

SALTASH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held at The Guildhall on Tuesday 20th July 2010 at 7:30pm

PRESENT:- Councillors M Gee (Chair), M Killeya (Vice-Chair), D Holley, Mrs S Hooper (left early), A Killeya, C Oakes, R Phillips, C Riches, P Stephens ISM, D Yates

ALSO PRESENT:- Councillor R Austin
Mrs D Ashton (Temporary Town Clerk)
One member of the public

APOLOGIES:- Councillors P Clements (late arrival), B Reid

52/10/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

All Cllrs declared a personal interest in item 66/10/11.

Cllr Austin declared a personal interest in item 56/10/11.

53/10/11 GRIT BINS

Cllr Austin updated members on a Cornwall Council (CC) statement saying that locations of grit bins were under review.

Members heard that the plan is to remove any grit bins that are deemed unnecessary with bins only being left at critical points. When asked how CC will go about this, Cllrs Austin and Holley said several factors were to be taken into account e.g. duplication of bins, removal of grit bins in areas that are already scheduled to be gritted when the weather conditions call for it including areas around senior schools etc. Members asked if this included gritting of the pavements as well as the roads in these areas.

Cllrs Austin and Holley confirmed that CC will be consulting with Town and Parish Councils. Local Councils are being asked to submit a list of grit bins indicating which ones should remain and highlighting areas for new ones. CC will then supply a list of bins that they consider need to be removed. Members were concerned that the way of choosing bins to go was going to be too office-based instead of actually going visit sites.

Members asked if any bins removed could be relocated to areas that are in need of one rather than purchasing a new one. A new grit bin costs approx £120 plus £30 for a fill of grit. Cllr Mrs Hooper said that at a recent CALC meeting, it highlighted that all local councils need to have adequate insurance in place for any new responsibilities taken on.

Cllr Gee asked members to collate all the grit bin information they have collected for submission to the Committee. Cllr Austin also asked members to check on the conditions of existing bins so that Cornwall Council can be notified.

54/10/11

TOWN COUNCIL INSURANCE

Mrs Ashton informed members that the Town Council's insurance was due for renewal in September. A meeting with a representative from WPS Insurance Brokers had been arranged for the 26th July 2010 to go through Town Council's insurance needs with the Clerk. Due to the temporary nature of her role, Mrs Ashton had felt it prudent to arrange for the Mayor and Cllr Gee to be present at this meeting too.

55/10/11

GUILDHALL

- (a) Cllr Gee said the purchase on new tables was ongoing as suitable tables were still being investigated.
- (b) The 'Green Appraisal' of the Guildhall by Eco-Kids had now been received. A copy was distributed to members just prior to this meeting.

Members were impressed and agreed that this contained very useful suggestions such as the 'Walk to Work' idea. Much of the feedback could be easily incorporated into everyday operation of the Town Council e.g. switching off lights, re-using scrap paper for meetings. However, due to the nature of the building, some suggestions were going to be met with difficulty such as rainwater harvesting.

Members **RECOMMENDED** that many of these ideas should be adopted, as far as reasonably practicable.

Members also **RECOMMENDED** that with a letter of thanks should be sent by the Mayor along with a payment of £50 to Eco-Kids. Members asked the clerk to further check if this is possible, and if so, to whom payment should be made.

- (c) Due to a degree of loose flooring (mainly in the Chamber) and the recent appearance of a few small holes in flooring planks (main hall), the clerk advised the members that notices have now been put in place on the doors to both the Chamber and main hall for the benefit of users asking them to take care and that the Town Council is in the process of addressing these problems.
- (d) The lockers at the Wesley Church have now been viewed and are ideal for the office. A sum of £15 is requested. It was **RECOMMENDED** the lockers be purchased with the clerk to arrange payment and delivery.

The Clerk updated members on SPAM software. It is already installed on the Town Council's server and captures approx. 2600 junk e-mails per month which are mainly directed at the Town Clerk's e-mail address as it is the one publicised. However, not everything is captured which means at least 30mins per week is spent removing these junk mails. Add-on software (quote of approx. £249 + VAT presented at the last meeting) has been recommended by the Town Council's IT services provider and would be paid for in less than a year in terms of the valuable time it save

the clerk. This software would also automatically add a legal disclaimer to each sent e-mail.

Cllr Holley suggested contacting CC as they may be able help through a shared service scheme. Members also suggested the Clerk speak with Cllr Bickford too.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that SPAM software be obtained subject to the Clerk contacting CC and also Cllr Bickford.

- (e) A further quote for works to the Guildhall boiler had been received. On further discussion on the difference in prices, it was **RECOMMENDED** that Council should go with the Jackmans' quote.
- (f) Cllr Mrs Hooper explained to members that during her year as Mayor, she did utilise the 2 free hires of the Guildhall which each Mayor was granted for Mayoral functions.

However, Cllr Mrs Hooper wanted to bring to the attention of members of a Mayoral function that was held in aid of 'Help for Heroes', with the invoice for the hire of the Guildhall being paid from the Mayor's allowance.

Cllr Mrs Hooper asked members if they would take into consideration such a worthy cause and those lost in action and find it appropriate to void this particular invoice.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that this invoice be voided.

56/10/11

UPDATE ON CEMETERY

Following the tender process, at the Special Council meeting on 8th July:

- i. WH Bond was chosen as the contractor to undertake these works subject to a pre-contract technical meeting which is due to take place within the next few days. Cllr Austin will be attending as the Town Council's representative in order to report back on the proceedings to Council.
- ii. Delegated authority to make minor decisions was given to Cllrs A Killeya, Gee and Austin as a collective in conjunction with the Clerk. The Clerk would serve as the main point of contact for the project manager Mr Steve Blatchford (CC) in order to distribute information and obtain a collective decision.
- iii. The borrowing of funds was delegated to Cllrs A Killeya, Gee and Austin as a collective in conjunction with the Clerk with funds to be applied for shortly from the Public Works Loan Board.

57/10/11

ACCESS TO ELECTORAL ROLL

CC has now provided the Town Council with a copy of the current full Register of Electors and instructions on what to do if a member of the public wishes to see them as per CC policy:

The Register may only be viewed once an inspection statement (provided by CC) has been signed. The member of the public is to be under the supervision of Town Council staff whilst viewing the Register. If staffing numbers are such, that supervision is not possible, viewing has to be rearranged. Viewing by the public for commercial purposes is not allowed. Only small handwritten notes are allowed. No part of the Register is allowed to be copied for the public to take away.

The Clerk will ensure that all staff are aware of the above, trained and that an instruction sheet and blank statements for the public to sign are available with the Register.

58/10/11

GROUNDSMAN'S REQUEST FOR A CHAINSAW

The Clerk had circulated a brief report to members summarising extensive information obtained from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), Arboriculture and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) and Tavistock Town Council.

Mr Bartlett had submitted copies of his qualifications obtained which dated back to before 1998. HSE and AFAG stipulated that qualifications must now adhere to the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998.

The Clerk explained that before any chainsaw purchase was recommended, Council, as the corporate employer, would need to fully consider the implications of a member of staff lone working with a chainsaw. If a decision is made to purchase one, Council would then need to ensure the following is undertaken prior to any use:

- Full risk assessment.
- Strict guidelines on what type of chainsaw work is permitted for lone working.
- Comprehensive lone worker policy.
- Up to date training.
- Purchase of appropriate PPE.
- Investigate and purchase the correct equipment i.e. an appropriate rear-handled chainsaw.
- Ensure operator is fully conversant with equipment purchased.

Cllr A Killeya felt there were two aspects to this: safety and financial.

Several members felt that lone chainsaw use should not be permitted under any circumstances as there are too many dangers.

Members discussed the financial aspect – the total cost of training, any alarm raising systems and full correct equipment purchased relative to the type of work Mr Bartlett would be permitted to do as a lone worker. Members considered whether it may be best to continue calling upon qualified companies as and when necessary.

It was **AGREED** that the final decision on this be deferred until a review of Town Council staffing needs later in the year with regard to staffing of the new cemetery extension.

Members asked the Clerk to relay this to Mr Bartlett.

59/10/11 **HEALTH AND SAFETY FUNDING FOR CEMETERY**

The Clerk apologised to members as this item was due to be added to a different committee agenda

60/10/11 **CORNWALL'S COMMUNITY GRANTS**

There were no suggestions for this.

61/10/11 **MACES**

M H Newman have passed details to the Clerk of individual who is experienced in undertaking cleaning and repair of historical items such as these ceremonial maces. Liskeard Town Council is able to provide a recommendation.

Members asked the Clerk if a quote could be obtained for the clean and repair of the two ceremonial maces for the next committee meeting as well as information on protective boxes for them.

62/10/11 **POLICIES**

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

63/10/11 **POLICY REGARDING COMMERCIAL LINKS ON WEBSITE**

Members felt that the Town Council should avoid any commercial links. However, it was **RECOMMENDED** that it should be at the Clerk's discretion to only post items that are of value, beneficial and of use to the community of Saltash with the Town Council's website disclaimer more prominent too.

64/10/11 **REQUEST TO DISPLAY COMMERCIAL NOTICE**

A request was made recently by a private dental practice to display their details in Town Council notice boards. This matter had already been discussed at the Civic Amenities Committee but members here felt strongly against no purely commercial notices should be displayed. It was **RECOMMENDED** that notices of this nature not be displayed in Town Council notice boards.

65/10/11 **CATS AWARDS**

Members requested that this be deferred until the next committee meeting. Cllr A Killeya made the point that only one successful bid is allowed each year.

66/10/11 **TOC H BUILDING**

There was nothing further to report.

67/10/11 **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.

68/10/11 **NOMINATIONS FOR FREEMEN OF THE TOWN**

Cllr A Killeya explained that this item arose from a letter he had received nominating a member of the Saltash community. Cllr A Killeya briefed members on the individual concerned and it was **RECOMMENDED** that this individual nominated become a 'Freeman of the Town'.

69/10/11 **BANK ACCOUNTS AND FINANCE**

Following the 1st July 2010 Full Town Council resolution to close the Town Council's Lloyd's bank account, Cllr Gee updated members on the process of closing that account. He had discovered that the current signatories were a long time out of date i.e. no longer with the Town Council. Members of this Committee **RECOMMENDED** that the signatories for this bank account now be as follows:

- Cllr Mrs Sue Hooper
- Cllr Bruce Reid
- Cllr Robert Austin

Cllr Gee also felt that the current signatory situation for the maces was not satisfactory and needed to be addressed. Members discussed this in great detail and it was **RECOMMENDED** that:

- The Clerk (the Clerk being Mrs Debbie Ashton until the 5th September 2010 and then Mr Ray Lane from the 6th September 2010) and the current signatories of the Town Council's Barclays bank account be the only signatories for retrieval of the maces from the bank for Town Council business only.
- A combination of any two of those authorised individuals can retrieve the maces.

Cllr Gee updated members on:

- The ongoing VAT situation.
- Current state of Town Council funds available and his investigation on how funds have been allocated project-wise. Cllr Gee had circulated a table of financial information for the benefit of members.

Cllr A Killeya reminded members that the Riviera project (station) was being carried through the Industry, Commerce, Tourism and Transportation Committee and that funds had been allocated for improvements to the Station.

Cllr Holley said that funds had been allocated for the purchase of land at Babis Farm in order to preserve it for the community. Cllr A Killeya was unsure whether the land was ever made available for lease. Cllr A Killeya suggested that the Town Council should indicate if it still wants to pursue this or allocate funds to another project.

Cllr Gee felt that all projects should remain on the relevant agenda with an informal presentation on each with financial information until such the project is finished.

Members clarified the existing projects and their designated committees were as follows:

- Riviera Project – Industry, Commerce, Tourism and Transportation
- Cemetery Extension – Policy and Resource
- Elwell Woods – Civic Amenities
- Babis Farm - Policy and Resource
- Disabled toilets - Policy and Resource
- Signage - Industry, Commerce, Tourism and Transportation

Cllr Gee explained to members the extent of the funds that would be available taking away project allocation and reserves.

Members were asked to supply Cllr Gee with as much financial information on projects to finally establish a fuller idea of funds allocated prior to next year's budget setting and precept requirement.

Cllr A Killeya spoke of the confusion on what the Clerk could or could not spend without coming to Council e.g. with regard to purchase of items for the necessary everyday operation of the Town Council. Cllr A Killeya felt the Clerk should have a degree of flexibility on this.

Currently, the only way to establish any form of definitive list of the Clerk's delegated authority spend-wise is to go and look through old minutes.

Cllr A Killeya explained his thoughts on the matter which he felt provided more clarity and flexibility for the Clerk without compromising the Clerk or Council and included a reporting back system.

Cllr A Killeya proposed the following to clarify and make consistent existing practice:

- a) Delegated authority to Town Clerk to spend the following budgets with the constraints that the Mayor and Chairman of Policy & Resources shall be consulted in advance on any item of spending over £250 and either may refer these items to the committee in advance, and in any case these items shall be reported back to the Committee afterwards:

- i) All elements of ‘Policy and Resources (Guildhall)’ excepting the large ‘Guildhall Maintenance’ budget (for future large scale work).
- ii) 15/17 Lower Fore St
- iii) P&R (Office)

These delegations of budget do not extend to the authority to take on new staff: variations in staff hours may be allowable in conjunction with the point below. Any items outside of budget would have to be referred to committee, unless under the existing delegated authorities.

- b) Delegated authority to Town Clerk in consultation with the Mayor to make any temporary arrangements necessary for the good running of the council where they incur no expenditure, or the expenditure falls under the other delegated powers. These shall be reported back to the appropriate committee or full council as soon as possible where they may recommend that they be made permanent or halted if appropriate, or else ‘noted’ e.g. amending office hours, offering overtime, altering bank signatories, responding to public emergencies etc
- c) Delegated authority to Town Clerk to waive charges for Guildhall room hire but to be notified to P&R.
- d) These delegations are in addition to the existing delegated authority to spend up to £1000 on urgent repair or replacement work (Financial Regulations 3.4), and to maintain and manage petty cash (to a float limit of £100 – Financial Regulations 6.5 a)).
- e) These delegations to take effect immediately, but shall be reviewed with the new clerk and, if agreed with him, incorporated into Financial Regulations of Standing Orders when those are updated. If amendments are suggested they shall be brought back to this committee.

Cllr A Killeya suggested that to make this work in practice, this committee adopts a standing item of ‘reports of exercise of delegated authority’.

Other delegated authorities that Cllr A Killeya was aware of: to have fly-posters removed from STC land, or from Cornwall Council land having checked that they do not have authority to be there (ICTT 28/6); to sign out Town Council Regalia where needed (date unknown); and to be responsible for Health and Safety (date unknown – referenced in WPS report).

Members felt this appropriate and cited that this kind of system existed in other organisations.

Members suggested that the following type of wording '*This document cancels out any previous resolutions*' should be recorded at the top of any new document of Clerk's delegated authority.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that these proposals, setting out the Clerk's delegated authority, be adopted.

70/10/11 **PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSIONS TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

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

71/10/11 **PRESS REPORTS**

No press reports were arising from this meeting.

72/10/11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 17th August 2010 at 7.00pm

Rising at 9.40pm

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____
5th August 2010