

Finance and General Purposes Committee
26th July 2021 7.30pm
Meeting held online at zoom – meeting as a
temporary working group



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 A Macdonald (sub for Cllr A Sandiford)

Officer: Mrs J Wheeler, Town Clerk

Also present:

Cllr E Hards (Deputy Leader) and one member of the public.

36. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr A Sandiford (Cllr A Macdonald subbing).

37. Declarations of interests

Cllr A Dearlove declared a personal interest in Food Festival grant aid application, item 6 on the agenda.

38. To approve the Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 21st June 2021

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to approve the minutes as an accurate record.

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

Cllr V Haval asked for an update on the redecoration of Willowbrook including the progress made in investigating LED lighting. Cllr J Moody responded that the

re-decoration would commence in August and the LED lighting report is with the Property and Facilities Committee.

Cllr V Haval also queried the timescale for appointment of a procurement consultant for Willowbrook. Cllr J Moody confirmed that the tender will close on 4th August and a summary table will be provided at the August meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to suspend standing orders to allow public participation.

Dan Andrew spoke to the committee regarding his Didcot Mountain Bike Park project. Dan explained that he is now also looking at external funding rather than relying on the Council. Dan's petition stands at 1,994 signatures with 973 OX1 signatures. He highlighted the physical and mental health benefits of cycling, encouraging families to get outdoors and facilitate healthy living.

Cllr J Moody thanked Dan for his contribution. In response, he stated that the Council does not have any land at present that can be used for the project. Cllr J Moody expressed his support but suggested contacting SODC to see whether it can be incorporated within any currently planned developments in the town, mentioning Valley Park as a potential location. Cllr V Haval agreed with going to SODC because they were developing leisure strategies and suggested she could point Dan in the right direction.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

40. To note two grant reports

The reports from Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South & Vale and Didcot Emergency foodbank were circulated with the agenda and noted by the Councillors. Cllr P Siggers wished to note the level of food poverty in Didcot and the importance of the Council supporting grants of this nature.

41. To receive any grant applications

The Food Festival has submitted some additional information to support a new application for £2500 of grant aid.

Several Councillors made statements of support. The importance of events which are affordable and open to all residents, promote the town and have the potential to strengthen community spirit were all highlighted.

It was proposed by Cllr V Haval and seconded by Cllr A Dearlove and RESOLVED to award the grant of £2500 to Didcot Events for the Food Festival.

41. To review the accounts and payments for June 2021

The accounts and payments for June 2021 were noted with no questions.

42. To note the up-date on the planning application for the pavilion at Edmonds Park

Cllr A Macdonald spoke on the contaminated land survey and the concerns that had been raised by Sport England. It was reiterated that the new pavilion was for

community activities and other sports in addition to providing changing facilities for the football teams.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Macdonald and RESOLVED that the contaminated land assessment be carried out at a cost of £850 + VAT.

43. To consider the attached strategic risk assessment

This item has been deferred until later in the financial year.

44. To receive an update on the Kickstart programme

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the Council's progress regarding the Kickstart programme. The Town Clerk explained that positions offered through Kickstart will be for young people to gain meaningful skills. A training provider has applied for two positions on behalf of the council. One position will be in the outdoors team and one will be for the buildings.

Cllr A Macdonald expressed his support for the programme.

Cllr P Siggers also expressed support and noted the importance of getting young people onto the job ladder.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND that the Town Clerk continue to pursue the two positions with the training provider, subject to any changes by the Personnel and Administration Committee.

45. To note the half yearly CCTV report

The report was circulated with the agenda and noted by the Councillors.

46. To review the location of an additional CCTV camera

Cllr P Siggers spoke of the recommendations of TVP to place a camera on Great Western Park giving good coverage of main roads, saying this was worth considering.

Several Councillors spoke in favour of Cow Lane as the preferred location for a new camera, highlighting the number of incidents over the years and the fact that it is an essential route for Ladygrove residents.

Some concerns were also noted, such as the need for cameras to be placed at a lower height to have full coverage. Cllr A Thompson suggested PTZ cameras which have extra protection could nullify the increased risk of vandalism due to low height.

Cllr J Moody and Cllr A Macdonald suggested that Wantage Road may be a potential future location for a camera due to high-speed traffic.

Cllr P Siggers suggested listening to the advice of TVP regarding a camera at Aldi.

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr A Thompson and RESOLVED that the Town Clerk move forward with additional cameras at Cow Lane tunnel and Aldi underpass.

47. To note the schedule for the 2022-2023 budget

The schedule was circulated with the agenda and noted by the Councillors.

48. To note the progress report on items not on this agenda

Cllr P Siggers wished to note that the solar roof project would be going to the Property and Facilities Committee on 28th July.

Cllr A Thompson asked if there had been any progress on EV charging points. Cllr J Moody responded that the Council was currently waiting to see how SODC will progress with their EV charging points.

The progress report was noted by the Councillors.

49. 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.

50. To agree to two refund requests

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and **RESOLVED** that the two refunds requests be approved.

51. To note the confidential minutes from the meeting of the CCTV Management Group

The Town Clerk gave a summary of the meeting. The CCTV control room is a COVID-19 secure workspace and therefore there are currently no visits being carried out. Once these resume, Councillors will be able to visit the control room to see the team working with the cameras. There is also an upgrade to the control room taking place to bring it up to standard.

The Town Clerk took the opportunity to query an additional CCTV camera and enquire about Edmunds Park. The Town Clerk was informed that cameras in Edmunds Park could be monitored at the central control room at no additional cost. However, the Council would need to pay for the cameras and equipment.

Cllr J Moody expressed a desire to get further details on the costs of CCTV at Edmunds Park as it may be a worthwhile cost to protect the investment being made.

Cllr A Thompson also expressed a desire to have cameras at Edmunds Park once the new pavilion is complete.

The minutes of the CCTV Management Group meeting were noted by the Councillors.

Cllr V Haval asked if there had been any further discussion on when the Committee might return to face-to-face meetings. The Town Clerk said that whilst some councils had planned to return to face-to-face meetings, they had delayed this until at least September due to the recent rise in infections. The Town Clerk is planning an email to all members to gauge consensus.

Meeting closed at 8.45pm

Signed _____ Chairman Date _____