

SALTASH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held at The Guildhall on Tuesday 15th June 2010 at 7:00pm

PRESENT:- Councillors M Gee (Chair), C Oakes, P Clements, D Holley, Mrs S Hooper MBE, D Yates, W Phillips

ALSO PRESENT:- Councillor R Austin
Mrs D Ashton (Temporary Town Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mrs M Killeya (Vice-Chair), A Killeya, P Stephens
ISM, C Riches

34/10/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were declared.

35/10/11 **GRIT BINS**

The process of listing all grit bins and their locations is still ongoing and approx. 70% complete. Pill ward needs to be finished with Essa ward to be undertaken next. Once the list is complete, it will be passed onto Cornwall Council.

36/10/11 **GUILDHALL**

A degree of maintenance needs to be carried out on the building which members have been reviewing. The caretakers have been undertaking some remedial works as necessary but the inside does require further works. A list of works is required indicating priority tasks with an idea of associated cost and time involved.

(a) Following previous investigations into obtaining quality tables, an issue arose with them being too heavy for staff to handle. Cllr Gee reported on lighter, good quality tables being available to buy only they are more utilitarian in looks.

Cllr Gee suggested that four attractive but heavy tables could be stored in Chamber and used in a way that kept handling them by staff to a minimum, along with the purchase of tables suitable for general use, such as markets, which are cheaper but also lighter for regular manhandling.

Members thought this a good idea, and it was **AGREED** that quotes for both types of table should be obtained. Members suggested liaising with Cllr Austin as he had undertaken purchase of last tables.

- (b) The Committee is awaiting the report following the green appraisal and audit by Eco-Kids.
- (c) Regarding the Chamber parquet flooring, Cllr Oakes suggested 2 options for improving the floor:
 - i. Re-lay any loose wood blocks with a suitable adhesive and then re-sand.
 - ii. Lay a good quality laminate flooring.

It was **AGREED** that quotes should be obtained for works to re-lay any loose blocks and re-sand.

Regarding the Hall floor, members spoke of the need for repair and that any repair needs to have careful consideration as the hall flooring is a specially designed sprung floor for dancing.

- (d) Office Equipment:

Staff Lockers

Currently, office staff do not have any suitable form of secure storage for their personal belongings. This has come to light as an incident has happened in recent history where personal belongings have been stolen from the office. A suitable sized locker unit has been sourced for approx. £150 for the office. Cllr Austin suggested the Wesley Church may have some fairly new but unused lockers that may be of use and that some arrangement could be made between the 2 organisations. Members agreed that a member of the office team should view these lockers to see if they can be used in the office.

Shredder

The current shredder is a domestic type shredder and cannot cope with the output of a working office to the point where it has tripped the lights out of the whole building. A more suitable heavy duty shredder can be sourced for approx £250. It was **RECOMMENDED** that a suitable shredder be purchased.

Fax Machine

It transpires that the current fax machine has its own dedicated telephone line which is currently and unnecessarily costing the Town Council approx £200pa. As the fax machine is not often used and therefore makes communication by fax quite expensive, Cllr Gee suggested removing the current system and a find cheaper alternative such as e-faxing. Members agreed that other options should be investigated.

Members also indicated that the website did not show the fax number.

Mobile Phone

A mobile phone was purchased for the previous Town Clerk whilst on Council's business away from the office. It was **RECOMMENDED** that this contract be cancelled and that a new contract should be set-up when the new Town Clerk starts in September.

Office Phones

The current portable office telephones are increasingly becoming unfit for purpose as they are now quite old and can play up. Members felt it was appropriate to wait for the new Town Clerk to start so they can source the equipment that they feel is most appropriate.

Lights

Following a recent incident where one of the stand-alone office lights was accidentally knocked but very easily and quickly toppled over due to their design, along with the fact that staff have experienced headaches with them too, it was suggested that members take time to inspect these lights quite soon and provide their opinion on them.

These type of lights were initially purchased to provide light in a dull room without having to disturb the walls of a listing building.

Answering Machine

The current answering machine has a problem where it does not allow callers to leave a message out-of-hours and cuts them off.

Members felt that due to the answering machine fault, it was **RECOMMENDED** that quotes should now be obtained for both new office telephones and answering machine system.

Kitchen Hot Water Boiler

Users have been holding up kettles to the boiling hot water dispenser in the kitchen which members felt was a serious health and safety issue as a kettle needs to be held quite high and becomes quite heavy once a certain volume of water has been dispensed. Members felt that the possibility of boiling hot water being spilt on someone was too high. Members were also concerned by hearing that some users actually hang the kettle on the dispensing tap – a purpose for which it was not designed and cannot take the weight of filling kettle. Again, members were concerned that the tape would break leading to a serious accident.

Members agreed to investigate ways to overcome this issue.

Fire Escape methods from Top Office

Cllr Mrs Hooper spoke of a health and safety expert who had said that means of escape from fire via rope ladders in boxes under the windows would be appropriate. The Town Clerk would investigate what is currently available on the market.

- (e) Cllr Oakes reported on the works and associated costs that the boiler requires following problems with its twin pumps. A quote for replacement of pumps only has been obtained (approx £2000).

To see if it may be better value to replace entire boiler, Cllr Oakes did enquire on that cost too and obtained 2 quotes. A commercial boiler unit only would be required with a cost between £6000 to £7000 and a ‘shelf-

life' of between 20 to 30 years. However, pumps would not be included as they are a separate kit. Installing a new boiler may also have complications due to the Guildhall's Listed Building status and the need for an external expansion pipe.

Current boiler installed in 1992 so still has some longevity, and as suitable replacement pumps have been sourced, it may be prudent at this time to just undertake this repair work only.

Cllr Holley suggested that GR Mechanical may be able to supply a quote for supplying and replacing pumps. Their cost may be slightly higher but they are a quality provider and very efficient. Members agreed with this suggestion.

37/10/11 **UPDATE ON CEMETERY**

Cllr Austin updated members on the tender process:

An e-mail from S Blatchford of Cornwall Council stated that the Town Council should be receiving all tenders by 23rd June 2010.

It was **AGREED** that on receipt of these tenders, they should be secured in a safe place with the tenders being opened by the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cllr Austin in the presence of S Blatchford and Mrs Ashton, the temporary Town Clerk, on 24th June at 4.00pm.

It was **AGREED** that the above Cllrs will then make a basic recommendation to Council.

38/10/11 **ACCESS TO ELECTORAL ROLL**

Cllr Austin explained that 2 types of electoral register were available; one with full information and an edited version.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Clerk write to Electoral Services to request that a copy be held at the Town Council.

39/10/11 **GROUNDSMAN'S REQUEST FOR A CHAINSAW**

Cllr Austin stated that having proof of the correct certification, training and experience for using this equipment along with the correct protection equipment was essential.

Members did speak of their concerns with regard to lone working aspect with this type of equipment and the type of works that would be undertaken.

Members agreed that advice should be sought from a professional tree surgeon on how lone working should be approached and the necessary safety measures put in place before any final decision made.

Members will also wait for the final report from a Health and Safety Risk Assessment carried out recently which will aid the decision-making.

40/10/11 **CORNWALL'S COMMUNITY GRANTS**

Cllr Mrs Hooper spoke of Phase 5 of some environmental works that requires funding from Cornwall Council. Cllr Austin is to pass details of the grant application to the Town Clerk.

41/10/11 **MACES**

Cllr Gee updated members on the current state of the maces and that they are in need of cleaning with some repair to rectify a small dent. Cllr Gee suggested that members take the opportunity to have a closer view of them at the forthcoming Civic Event on the 19th June 2010.

Cllr Gee also updated members on the current authorised signatory situation when obtaining maces from the bank.

42/10/11 **SAGE SOFTWARE**

The current version of Sage may not be supported in the future as a new version is now available (approx. cost £400). There may also be an issue of the current office computer O/S not being able to support this new Sage upgrade which means there may be a possibility of further expense to address this.

Members asked the Town Clerk to further investigate details of the Sage upgrade and associated cost.

Also, currently, all of the office e-mails are subject to receiving a huge number of spam mails which clog up the inbox and take time to remove. Suitable software has been recommended by the company that the Town Council uses for IT services and costs approx. £249.

Members supported the need to address the spam mail problem but were concerned at the cost of the software so asked the Town Clerk to investigate a cheaper solution.

43/10/11 **INFORMATION COMMISSIONERS OFFICE**

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Town Clerk as Proper Officer should be the contact name for the ICO.

44/10/11 **POLICIES**

Cllr Gee updated members that a review of policies is still ongoing.

45/10/11 **TOC H BUILDING**

Members were updated that it is Cornwall Council who owns this property and land and that any subsequent letter of enquiry should be addressed to them.

46/10/11 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be discussed it was **RESOLVED** that the press/public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business.

47/10/11 **STAFFING**

The Town Clerk expressed that, although short staffed, the staff were coping with this difficulty very well and that their sterling efforts, ability and support to ensure continuity of service were a credit to the Town Council.

48/10/11 **BANK ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE**

Cllr Gee updated members on the current VAT situation and that the matter was in hand and was being assisted by a member of the office team in her own time due to the staff shortage. Cllr Gee suggested that extra over time should be paid to this member of staff to cover time worked and that the total time would be in the region of 18 hours over the course of the year. It was **RECOMMENDED** that this overtime should be paid.

It was also **RECOMMENDED** that the services of the CALC and SLCC should be utilised as necessary for any advice.

With regard to other financial matters, Cllr Gee also updated members on the various other organisations that he is liaising with in his support to the Town Council during this period of staff shortage. It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cllr Gee be given delegated power to deal with situations relating to finance as necessary.

Cllr Gee further updated members on an old bank account that does not appear to serve any purpose. The Town Council are being charged a monthly fee for this and is not receiving any interest either. Cllr Gee suggested that this account be closed and for the monies to be transferred to the Town Council's proper bank account. It was **RECOMMENDED** that Cllr Gee should arrange for this to be done.

Cllr Gee finally spoke of the way that invoices are paid as currently the only payment method at the Town Council is via cheque, which requires two signatories. This is becoming increasingly outdated and means that the Town Council loses opportunities to obtain discounts e.g setting up Direct Debits with the current electricity supplier would mean the Town Council would get a 6%

discount. Cllr Gee also suggested that setting up a BACS payment system would also be more efficient.

The Town Clerk explained that this was the case at Tavistock Town Council and that, even though various payment methods were in use, there were internal control processes in place that ensured that all payments, whatever the method, were subject to at least two persons involved in the transaction.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that Direct Debits and BACS payment system be arranged as necessary.

49/10/11 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

It was **RESOLVED** that the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting.

50/10/11 **PRESS REPORTS**

There are no press reports to be undertaken.

51/10/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 20th July at 7.00pm.

Rising at 8.45pm

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____ 1st July 2010