

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING held on 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2016 at 7.00pm in the GUILDHALL, BUTCHERS ROW BARNSTAPLE.

Present: Cllr Mrs S Haywood (Chairman)

Councillors: S Upcott, Mrs V Monk, Mrs V Elkins, F Vernon, A Windsor, I Roome, J Phillips, J Carter, I Williams, Ms N Haywood, M Kennaugh, and G Langford.

Also in attendance: W Austin (Town Clerk).

FG69 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J Hunt and Mrs J Wilsher.

FG70 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS RECEIVED

Cllrs Mrs S Haywood and I Roome, as members of North Devon District Council, have dispensation under S.O. 66 to discuss and vote on all items on the agenda except where the item is a matter of financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Cllrs Mrs S Haywood and Ms N Haywood declared personal interests in agenda item 4 as relatives of an honorary member of the Showmen's Guild.

Cllr A Windsor declared a personal interest in agenda item 4(b), transaction numbers 52585 and 52783, as a relative of the supplier.

FG71 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(NC)

FG72 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The financial statements and budget monitoring reports were circulated prior to the meeting.

a) Budget Variance Report

RESOLVED: That the Budget Variance Report be received and approved.

(NC)

b) Bank Transactions

RESOLVED: That the Bank Transactions report be received and approved.

(NC)

c) Direct Reserve Account and petty cash accounts for Barum House, Heritage Centre and Improvements & Design

RESOLVED: That the Direct Reserve Account and petty cash accounts for Barum House, Heritage Centre and Improvements & Design be received and approved.

(NC)

d) Aged Debtors and Aged Creditors Analyses, and Nominal Balances

RESOLVED: That the Aged Debtors Analysis, Aged Creditors Analysis and Nominal Balances reports be received and approved.

(NC)

e) Direct Debit and Credit Card Reports

RESOLVED: That the Direct Debit and Credit Card Reports be received and approved.

(NC)

FG73 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WORKING PARTY

The Town Clerk gave a verbal summary of the Corporate Governance Working Party meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016, the notes of which are shown at Appendix 1 to these minutes.

Councillors considered the Working Party recommendations in respect of the Council's Standing Orders, and

RESOLVED: That the Working Party recommendation of 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 in respect of amendments to Standing Orders be forwarded to Full Council for consideration.

(10, 1 against, 1 abs)

Cllr Upcott requested that his vote against the motion be recorded in the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Corporate Governance Working Party meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2016 be received, and the remaining recommendations therein be approved.

(10, 1 against, 1 abs)

FG74 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Clerk explained that there were ongoing discussions with the Council's external auditor in respect of revised financial regulations, and that a response was awaited from the auditor explaining their reasons for considering that the NALC model regulations would be preferable to the Council's current regulations.

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred pending a reply from the external auditor.

(NC)

FG75 SITING OF BARNSTAPLE FAIR

The Clerk read a letter received from North Devon District Council advising that the Seven Brethren area was likely to be redeveloped for uses that would mean it would no longer be available for the siting of the annual Barnstaple Fair. There was no indication of when this might be, but the Clerk advised that in order for officers to make progress in devising detailed plans for an alternative site, it would be helpful if members could provide a preferred location. Two sites had been considered in principle to date – firstly an area encompassing The Square, The Strand, North Walk, Cattle Market Car Park, Castle Green and the Civic Centre Car Park, and secondly Rock Park.

RESOLVED: That an area encompassing The Square, The Strand, North Walk, Cattle Market Car Park, Castle Green and the Civic Centre Car Park be considered the preferred alternative location for the future siting of Barnstaple Fair, should this be required.

(NC)

FG76 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES

The Clerk advised that the administration of bookings of Council facilities was currently under review, and that this could have an as yet unknown effect on hire fees. He asked that members consider deferring this issue pending conclusion of the review.

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred for consideration at a future meeting.

(NC)

Meeting closed at 8.03pm.

Chairman.

Signed .....

Dated .....

**Notes of Corporate Governance Working Party held on 22 February 2016 at 6.30pm in the Guildhall, Butchers Row, Barnstaple.**

Present: Cllr A Windsor (Chairman), Cllr Mrs V Elkins, Cllr I Roome, Cllr J Phillips, and Cllr M Kennaugh.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr I Roome, as a member of North Devon District Council, has dispensation under S.O. 66 to discuss and vote on all items on the agenda except where the item is a matter of financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

**NOTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2016**

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(NC)

**REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROL – COUNCIL POLICY REVIEWS**

The Clerk summarised the following current policy documents that had been circulated for consideration prior to the meeting:

- Anti-Fraud Policy
- Financial Regulations (current and NALC model regulations attached)
- Investment Policy
- Standing Orders and Committee Remits

The Clerk explained that there were ongoing discussions with the Council's external auditor in respect of revised financial regulations, and that a response was awaited from the auditor explaining their reasons for considering that the NALC model regulations would be preferable to the Council's current regulations.

In respect of the Investment Policy, Cllr Phillips reminded members that the Finance & General Purposes Committee had considered the need to spread investments previously, and that this should form part of the policy. The Clerk agreed to investigate the decision reached by the committee.

RECOMMENDED: That the Anti-Fraud Policy be agreed and adopted subject to changing the term "inter alia" at paragraph 2.2.1 to read "amongst other relevant actions".

(NC)

RECOMMENDED: That the review of Financial Regulations be deferred pending a response from the external auditor.

(NC)

RECOMMENDED: That the review of the Investment Policy be deferred pending the outcome of the Clerk's investigations into a previous decision by the Finance & General Purposes Committee regarding the spreading of investments.

(NC)

RECOMMENDED: That Full Council considers the following proposed changes to Standing Orders:

- i) At paragraph 56, the replacement of the phrase "using the dedicated mobile phone number 07917 874508" with the phrase "email to the Committee Clerk".
- ii) At paragraph 70, replacement of the word "purport" with the word "purpose".
- iii) At Appendix A (Committee Remits), the replacement of the sentence "All matters relating to the management, development and use of the Heritage Centre, St Anne's Arts and Community Centre and the Guildhall" with the sentence "All matters relating to the use of the Heritage Centre, St Anne's Arts and Community Centre, the Albert Clock and the Guildhall, except for civic and ceremonial uses and Council meetings".
- iv) At Appendix A (Committee Remits), the replacement of the sentence "Maintenance, management and insurance of Town Council properties" with the sentence "Maintenance, management and insurance of all Town Council properties, and civic and ceremonial, administrative and Council meeting uses of those properties".

(NC)

#### REVIEW OF INTERNAL CONTROL – FREQUENCY OF POLICY REVIEWS

RECOMMENDED: That this item be deferred for consideration at a future meeting.

(NC)

Meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Chairman.

Signed.....

Dated.....