

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING – 2012/02/18 – 23

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 18 February 2013 at 8.58 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Pearman (Chairman), B Berryman, D Biddle, C Harris, C Matthews, W J Osborne and B Thomas

Cllr R Bonser

Mrs J Smailes – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/RFO

Miss C Wheeler – Executive Officer (EO)

Cllr Pearman informed all present that no practice fire evacuation had been scheduled for the duration of the meeting. All attendees were then informed of the locations of the nearest fire exits.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr James.

2. **TO CONSIDER INCREASING THE MEMBERSHIP COUNCILLOR NUMBER OF THE FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The CEO advised Members that Cllr James had withdrawn her request to be co-opted to the Finance and Scrutiny Committee. Responding to a question raised by Cllr Matthews, the CEO stated that Cllr James had not given an explanation for her decision.

It was **proposed by Cllr W Osborne, seconded by Cllr Matthews**, that in readiness for the Annual Council Meeting a proposal would be submitted suggesting consideration be given to the Committee membership being inclusive of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council and the Chairmen of each Trust. The motion was put to a vote which was carried with one abstention.

Action by – the CEO

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr C Matthews – Grant Application by Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre.

4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Finance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 November 2012 and the Extra Ordinary meeting held on 10 December 2012 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Osborne, seconded by Cllr Harris.** Unanimous.

5. **OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

6. **BUDGETS: 2012/13 AND 2013/14**

2012/13 Financial Year

Members were reminded of the points which had been raised during the February Full Council meeting regarding the Council's anticipated position at Year End.


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2013/2014 Financial Year

Members were provided with an overview of the agreed budget for the 2013/14 Financial Year. Cllr W Osborne sought clarification over the budget of £16,250 which had been allocated towards the Christmas Event/Lights. The CEO explained that the aforementioned figure had been proportioned thus:

- Electricity = £2,500
- Jinglefest = £250
- Light purchase = £12,000
- Purchase/erect tree = £1,500

Franking Machine

Members were advised that a cost analysis exercise had been undertaken on the Council's postal expenditure since the beginning of the year. It was noted that savings of 35-40% could be achieved if the Council leased a franking machine and that the cost of leasing the machine had been incorporated into the initial calculations. However, Members were informed that the Council would be subjected to a nominal charge each time it wished to re-credit the machine. Accordingly, Members were advised that the machine should be credited on a quarterly basis so as to minimise the charges.

During discussion it was noted that the machine could be re-credited via remote means and that franked mail could be deposited in the post box at the end of Templeway West. A slogan block and provision of a return address for the Council had also been included in the cost of the equipment. It was noted that the CEO would progress the lease of a franking machine under her Clerk's remit for managing the office.

Cllr Biddle sought clarification over the change in the Corporate Expenditure budget when compared against the proposed budget. The CEO advised that the increase was due to the fact that the provision for admin support for the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) (an additional part time Admin Assistant) had been removed from the NDP budget and then incorporated into the Corporate Expenditure budget which included salaries/pension/etc. Members also noted an increase against the predicted income when compared with previous years. Members were advised that the increase was due to a higher than anticipated income in 2012/13, which it was felt likely continue in 2013/14.

Lease of Vehicle

Members were advised that the lease for the existing van would expire in April and they noted that the van did not meet the Council's current requirements (e.g. no tow bar or bulkhead, etc). Investigations had taken place into the lease of a Ford Ranger 4WD vehicle which was more in line with Council's requirements; rental charge amounting to £234.00 per month (inc. tax, mot, service, tyres and cam belt change). It was noted that the proposed vehicle would permit four members of staff to be transported to a location, together with equipment and would also enable the Council's existing trailer to be towed. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Matthews, the CEO advised that the proposed vehicle would require an additional £39.70 on the Council's insurance premium. It was **proposed by Cllr Biddle, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council would agree to lease the proposed vehicle on a four year contract. The motion was put to a vote which was carried with one abstention.

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Replacement Telephone System

Councillors were informed of the problems which were being experienced with the current telephone system (lack of ability to transfer calls to certain extensions/incoming calls not ringing on all extensions/health and safety issues). Prior to the meeting Councillors had been provided with copies of the quotations which had been received for a replacement telephone system/cost of rectifying existing system. Attention was drawn to the fact that BT had advised that they were withdrawing support for the Council's current telephone system.

The CEO advised that the quotation from Glamorgan Telecom for a replacement telephone system included the option to relocate the equipment free of charge, for a monthly lease charge of £227.35 plus VAT. It was **proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Biddle**, that the Council would accept the five year rental contract from Glamorgan Telecom. Unanimous.

7. GRANTS

a) County Air Ambulance Trust

Cllr Matthews proposed the awardance of a grant for £100.00, but this was not seconded. **Cllr Harris proposed** the awardance of a grant for £250.00, **seconded by Cllr Matthews**. Unanimous. **Cllr Pearman proposed** that the Council would look at the grants in total, rather than on an individual basis. No objection was raised.

b) Forest of Dean Children's Opportunity Centre

Having previously declared an interest in this matter, Cllr Matthews then spoke briefly in support of the application. Cllr Pearman proposed the awardance of a grant for £350.00. Unanimous.

c) Lydney Town Hall Trust Management Committee

The CEO advised that she had spoken with Mrs S Berryman who had stated that the Trust intended to settle any invoices relating to the Council the following day. Accordingly, Members were asked if they wished to release the remaining £5,000 from the grant to the Town Hall. **Cllr W Osborne proposed** that the Council would only release the remaining £5,000 once it could be confirmed that the Trust had settled the Council's invoice. The motion was then put to a vote which was carried, with one abstention.

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC & PRESS

Pages 27 - 29 (Inclusive) - CLOSED SESSION

Standing orders suspended in order that the Council may continue in "closed session" under the provisions of The Public (Admission to Meetings Act 1960) as the business to be discussed is considered to be of a confidential nature

8. STAFFING

- Minutes of November 2012, December 2012 and January 2013 staff meetings noted.

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- That the Town Council would no longer be required to provide a payroll service to the Town Hall Trust
- That the Town Council would decline Gloucestershire County Council's request to provide work experience.
- That Annual Staff Appraisals have been conducted for all staff.

Meeting closed at 9.53 pm