

**Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018 at 7:30 pm  
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:

Councillors:

Dr S Clarke  
Mr S Connel (Substituting) from minute number xxx  
Mr A Dearlove (Chairman)

Mr D Healy  
Mr M Khan  
Ms P Siggers

### Officer:

Mr CP Wayman, Town Clerk  
1 Member of the public

### Public participation

Cllr Macdonald spoke as a member of the public on the issue of International Women's day (minute number xxx), highlighting that the day was a call to action rather than a competition. The point was made that it was unclear what the schools currently do for the date and that supporting their activities might be a better way forward.

### 364. Apologies

Cllr Ms J Billington and Cllr. Mr T Harbour tendered their apologies, Cllr S Connel substituting.

### 365. Declarations of interests

None.

### **366. Minutes of the meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

Proposed by Cllr Dearlove, seconded by Cllr Healy it was

**RESOLVED** to agree, as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and to sign them as such.

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

None.

### **368. Financial statements and budgets as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

The Committee considered and **NOTED** the financial statements and budgets as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 along with a bank reconciliation report.

### **369. Motion Referred from Full Council**

The following had been referred from Full Council

Motion from Councillor Neville Harris. Didcot Ladygrove Ward:

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Mr N Harris, seconded by Councillor Mr S Hewerdine.

“I move that Didcot Town Council help mark and celebrate next year's Women's International Day [sic – International Women's Day] which is on March 8th 2019. The enthusiasm shown nationwide to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of partial women's suffrage this year highlighted the general acknowledgement that there is still much to be done to bring about true gender and diversity equality in the UK. Discrimination and harassment of all kinds must be identified [sic] and brought to an end.

The celebrations to be organised, as appropriate, in the run up to March 8th to include: an approach to all Didcot's Junior and Senior Schools \ Academies to invite pupils regardless of gender to take part in marking Women's International Day [sic] in the following way. The Council will organise, in conjunction with those schools that involve themselves, a Competition inviting pupils or groups of pupils to submit, in any artistic medium they wish, suitable pieces of work which may include: essays, paintings, poems, recorded music, recorded songs, short videos, maximum length 10 minutes, memory stick presentations, again 10 minute maximum duration, wood carvings, metal work or any other creative medium. Pieces (entries) to be on any aspect of Women's International Day [sic]. The Council hope that this will increase community and citizenship awareness in creative and imaginative ways. There would be an overall winner and category winners. The precise details to be finalised by an

appropriate grouping of people to be agreed. Examples of aspects which could be included might be: What does it mean to be a woman or a girl in 2019? Why we still need a Women's International Day [sic] in the 21st Century? 'It's been 100 years since some women got the vote. Would those who achieved suffrage for women then think we still had work to do?

I further move that the 6th Former's of Didcot's Schools and Academies be invited to take part in a debate to be arranged, on a proposition to be decided based on the foregoing example elements or any other kindred aspect of Women's International Day [sic]. Details to be finalised by the grouping of people referred to above.

The Council also agrees to campaign in the run up to the next Town Council Elections in May 2019 with a view to encourage more women to stand as candidates and to vote in the said elections. With the overall intention of increasing the amount of the Town's residents that participate in the Town's local governance.”

In discussing the motion, all speaking Councillors recognised the importance of International Women's Day, and the potential for local young people to be able to express their creative talents was welcomed in both the fine and performing arts. On the other hand, Councillors expressed concern that insufficient groundwork had gone into the proposal, with insufficient consideration being given to the impact it would have on the female staff who would be implementing the motion, the absence of any pre-meeting, concerns over the absence of any engagement with the schools in light of the proximity of the planned event to exams, and the failure to address resource implications for the schools and Town Council meaning that the Council was being asked to agree to something without knowledge of its financial implications.

It was proposed by Councillor Mr S Connel, seconded by Councillor Mrs D Macdonald and **RESOLVED** to refer consideration of the financial aspects to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, and for a recommendation then to be made to Council.

Members considered the motion. It was felt that the competition element was inappropriate and that an exhibition would be more in keeping with the values of the day. Councillors also discussed the possibility of giving a specific award for women as part of the John Eldridge Awards evening.

Members were concerned with the lack of information provided, that there were no potential costs and so little time to arrange that it meant that there was no possibility of creating a new event in time.

It was also commented that the above points coupled with the fact that the mover of the motion was not present to put forward the case and provide additional information spoke volumes about the motivation for the motion.

Proposed by Cllr. Siggers, seconded by Cllr. Clarke it was

**RESOLVED** unanimously that the motion be rejected but that the council actively seeks grant aid applications for exhibitions in relation to International Women's Day.

### **370. Internal Audit Action Plan report**

Members noted the report.

*Cllr Macdonald as a member of the public left the meeting and Cllr. Connel arrived at the meeting during the next item.*

### **371. Draft Budget for 2019/20**

Proposed by Cllr Dearlove, seconded by Cllr. Clarke and

**RESOLVED** to increase the rent of the allotments by £3 per year and to accept the draft budget estimates with 3 votes for the motion and 3 abstentions

### **372. Quarterly CCTV report**

Members noted the report and asked the Town Clerk to promote the ask Angela campaign for public safety via the Town Council's Social media.

### **373. Grant aid policy**

Members had a discussion over the discussion points raised in the report to the committee. The review had been asked for to clarify the position regarding funding of wages.

Proposed by Cllr. Khan, seconded by Cllr. Connel and

**RESOLVED** that a line at 3.2.2 be included stating the Council will not contribute towards wages or salaries

### **374. Christmas Office Closing**

Proposed by Cllr. Connel, seconded by Cllr. Khan and

**RESOLVED** that the office be closed Monday 24<sup>th</sup> December and re-open on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2018 and that staff will use their holiday allowance for this period

Councillors passed on their gratitude to the Council staff for their work.

The meeting closed at 8:40 pm.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman      Date \_\_\_\_\_