

Didcot Town Council

Finance and General Purposes Committee

26th October 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 M Khan (Leader and Deputy Mayor), D. Macdonald and one member of the public.

84. Apologies

No apologies – everyone was present.

85. Declarations of interests

Cllr V Haval declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 14 and 15 on the agenda.

86. To approve the Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held 28th September 2020

It was proposed by Councillor P. Siggers and seconded by Councillor A Sandiford and **RESOLVED** to agree the minutes held on 28th September 2020 as a correct record. It was noted that at minute 72 Cllr McNeill's surname was incorrectly spelt and at minute 78 last paragraph should read "quote for repair".

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

The Chair paged through for questions. Cllr V Haval wished to find out where the replacement CCTV camera was installed.

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

Sabiene North from Be Free Young Carers spoke to support their grant application. She spoke about how the charity was working with its young carers during the pandemic. The charity had seen numbers rise and they have a large waiting list for the Be Friending Service. Sabiene spoke of the activities they arrange to help give some respite for the carers.

Cllr M Khan then spoke of the emergency grant application which he would like the Committee to consider. He was proposing a sum of £5,000 from the grant budget to be ring-fenced to help provide food for vulnerable children during the Christmas holidays.

Cllr D Macdonald spoke regarding item 13 – the access to Stubbings Land and why the monies were needed to install a tarmac path.

Standing Orders were re-instated.

88. To note the report from Homestart

This report was noted and thanks will be sent to the charity.

89. To consider the two grant applications

It was proposed by Cllr P. Siggers and seconded by Cllr A Sandiford and RESOLVED to award the full grant of £6,000 to the Be Free Young Carers charity. Their work was considered to be essential in the community.

The emergency grant application was discussed by the Committee. It was agreed that community groups would have to apply for the ring-fenced money by completing the Council's grant application paperwork in the usual way.

It was proposed by Cllr V Haval and seconded by Cllr A Sandiford and RESOLVED to ring fence the sum of £5,000 for the potential provision of food to vulnerable children in the Didcot community.

90. To review the monthly accounts and payments in September 2020

The Chair paged through the accounts for comments. Cllr V Haval stated that the balance sheet showing the bar stock expenditure at £4,415 should not exceed the income. It was noted however that the bar at the Civic Hall was closed and in this extraordinary situation it was likely that there would be no income.

The purchases on the Council's new credit card were noted along with the measures the Town Clerk has put in place to ensure that the card use is authorised each time. The credit limit in place was £8,000 which had been allocated by the bank. It was agreed that the Town Clerk should write to request that the limit is lowered to £2,000.

The sales ledger was also discussed and it was agreed to request that DCK Accounting Solutions be asked to do an extra day's work going through each sum. Cllr V Haval wanted a full report to be brought back to this Committee.

91. To note the significant budget requirements being considered by the Committees so far.

Civic Hall Management Committee:

- Income will be severely depleted.
- Wedding packages and children's parties would not be promoted as they required financial outlay to host. Current bookings would be honoured.
- Advertising and marketing cost centres would also be restricted.
- 4024 – Events £9,000 to be held at zero.
- 4025 – Children's birthday parties to be deleted.

Environment and Climate Committee:

- 1173 ring fence any unspent money in 1173 Green Projects.
- £100,000 towards new play equipment for Edmonds Park – junior play area.
- 9056 Ladygrove lakes staging replacement – journal any unspent money on this project.
- 9051 – Memorial bench – to journal this money to general benches
- OCC grant was not sufficient to cover the grass verge cutting and had not been increased since 2016.
- Remembrance Day parades will now be funded by the Town Council.

It was also noted that the Planning and Development Committee was requesting a budget of £13,000 to cover planning expenses such as copying and traffic surveys.

92. To review the current status of S106 and CIL monies

This report was noted.

93. To review the quotes for the end of year close down and VAT partial exemption work

This item was deferred to the next meeting to allow the Town Clerk time to gather further information on the quotes and available options.

94. To review the insurance quotes once received

The Town Clerk gave a verbal up-date on the insurance quotes. It was AGREED to send this item to the full Council meeting on 2nd November 2020.

95. To approve the next stage of funding for the Edmonds Park Pavilion

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to delegate the authority to the Environment and Climate Committee to spend budget 9058 Building projects fees.

This decision would allow the project to proceed with the architects drawing up developed designs (stages 3 and 4) and to apply for planning permission. This would give the Council the ability to apply for grants as an option to cover the building costs. The costs of stage 3 and 4 is £24,250 plus vat.

96. To vire funds to build the link path at Stubbings land

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Siggers and RESOLVED to RECOMMEND the virement of £20,000 from cost centre 1268 Elections to 3154 Other Parks and Recreational areas – Maintenance. Due to the pandemic the Government will not allow any elections until May 2021 – so this sum is available to fund this project. The Committee supported the longer tarmac option.

97. To consider the report on roof repairs at Willowbrook

It was proposed by Cllr J Moody and seconded by Cllr P Davies and RESOLVED to opt for the repairs option as an interim measure to make the building water-tight. It was agreed that future options could include solar heating as part of a replacement roof in the Council's quest to move towards a more environmentally sustainable form of heating for its buildings.

The repairs have been estimated at around £6,677.25 + VAT. This includes removing all fixings from the current ridge and re-install a larger ridge flashing over the top and seal using EPDM fillers. This would prevent wind and driving rain from getting under the flashing.

The cost breakdown is £3,664 specialist machine hire for two days and £3,013.25 for the ridge flashing replacement.

98. To note the potential solar power project on the roof of the Civic Hall and Willowbrook

The information on the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme was circulated for noting by the Committee. The deadlines appear to be very tight but the Officers were asked to explore whether it would be viable to submit an application and the information required as part of that application.

99. To note the progress report

The Chair went through the progress report and the contents were noted.

100. 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.

101. To review the proposed objectives for Didcot Town Council during this term

It was noted that this version of the document would not contain recommendations from the recent meeting of the Personnel and Administration Committee. Cllr P Davies wondered if the Council wanted to make a profit from the Civic Hall rather than an operating surplus. It was agreed that the Civic Hall was a great asset and one that should remain at the heart of the community. This document would be further debated at the full Council meeting on 2nd November 2020.

Meeting closed at 9.21pm.

Signed _____ Chairman Date _____