

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING – 2012/11/19 – 13

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 19 November 2012 at 8.37 pm.

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

Mrs J Smailes – Chief Executive Officer (CEO)/RFO
Miss C Wheeler – Executive Officer (EO)

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Berryman and Thomas and duly accepted.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr D Biddle – Agenda item 6a) Grants – Lydney Youth Cafe, Lydney Festival, The Victoria Centre

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Finance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 July 2012 were confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Osborne, seconded by Cllr Harris.** Unanimous.

4. **OPEN FORUM**

No members of the public were present.

5. **FINANCE**

External Auditor

Members noted that The Audit Commission had assigned Grant Thornton UK LLP to act as the Council's External Auditor for five years from 2012/2013.

Financial Statement

Members confirmed that the practice of receiving copies of the Financial Statement on the night of a Full Council meeting was acceptable practice, such Statement being available to Councillors at the commencement of the meeting.

6. **GRANTS**

Despite having declared an interest in this matter, Cllr Biddle was asked to remain in the chamber in order that the meeting remain quorate.

a) **Vibes – Lydney Youth Cafe**


Deferred until next meeting.

b) **Lydney Festival**

Deferred until next meeting.

c) **Lydney Town Hall Trust**

Cllr Biddle requested that the Council release the previously agreed funding to Lydney Town Hall Trust. Accordingly, **Cllr Biddle proposed** that the Council release £15,000 to the Trust to reflect the current position in the year. **Seconded by Cllr Osborne.**


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The motion was put to a vote which was carried. Cllr Pearman advised that the Trust would need to apply for the release of the remaining £5,000 towards the end of the financial year.

d) **Age Concern**

Having perused the information submitted by the organisation it was **proposed by Cllr Matthews, seconded by Cllr Biddle**, that the request would be declined. Unanimous.

e) **The Victoria Centre**

Deferred until next meeting.

f) **Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust – Zipwire**

Members noted that no grant request had been submitted by the Trust in respect of the possible relocation of the zipwire.

7. **TRAINING**

Members noted that the CEO had previously advised Full Council that four places had been booked on the Right to Trade seminar on 27 November 2012. It was noted that Cllrs Biddle, Matthews, the CEO and the EO would attend, at a Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Council Membership rate of £35.00 per person.

Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

The CEO advised that due to her qualifications she held Member status of SLCC. However, as she now held the Certificate in Higher Education and also facilitated mentoring sessions for staff it had been suggested that her membership be upgraded to Principal, at an additional cost of £15.00 as and when appropriate. **Proposed by Cllr Harris, seconded by Cllr Biddle**. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

8. **PROMOTING DEMOCRACY/CITIZENSHIP**

Councillors recalled that they had previously discussed the purchase of lapel badges in order to raise the Council's profile. The CEO advised that a quotation had been obtained for £190.00 plus VAT for the supply of 100 hard enamel badges. Purchase **proposed by Cllr Osborne, seconded by Cllr Harris**. Unanimous

Action by – the CEO

9. **BUDGETS: 2012/13 AND 2013/2014**
2012/2013 Half Yearly Report

Members were provided with a copy of the half yearly report, which it was unanimously felt reflected a healthy position. Responding to a question which had been raised by Cllr Osborne, the CEO advised that the Finance Assistant awaited confirmation from the Council's bankers before removing any unrepresented cheques which had been cancelled from the listing.

Cllr Biddle proposed that the contents of the report be noted. No objection to the proposal was raised.

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Internal Auditor Report

Members were provided with a copy of the Internal Auditor Report which had been received following the interim audit. Cllr Pearman felt the contents of the report to be an excellent reflection of the vigilant work of the staff and offered his congratulations.

2013/2014 Budget

Members noted that the Committee would be required to submit a recommendation to Full Council for the 2013/2014 budget which was in line with National Association of Local Council (NALC) guidelines.

It was noted that all Councillors had been invited to attend a pre-budget discussion in order to understand how the budget was calculated. Members noted that the draft budget included the budgets for each of the Committees, future training requirements, etc. In light of the discussion which had taken place at the November Amenities Committee meeting, Cllr Matthews requested that the budget heading for Christmas lighting be increased to £25,000 to reflect the Committee's desire to purchase a good display of lights. Members were reminded of the need to consider the impact of the Committee's request on the Council's overall budget. Furthermore, Members were reminded that the Council may face a referendum if their overall budget increased by too large a percentage and if the Council were to be capped which was still not certain.

Discussion took place on the exact amount of funding which would be required by the Committee to purchase Christmas lights and it was **proposed by Cllr Pearman** that if the amount of funding resulted in an increase to the Council's overall budget of more than 5% then the amount of the excess percentage should be taken from the Council's reserves. It was noted that Lydney Recreation Trust had yet to decide if they would approach the Town Council for a grant during the 2013-2014 Financial Year and it was felt that the Council should work on the assumption that the Trust would not require a grant in the next financial year. Members were made aware that the Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust were currently in discussion with Lydney Bowling Club regarding the provision of a formal lease. The CEO advised that corporate expenditure included provision for a number of functions including office running costs, health and safety, Newsletter, staff salaries, superannuation, pension, etc. Furthermore, that the Civic budget included provision for the Mayor's allowance, Remembrance Parade, Mayor's Reception and the printing costs for the Orders of Service at both the Remembrance Service and the Town's Thanksgiving Service.

The CEO then provided Members with an overview of the grant provided to the Bathurst Park and Recreation Trust and Members noted that provision for a limited grant had also been included in respect of Lydney Town Hall Trust, in anticipation of receiving a request from the Management Committee. However, a budget in respect of grants did not equate to a promise to provide a grant to any one organisation as each was dependent upon a grant form being completed/considered by Finance and Scrutiny Committee. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Finance and Scrutiny Committee would need to meet again if Full Council did not accept the Committee's budget/precept recommendation, as it would need to examine where reductions in the budget could be made. At this point Cllr Pearman's proposal was put to a vote. Unanimous. Members were advised that the Committee's recommendation would now be put forward to the December Full Council meeting.

