

Workington Town Council

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Minutes of the Finance, Property and Employment Committee Meeting on Monday 22 May 2017, at 6pm in Workington Town Hall

M Bainbridge	Apologies
K Hansen	Apologies
M Heaslip	Present
A Lawson (chair)	Present
A McGuckin	Present
P McHarry	Present
B Miskelly	Present
J Osborn	Present
B Reville	Absent
M Rollo	Apologies
N Schofield (vice chair)	Present
J Wright	Apologies

In attendance: Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk

F17.1 Apologies

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs M Heaslip, K Hansen, M Rollo and J Wright.

F17.2 Declarations of Interest

No further declarations were noted.

F17.3 Exclusion of Press and Public

No items.

F17.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting on 20 March 2017 were received and affirmed as a true record.

F17.5 Presentation of Accounts 2016-17

- a) The Schedule of Payments 1-31 March 2017
The committee considered the schedule of payments

Resolved: To accept the schedule.

- b) The Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31 March 2017
The committee considered the Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31 March 2017.

Resolved: To accept the statement.

c) The S137 Payments as at 31 March 2017

The committee considered the list of payments made under the powers listed in S137 of the Local Government Act 1972 for 2016-17.

Resolved: To accept the list of S137 payments.

d) The Asset Register as at 31 March 2017

The committee considered the asset register as at 31 March 2017. There was a discussion about the insurance of the Mayoral Chain currently on loan to Allerdale Borough Council. The clerk agreed to obtain confirmation of this in writing from the Borough Council.

Resolved: To accept the Asset Register.

e) The Budget Statement as at 31 March 2017

The committee considered the Budget Statement as at 31 March 2017. It was noted that there was a £6,000 underspend in accommodation. The clerk reported that this was budgeted to allow the Town Council to occupy additional office space, but has since been declined a lease.

Resolved: To accept the Budget Statement.

f) The Annual Return

The committee considered the entries in the Annual Return for 2016-17.

Resolved: To accept the Annual Return.

F17.6 Schedule of Payments

The committee considered the Schedule of Payments 1 April to 30 April 2017.

Resolved: To accept the Schedule.

F17.7 Bank Reconciliation Statement

The Committee considered the Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30 April 2017.

Resolved: To accept the Statement.

F17.8 Budget Monitoring Statement

The committee received the Budget Monitoring Statement for 2016– 2017 to 30 April 2017.

Resolved: To accept the Statement.

F17.9 Internal auditor's report

The committee considered the Internal Auditor's report. It was noted that the internal auditor had praised officers for their work and the committee commended the accuracy of the Finance and Administration Officer.

Resolved: To accept the report.

F17.10 Bookkeeping and Accounting Software

The clerk presented a verbal report on the bookkeeping system for the Town Council. The Town Council's books are currently produced on Excel and paper based systems, this can cause issues with time to produce reports, purchase ordering and reconciliation. Upon investigation, these issues could be resolved using bespoke accounting software designed for Parish and Town Councils. Councillors discussed issues that may arise from such software packages; this included an exit clause, set up costs and server storage. Councillors stressed that the Town Council should continue to record paper based accounts until officers were fully satisfied with any software provider.

Resolved: For officers to source quotes from at least three software companies to deliver the Town Councils accounts and to present at a following meeting.

F17.11 Property issues

The clerk reported that there has been no progress towards the acquisition of land from Allerdale Borough Council and the Town Council has yet to receive queries before contracts.

Resolved: To pursue land transfers with Allerdale Borough Council.

F17.12 Moss Bay Growing Site

The committee reviewed the details for the Moss Bay Growing Site and authorised the clerk and appropriate councillor to sign the lease on behalf of the Council.

Resolved: For the clerk and chair of the committee to sign the lease for the Moss Bay Growing Site.

F17.13 Apprenticeship Programme

The committee considered the report provided by the Assistant Town Clerk alongside previous queries brought forward by councillors. The Assistant Clerk highlighted that the apprentice was due to begin in September and there was a limited timescale to review a job description and begin recruitment. It was proposed to convene a task and finish group to work through this recruitment process and for officers to present a recruitment time scale and job description at Full Council.

Resolved: To present the Apprentice Programme, and all accompanying documentation, to the next Full Council.

F17.14 Town Clerk's annual review

The committee discussed the previous year's process for the Town Clerk's Annual review, carried out by the chair of the Finance, Property and Employment Committee and the Mayor. All members agreed that this was an effective review process and if any other councillors had points to contribute to the review they could direct them to these persons.

Resolved: For the Mayor and Chair of the Finance, Property and Employment Committee to complete the Town Clerk's annual review.

F17.15 Employment issues

The clerk reported that a review process for the estates team was beginning to take shape, and an annual review for all employees would be rolled out in the coming year.

Resolved: To note the report.

F17.16 Social Media, Email and Engagement

The chair reported that the Town Council is beginning to make better use of its media platforms but additional work is required to promote the achievements of the Council. A Councillor highlighted that although social media is important, there is still a need for a paper based newsletter for those constituents without internet access. Councillors discussed the best way to do this, it was suggested to make smaller newsletters or leaflets that contained ward specific and general information. Some concerns about cost were raised. The clerk highlighted that the Town Council was still in the process of delivering Town Centre Matrix boards to relay local information. There was a discussion about the use of personal email for Council business; it was suggested to create ward inboxes to direct enquiries from members of the public.

Resolved: To research the ability for the Town Council to produce bespoke newsletters to Workington Wards.

Resolved: To contact the Town Council's IT supplier to investigate the implications of setting up new email accounts.

The meeting closed at 19:24