

LYDNEY TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING – 2015/02/16 – 07

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING held in the Council Chamber, Claremont House, Lydney on Monday 16 February 2015 at 8.06 pm.

PRESENT: Cllrs B Pearman (Chairman), B Berryman, R Bonser, C Harris, V Hobman, J Openshaw, S Rudge and B Thomas

Two members of the public
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 and noted from Cllrs Biddle, Greenwood, Preest and Vaughan.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Bonser – abstained from discussion re Lydney Town Hall Trust and Lydney Festival
Cllr Hobman – Lydney Community Centre

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Cllr Bonser called for the minutes to be amended to reflect her attendance.

The minutes of the Finance and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 December 2014 were then confirmed as a true record. **Proposed by Cllr Hobman, seconded by Cllr Harris. Vote carried.**

4. **OPEN FORUM**

Mr B Hobman, 31 Albert Street, Lydney – questioned if completed grant applications would be held over to the next meeting or if organisations would be required to re-apply, should the Committee's remaining "free" grant budget not be sufficient. Mr Hobman was advised that whilst the Committee may possess funding in its "free" grant budget, it was not a licence to spend same. Furthermore, that any affected organisations would be invited to submit an amended application for consideration at the next relevant grant meeting (convened February or June).

Mr Owen, 3 Augustus Way, Lydney – reference item 4 (Legal) from the minutes of the Extra Ordinary Finance and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 December 2014, enquired whether anyone who questioned the Council, and was not satisfied with the reply given, would be subject to legal action. Mr Owen was advised that this would not be the case, unless the Council considered the enquiry to be vexatious or harassment which may then warrant legal advice being sought and action pursued by the Council's legal representative if they deem appropriate.

Mr Owen then sought advice as to whether an appeal against such action should be submitted to the Ombudsman, a complaint lodged with the Monitoring Officer or the Audit Commission. Mr Owen was advised that the Council was unable to provide hypothetical advice and that he should take whatever course of action he felt necessary if he deemed the response tendered by

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Council at any specific time to be unsatisfactory.

Mrs L Beswick, 10 Augustus Way, Lydney – advised that she had attended the meeting on behalf of Lydney Festival and confirmed that the submitted grant application had been in respect of the 2015/2016 financial year. Appreciation was expressed for the Council's financial support which had been shown to the Festival in previous years. Mrs Beswick then spoke on the additional event which had been operated as part of the 2014 event (Totally Talented), which had proved to be extremely successful and well received, for which financial support was being sought to enable the performance to take place once again. Mrs Beswick provided clarification to Members that the Festival wished to apply for a grant of £2,000 for the 2015 event.

5. GRANTS/DONATIONS

Cllr Pearman reminded Members that £5,650 remained in the "free" grant budget; that the Council was not under any obligation to exhaust said resource; that Members needed to ensure that applications from organisations fulfilled the Council's funding criteria as previously approved/adopted by Council.

Lydney Community Centre

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the completed grant application form which had been received in respect of the provision of a fire door and serving hatch for the Centre's kitchen. Cllr Bonser drew attention to the level of savings held by the organisation together with its good income stream. Accordingly it was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Harris** that the Council would provide a grant to the value of £516.00 to enable the provision of a fire door to the kitchen. It was noted that the organisation would be able to apply for funding to provide a serving hatch to the kitchen in the 2015/16 financial year if they so chose. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

Lydney Festival

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the completed grant application form which had been received from the organisation regarding the cost of organising/providing Lydney Festival. Members were advised that the Council's criteria would not permit two grants to be given to an organisation in the same financial year. Accordingly the Committee were advised that they would need to decide to either defer consideration until the June 2015 meeting or it would need to resolve to commit funding to the event out of its 2015/16 budget. Clarification was sought from Mrs Beswick regarding the impact which delaying consideration of the application would have on the Festival and it was noted that the Festival would need to incur expenditure in advance of said date in order to secure venues/artists.

It was agreed that consideration of the application would be placed in suspension until after all remaining grants had been considered, however, the minutes reflect the order as shown on the agenda.

Members were advised that if they resolved to make a commitment in the 2015/16 budget for the Festival this would result in a cheque being written in April to the organisation and were reminded that the Council had agreed a "free" grant budget of £8,000 for the 2015/16 financial year. It was **proposed by Cllr Bonser** that a commitment of £2,000 be included in the 2015/16 budget for Lydney Festival.

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Following the discussion which had taken place at the proceeding Amenities Committee meeting consideration was given to the possibility of organising an event in Bathurst Park which could be included as part of the Festival's Programme. However, upon reflection it was felt that insufficient time remained for an event to be organised for inclusion in this year's Programme.

During discussion it was noted that the Festival had not provided any specific quotes for this year's event and further information was sought regarding the "Totally Talented" event. Cllr Openshaw felt that the Event Programme was weighted towards the event at the Docks, however, Mrs Beswick advised that the event was a yachting regatta; had proved to be a popular draw/tourist attraction for the Town and was classed as the Festival's lead event.

At this point **Cllr Harris agreed to second** Cllr Bonser's motion that a commitment of £2,000 be included/taken from the 2015/16 budget for Lydney Festival. Vote carried.

Action by – the CEO

Lydney Town Hall Trust Management Committee

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the completed grant application form which had been received from the organisation concerning the cost of running Lydney Town Hall.

During discussion it was noted that the current grant application did not conform to the Council's grant criteria and it was agreed that the CEO would contact Lydney Town Hall Trust Committee in order to explain the Council's grant criteria/relay Council's concerns regarding the necessity to ensure that the application complied with said criteria/to encourage the organisation to submit a revised application for consideration at the June Committee meeting.

Action by – the CEO

Lydney Youth Café (VIBE)

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the revised grant application form which had been received from the organisation towards to costs for a community garden project.

During discussion concern was expressed that the organisation was not financially secure and the prudence of providing a grant was questioned. It was also felt that the scheme may be too ambitious. Whilst the benefit provided to local youths by the organisation was highlighted, it was **proposed by Cllr Bonser, seconded by Cllr Rudge**, that the organisation would be invited to refine their application for a project which was more achievable. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

St Johns Ambulance

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the revised grant application form which had been received in respect of a Student First Aid Project.

Members recalled that whilst the organisation had been requested to provide specific information regarding where said training would take place in the Town, no information had been provided. Cllr Harris initially proposed that the organisation be awarded £200.00, Cllr Thomas highlighted that no commitment had been given that youths from Lydney

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would benefit from the training. Cllr Harris then retracted her proposal. **Cllr Harris then proposed** that the application would be declined. **Seconded by Cllr Openshaw**. Unanimous. Cllr Bonser requested that the organisation be once again informed of the need to demonstrate where the classes would take place in Lydney.

Action by – the CEO

Tutnalls Lunch Club

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the revised grant application form which had been received from the organisation in respect of funding for transport to the Club, speakers, a hygiene course, meal costs, etc.

After reviewing the documentation provided concern was expressed that only one signatory was required to sign for the organisation's bank account. Furthermore, that detailed information had not been provided regarding the replacement equipment for which funding was being sought or the transport costs. It was therefore **proposed by Cllr Openshaw, seconded by Cllr Harris**, that the application would be declined. Cllr Thomas requested that the CEO offer to provide clarification regarding the level of information required. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

The Victoria Centre

Prior to the meeting Members were provided with a copy of the revised grant application form which had been received in respect of a gardening project.

Cllr Openshaw spoke in favour of the application and **proposed** that a grant of £400 be awarded, in line with the amount requested by the organisation. However, Cllr Harris proposed that a grant of £600 should be awarded as she felt the organisation to be a superb asset for the Town. Cllr Bonser reminded her fellow Councillors of the need to ensure that funding provided by the Council would be used for specific items.

After a short further discussion it was **proposed by Cllr Openshaw, seconded by Cllr Berryman**, that a grant of £400 would be awarded. As it was felt that the venue may lie within the Lydney Conservation Area, **Cllr Pearman proposed** a slight amendment to the motion in order that The Victoria Centre ascertain if planning consent would be required for their proposals. Unanimous.

Action by – the CEO

Members were provided with copies of the letters/e-mails which had been sent to Vitalise; Lydney War Memorial Trust and Mrs N Knight (on behalf of Girl Guiding UK) regarding the Council's grant criteria. Noted

6. MEETING DATES

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 15 June 2015.

Meeting closed at 9.17 pm

Chairman B. Pearman

Date 23/6/15