

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING – 2013/04/22 – 30

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 22 April 2013 at 8.33 pm.

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

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/noted from Cllr Edwards who had anticipated attending as a (non-voting) member of said Committee.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Finance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 18 February 2013 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Osborne, seconded by Cllr Matthews. Unanimous.**

4. **OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

5. **FINANCE**

Internal Auditor's Report for Year Ended 2012/13

Members were reminded that the Internal Auditor's Report had been presented at the April Full Council meeting in order that all Councillors were aware of its contents and the areas which needed to be addressed (if any). The Independent Internal Auditor had nothing of concern to report. Members of the Full Council were also presented with a copy of the Council's audited Asset Register; attention was drawn to the fact that the air compressor for the Town Council had been shown on the asset register for the Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust.

Acceptance and approval of the Internal Auditor's Report was **proposed by Cllr Pearman. Unanimous.** Members also noted the audited Asset Register (subject to minor spelling amendment).

Annual Return

Members were informed that the Council's Annual Return would now be submitted to the External Auditor, Grant Thompson LLP and that the public inspection period for the accounts would be advertised in line with audit practice.

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Budget 2013/2014

Councillors were provided with a copy of the approved budget for 2013/2014 and noted the budget allocation (across approved budget headers) accordingly.

Precept Referendum Bill – LAIS1350

Members were provided with a copy of the guidance note which had been issued by the Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC). Attention was drawn to the statement contained in the guidance note that *“the anticipated absence of a compensatory grant in 2014-15 which, among other things, will leave those councils that reduced their precept and topped up their income with a grant in 2013/14 more vulnerable to automatic precept referendums”*.

Cllr Pearman advised that prior to the Annual Town Meeting two questions had been received from members of the public regarding the amount of the Council's precept for 2013/2014.

During discussion it was felt that the Council had acted prudently by increasing the precept for 2013/2014 and whilst Councillors did not wish to see costs increase for the electorate, neither did they wish to see the level of services currently provided diminish.

Independent Internal Auditor

It was proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Harris, that Wildin & Co be retained as the Council's Independent Internal Auditor for the 2013-2014 Financial Year. Unanimous.

All Councillors were provided with a copy of the public questions which had been received in advance of the Annual Town Meeting, together with a copy of the Council's response. Noted. A copy of the CEO's overview, as given at the Annual Town Meeting was also provided. Noted.

Cllr Pearman stated that the Public Interest Report had identified that the Council needed to strengthen its governance. It was stressed that the Council therefore must continually review its financial governance procedures and Members were reminded of the importance of the matter. Those not comfortable with such procedures or who require further training in financial matters were advised to approach the CEO. Noted.

6. GRANTS

Members were informed that no grant applications had been received. The CEO advised that the submission of a grant application from the Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust was pending the appointment of its new Chairman.

Cllr Harris advised that the next meeting of Lydney Town Hall Trust Management Committee would take place on Wednesday 24 April 2013; the agenda did not include the submission of a grant application to the Council.

7. MINUTE BINDING

The CEO advised that the Council had neglected to bind previous minutes of its meetings and those of its Charitable Trusts for many years. Accordingly, fourteen sets of minutes now required binding. Members were informed that said signed minutes were a legal record of Council/Trust meetings and could be used as evidence. It was noted that a cost



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of £1,800.00 would be incurred for the binding and Cllr Matthews felt that the Council had no option but to undertake the work (re-charge to Trusts as applicable). However, Cllr Matthews called on the Council/Trusts to undertake binding of its minutes annually in the future. It was therefore **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the Council's minutes would be bound up to the sum of £1,800.00 (re-charge as appropriate). Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

Cllr Matthews then proposed that delegated power would be granted to the CEO to arrange for the Council's/Trust's minutes to be bound annually. **Seconded by Cllr Harris**. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

8. WEBSITE

Members noted the intention for updates for the Council's website to be undertaken through internal resources, with structural changes still being undertaken by Imagitec (and charged accordingly in addition to hosting charges of £50.00). Approval was sought for £140.00 plus VAT to cover the cost of providing a training course to enable the Town Council's staff to receive training on how to carry out routine changes.

It was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that delegated powers would be granted to the CEO to arrange training for two members of staff. The motion was put to a vote which was carried with one abstention.

Action by – the CEO

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC & PRESS

Pages 33 - 35 (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

9. STAFFING

- Annual staff appraisals conducted.
- Staff attendance at Summer Symposium

10. PWLB

- That the matter would be an agenda item for the May Full Council meeting

Meeting closed at 9.27 pm