correct spelling Jon (Bright); in Minute 111. Cllr V Haval enquired as to the status of the Willowbrook business plan being put together by the consultant. This document would be reviewed at the next meeting of the Property & Facilities Committee.

#### **123. Questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item**

Cllr Haval referred to the confidential Minute 119 and wished to know if the employee had signed an agreement. The Town Clerk confirmed that an agreement had been signed.

**124. To note two grant aid reports**

There were two Grant Aid reports; one from the Didcot Baptist Church and one from the Didcot Volunteer Drivers. The Committee noted both reports.

**125. To review and consider the budget reports for 2022-2023 financial year**

Cllr J Moody clarified a typo on page 6-9 with the precept amount which should be £1,241,562. The proposed amounts for the various cost centres were discussed. It was noted that the Member's training budget at £800 has not been spent and has been impacted by the pandemic. It would be prudent to look at an increase for the next financial year to allow for induction training after the next local elections in May 2023. It was clarified that the Queen's Jubilee budget would come from cost centre 9051 @ £3,000. Cllr V Haval spoke about the issue with the buses that were being taken over by Thames Travel. Cllr E Hards spoke to say that this has gone through the Planning Committee and it was agreed that our bus shelters are in reasonably good repair. Improvements were being considered within DTC budgets along with new bus shelters where appropriate. Cllr V Haval queried the 3000 bar codes and the expenditure on food. The Town Clerk said that the Council does not do food but simply serves bar snacks which do not require any preparation. This could be discussed with the Property & Facilities Manager.

**126. To recommend the precept request for 2022-2023**

The Chair spoke through the report and his stance of taking a prudent view regarding income. The precept recommendation of £1,241,562 was suggested on the tax base of 10,499 which would result in a Band D property paying £118.25 per annum an increase of 4.56%. Some of this percentage will be reduced by the extra 300 new properties built this year. SODC wish to receive this request by Friday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND a precept of £1,241,562 for the 2022-2023 financial year. The vote was: IN FAVOUR = 5; ABSTENTION = 2.

**127. To note the half yearly CCTV reports**

The reports were noted and the Town Clerk was asked to make a formal request to purchase two new CCTV cameras – one to replace the old camera at Edinburgh Road car park; the other under the bridge near the Aldi supermarket.

**128. To consider the information from Croudace Homes relating to the new Ladygrove Community Centre**

Didcot Town Council were approached by Croudace Homes in relation to the new community centre due to be built in north-east Ladygrove. A church group were due to run this facility but had pulled out. The proposed floor plans and specification were circulated to the Committee. The centre could potentially be run to give local groups access but without staff on site. A commuted sum of £44,000 would be provided towards the maintenance of the centre - through the S106 agreement. Cllr V Haval spoke to propose that the Council agree in principle. There were concerns that the

commuted sum was insufficient and we could end up paying a service charge to the management company. There were also concerns about the position of the toilets.

It was AGREED to invite the Developer to speak at the next meeting of the F&GP Committee in January. The Town Clerk was instructed to speak to SODC before this meeting.

**129. To consider revising the expenditure authorisation for staff**

The recommendation from the Personnel & Administration Committee was to authorise the following everyday expenditure:

- £600 for the Property & Facilities Manager and the new Outside Services Manager
- Increasing the expenditure for the Town Clerk from up to £1,000 to £1,500

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that the authorisation be approved subject to the sums being available from approved budget cost centres which are marked on the purchase orders.

**130. To note the progress report on items not on this agenda.**

The progress report was noted by the Committee. It was agreed that a notional allowance for incidentals at the Fleet Meadow Community Centre should be allocated but there would appear to be enough income for the Centre to be self-sustaining. Cllr A Thompson spoke of the flooding to the building which needs drainage improvements.

**131. Exclusion of the press and public**

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

**132. To consider two part time positions as a replacement for the full time Reception & Finance Assistant**

It was recommended by the Personnel & Administration Committee to replace this full time position with two part time positions: a Bookings Administrator and a Meetings Officer. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED to go ahead and advertise these positions in the new year.

**133. To note the minutes of the June CCTV half yearly meeting**

The confidential minutes of the CCTV Management meeting was noted.

Meeting closed at 8.35pm

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair      Date \_\_\_\_\_