

Didcot Town Council

Finance and General Purposes Committee

25th April 2022 at 7.30pm
All Saints Room, Didcot Civic Hall



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 (Chair)
Councillor A Macdonald (sub for Cllr P Siggers)
Councillor D Chandran
Councillor A Dearlove
Councillor A Thompson
Councillor V Haval
Councillor E Hards (sub for Cllr A Sandiford)

Officer: Mrs J Wheeler – Town Clerk

176. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A Sandiford and Cllr P Siggers.

177. Declarations of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

178. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 28th March 2022

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr D Chandran and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record. There were no amendments.

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

There were no questions.

180. To consider two grant reports

The Committee noted grant reports from Be Free Young Carers and Citizens Advice. The Chair asked the Town Clerk to thank both organisations for their reports.

181. To review the financial reports for March 2022

The Town Clerk explained that although this was the end of the financial year, this was only a draft and the final end of year figures will be confirmed at the next F&GP Committee meeting. The Committee then listed a range of cost centres where they required additional information:

- 101/1109 – Staff Travel – why over-spent?
- 105/1159 – Accounting support
- 301/9045 – Ransomes Parkway 3 – large over-spend query
- 306/3151 – Loyd Park water charges (All locations)
- 302/3151 – Allotments water charges
- 401/4012 – Civic Hall water charges – significantly less than previous years
- 102/1235 – Civic Functions
- 101/1121 – Telephone/Fax/internet
- 101/1160 – IT maintenance/website
- 310/3157 – Dog Fouling Clean-up Service

Explanations of these variances would be brought to the May F&GP Committee meeting.

The Chair had a general query on the aged debtors listed. The Committee wanted clarification on the payment of invoices and how this was achieved. Cllr V Haval wanted to know if the business plan spread sheet produced by Craig Mulhall was being followed. The Town Clerk pointed out that Willowbrook is not yet fully open so a comparison would not clarify the running and management costs.

182. To consider writing off some outstanding invoices

The Property & Facilities Manager had compiled a list of invoice queries that needed to be written off for various reasons – invoice numbers:

CH9738 (20/11/21)	£134.50
CH9348 (01/02/20)	£216.00
CH8442 (26/02/19)	£34.20
CH8377 (31/01/19)	£126.00
CH8383 (31/01/19)	£265.60
CH9734 (29/11/21)	£15.59

The total write-off sum is £1,067.29. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr V Haval and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** to Council that the sums are written off.

183. To consider amendments to the Financial Regulations and to note the new advice

The Town Clerk had provided a copy of the Financial Regulations with various amendments and considerations. The amendments were largely agreed as they were up-dates to bring the financial regulations more in line with how the Town Council is now operating.

- It was agreed that standing Committees should have the authority to spend over £5,500 as long as the expenditure is detailed in the budget. The Town Clerk would check the terms of reference for the standing Committees to ensure that this is covered.

- Page 8 Section 5 5.8 – limit on £5,000 grants. It was agreed that any grants over £10,000 should be referred to full Council as they were a significant proportion of the grant aid budget. This had not been happening for the last few year.
- Page 11 Section 6 6.21 – it was agreed to lower the petty cash sum from £250 to £150. The credit card reduces the need for petty cash in the office.
- It was noted that the latest Public Contracts Regulations 2015 have been updated and the £25,000 threshold now includes VAT. This means that new Financial Regulations are likely to be published by NALC in the future.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that these Financial Regulations for 2022 be presented to full Council for adoption on 9th May 2022.

184. To review the grant policy guidance

This item was deferred to the next meeting as the guidance was not attached.

185. To consider out-sourcing the salary payments

The Committee were keen to out-source the salary payments but wanted to know whether further time savings could be made by allowing DCK to may the salary payments direct from the DTC bank account. The current proposal was to make one large payment each month from which DCK could allocate to the salary payments. The Town Clerk would bring this item back to the May meeting.

186. To consider the effectiveness of the internal audit and recommendation regarding the internal auditor for the next financial year

The Committee reviewed the report and confirmed that they were satisfied with the service from Auditing Solutions. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr E Hards and RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Auditing Solutions are retained for a further year.

187. To review the strategic risk register for 2021-2022

The strategic risk register was reviewed and approved by the Committee. It was noted that the Town Clerk is working on a more in-depth risk assessment to cover all the Town Council assets and facilities.

188. To note the latest CIL dividend

The sum of £8,645.66 was due to be paid to the Town Council towards the end of April 2022.

189. Progress report

The Committee went through the progress report. A meeting was due to take place on the day-to-day handover of Fleet Meadow on Thursday 28th April. The case for additional CCTV cameras was not easy to make as the crime figures recorded on the Police website did not support the two locations that Councillors had chosen. The heads of terms were due to be considered for the new building at Ladygrove North Community Building at a meeting with the developer on 20th May 2022.

It was also proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED to approve a memorial bench to mark the Her Majesty the Queen's

Platinum Jubilee. The bench would be situated in the Civic Hall gardens and would need to be ordered as quickly as possible to ensure delivery before the Jubilee celebrations. The cost would be approx. £599 + VAT and the cost would come from cost centre 325/9051.

190. 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.

191. To review the quotes for Tender Management Services for the tendering and award of contract for the new Pavilion at Edmonds Park

This tender opportunity had been advertised on the Contracts Finder website. A total of seven responses were to be considered.

The confidential report listed the companies and prices quoted along with several observations from the Officers. All responses were scored on the following criteria:

- Local to Didcot
- Price quoted
- Content – services described
- Time estimates for the project
- Local Government – sector knowledge
- Awareness of Value
- Awareness of biodiversity and carbon footprint values

It was proposed by Cllr A Macdonald and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that the contract for stage one and two be awarded to Ridge and Partners at a cost of £29,000 + VAT subject to confirmation that the liaison with the BREEAM consultant will not add to the price quoted.

The Town Clerk can now confirm that the liaison with the BREEAM consultant will not add to the cost. This appointment will go to the Annual Meeting on 9th May 2022 for ratification.

192. To review a recommendation from the Personnel and Administration Committee

The recommendation is to promote two members of staff onto an incremental scale – SCP 7 £20,444 to SCP 11 £22,129. Both members of staff are part time. The total increase would be £644.80 and £483.60 pro rata. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr D Chandran and **RESOLVED to RECOMMEND** this promotion to full Council. The total cost would be £1,128.40 per annum.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed _____ Chair Date _____