

Finance and General Purposes Committee
24th August 2020 at 7.30pm
Meeting held online at zoom



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 P Siggers (Vice Chair)
Councillor P Davies
Councillor V Haval
Councillor M McNeill
Councillor A Sandiford
Councillor A Thompson

Officer: Mrs J Wheeler, Town Clerk

Also present:

Councillor E Hards (Mayor); M Khan (Leader); A Hudson; A Dearlove; D Rouane; M Mallows; S Hewerdine; M Walsh; D. Macdonald; A Macdonald; P Giesberg; C Wilson and two members of the public.

51. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr J Durman and Sharon Hickman (Finance Manager).

52. Declarations of interests

Cllr V Haval declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 on the agenda – she would take part in the discussion and vote.

53. To receive a report on the end of year accounts from the second internal audit

This report had only been received that day which did not give enough time for the Committee to note the recommendations. However the report did have a recommendation that the Finance and General Purposes Committee should approve the annual return document and recommend it to the Full Council later that evening.

It was also noted that letters had gone out to all the debtors in a bid to gather in the monies due to the Civic Hall.

It was proposed by Cllr P Davies and seconded by Cllr J Moody to note the recommendation and review the report at the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

54. To review and sign the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2019 – 2020

The Committee reviewed the accounting statements and the figures contained therein. It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** the acceptance of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2019 – 2020.

The vote was: 6 = IN FAVOUR; 1 = ABSTENTION

55. To approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held 27TH July 2020

It was proposed by Councillor J. Moody; seconded by Councillor P Siggers and **RESOLVED** to agree the minutes held on 27th July 2020 as a correct record.

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

The Chair paged through for questions. Cllr P Davies enquired as to the item on the CCTV query. The Town Clerk confirmed that an email had been received that day and she would forward it to all Committee members.

57. To review a grant application

A grant application had been received from the Methodist Church for the repair of the church steps. The sum requested was up to £5,480 + vat. There was a discussion on how the awarding of this grant would benefit the residents of Didcot. It was agreed that different community organisations make use of the church rooms. However it was noted that the application was incomplete and the accounts must form an essential part of the application to give Councillors a true picture of their financial position.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers to refuse this grant application.

58. To note the monthly accounts to 30th June 2020

The Chair paged through the papers and took questions. It was noted that the payments from Soll Leisure had re-started but the outstanding sum needed to be resolved. The Town Clerk was asked to look at this.

59. To consider several accounting scenarios exploring the impact of the pandemic on the Town Council accounts

It was **AGREED** to defer this item to the next meeting of the Finance Committee which would be the six month point to review before the budget process begins.

60. Adjournment of this meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers to adjourn this meeting to allow the Extra-Ordinary Council meeting to take place. The Committee meeting would resume after. This was AGREED at approx. 7.55pm.

Meeting resumed at 8.35pm.

61. To review the Extra-Ordinary Covid risk assessment relating to staff working in the DTC offices

This risk assessment was deferred from the last meeting when the table had not been sent out with the agenda. The Chair paged through the document for discussion. It was AGREED to note this document which was subject to review as the advice from the Government was up-dated.

62. To consider whether the Autumn CIL payments were to go into the bank account or be left with SODC

It was AGREED that the payments would be requested to go into our bank account.

63. To review and note the Grant Policy

It was AGREED to defer this policy for review at the next meeting – the review date was December 2020.

64. To confirm the budget timetable for 2021-2022 financial year

The following timetable was circulated to Committee members.

1st round of budget consideration

Personnel and Administration Committee	5 th October 2020
Civic Hall Management Committee	23 rd September 2020
Environment and Climate Committee	21 st September 2020
Finance and General Purposes Committee	28 th September 2020

2nd round of budget consideration

Personnel and Administration Committee	7 th December 2020
Civic Hall Management Committee	25 th November 2020
Environment and Climate Committee	16 th November 2020
Finance and General Purposes Committee	23 rd November 2020

The aim is to have the final budget and precept recommendation ready for the F&GP Committee meeting on 21st December 2020. This will be considered at the Council meeting on 11th January 2021.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to adopt this timetable.

65. To review the quotes for the end of year close-down and partial exemption work

The Town Clerk was still gathering quotes for this work. Cllr V Haval reported on the work that she has carried out regarding the methods used to calculate the partial exemption. It was AGREED to defer this item until the quotes have been gathered.

The Chair discussed the need to appoint a firm to take on the pay roll in the aftermath of the Finance Manager who was leaving her post this week.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers to appoint DCK Accounting Solutions for the payroll work. The vote was in favour with one abstention from Cllr Thompson.

66. To note the progress report for items not on the agenda

The progress report was noted. It was AGREED to open a dialogue with Willowbrook regarding the outstanding amounts currently owed.

67. 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.

68. To review two requests for funding from the Environment and Climate Committee

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson to agree the quote of £1080 per year to treat the hemlock plant. Cllr Moody asked for this to be included in the next budget.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson to go ahead with the installation of the height barrier at a cost of £1,600

69. To review the quotations for valuations of Council property

The Town Council's insurance is due for renewal in November 2020. It is good practice to review the value of the Council-owned buildings to ensure that the new insurance gives an up-to-date valuation in the event of the need to re-build.

Five properties were included in the quotes:

- Council Offices and Civic Hall
- Willowbrook Leisure Centre building
- Edmonds Park storage
- Edmonds Park cycle proposal
- Loyd Park Pavilion
- (Edmonds Park Depot – was omitted by error)

Three quotes were received:

Company A = £5,450 + vat

Company B = £3,295 + vat – to include one site visit over two days

Company C = £1,450 + vat – or the option of a desk-based valuation for £500

The desk-based option from Quote C is valid for up to two years. The alternative option includes a site visit and the valuation is valid for six years.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Davies and RESOLVED to appoint Company C to carry out the work using the quote including the site visit. This would be needed because the new Depot at Edmonds Park would need to be added. The final cost including the Depot was £1,600 + vat.

70. To review a draft brief for a contractor to manage the Civic Hall boilers

The draft tender was presented to the F&GP Committee at their meeting on 27th July 2020. It was deferred to revise the wording to include more than just the boilers. Cllr J Moody proposed changing the call out to 12 hours a day from 8.00am to 8.00pm. it was AGREED that this contract could be expanded to cover all the properties owned by DTC.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED to circulate the amended brief for quotations.

Meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Signed _____ Chairman Date _____