

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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MINUTES of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** held on Tuesday 13th March 2018 at 7.30pm in the Library, Church St, Hungerford.

Present: Cllrs Benneyworth, Crane, Knight, Brookman, Farrell, Simpson and Winser
Also present: Town Clerk, RFO

1. **Apologies for absence** - None
2. **Declarations of interest** – Cllr Knight (Hungerford Community & Library trust)
3. **Minutes – Propose minutes of F&GP meeting on 16th January 2018** – Not voted on
Outcome of any actions – The RFO has investigated obtaining a charge card. The first year is free followed by an annual charge of £32. Although this would be in the name of HTC, the cardholders name would be C Barnes and any searches would be in the Clerk’s name. It was not agreed to pursue this. The Action Plan is being progressed and we will be eligible for the Local Council Award (Bronze) when this is finished providing a training policy is agreed (see item 11).
4. **Finance: -**
 - **Checking of bank reconciliations by a non-signatory** – *Cllr Simpson proposed Cllr Winser checks the bank reconciliations as she is not a current signatory, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*
 - **Grading Review** – A spreadsheet was circulated of the salary gradings which will be effective from April 2018. This shows a 2% increase to the higher bands and a higher increase to lower wages. It was noted that the grades per employee were last reviewed 3 years ago and may need a further review as some employees have reached the top of their band. The job description review determines the upper ceiling limit along with consideration for the level of difficulty. **Action:** Schedule a part 2 staff meeting to discuss this. *Cllr Benneyworth proposed the gradings as specified in the spreadsheet, seconded by Cllr Crane all in favour.* **Action:** Invite Employee No. 1 to the next staff meeting to review his maintenance hours. **Action:** Prior to the staff meeting Clerk to set up a meeting with him and Cllrs Winser, Benneyworth and Knight to review his job spec.
 - **Clarification of funds for Croft Field Project** – a report was circulated (see attached). Figures were read out detailing how the building invoice will be funded. A further £1k will come from The Good Exchange once the project is finished and this will be match funded. *Cllr Winser proposed acceptance of the costs now totalling £26,750 and the funded as detailed in the report,, seconded by Cllr Knight, one abstention, rest in favour.*

- **Confirm Electrical contract for Croft Field** – A three year agreement has been signed at a cost of £511.21 per year. This was agreed between the RFO and Chair of FG&P as delegated at the last meeting.
- **Consider increased budget for I3 Web** – HTC currently pays £25 a month for a microsite on the Love Hungerford website managed by I3 Web. The cost of this is going up to £30 a month. I3 Web is proposing an additional advertising/bulletin spot for HTC on the home page for £25 a go. They are suggesting a cost of £660 + VAT per year.

Cllr Benneyworth proposed accepting the £5 per month increase and the additional advertising, but in future, T&E should deal with this issue, seconded by Cllr Crane, two abstentions, rest in favour.

5. **Library: -**

- **Propose appointment of a solicitor to act on behalf of HTC for the lease**
- **Propose agreement of solicitors' fees**

Three quotes have been received from solicitors as follows:

Charles Lucas & Marshall, Wantage - £3-4k

Alex Atkins - £2k + VAT

MacAuley & Co, Hungerford - £1,250-£2,250

We currently have £1,500 in professional fees and a contingency fund.

Action: To ask WBC if they will pay the legal fees.

Cllr Simpson proposed the appointment of MacAuley & Co to act on behalf of HTC and acceptance of their quote of £1,250-£2,250, seconded by Cllr Farrell, all in favour.

6. **To approve the Internal Auditor's Report** – Chairs of each committee will initial each page of the minutes and the grading review.

The report mentioned a delay in the grant, this has now been allocated.

We will be actioning an 'Investment Policy'. This will be addressed at the next FG&P meeting. **Action:** Add to next F&GP agenda 'Investment Policy'

Money for the defibrillators has now been adopted.

The £5k difference between the precept we set and what appears on the Government website is due to the Special Expenses (lamp posts) detailed in the Council tax bill. *Cllr Simpson proposed acceptance of the report and actions, seconded by Cllr Crane, all in favour.*

7. **Youth & Community Centre**

- **To receive Cllr Cusack's report** – Cllr Cusack was not present at the meeting;
- **Update on renewal of lease of Y&C centre building** – the lease is now between HTC and Excalibur (previously HTC and WBC) and expires in August. The Clerk is chasing this. **Action:** Add update to the next agenda.

8. **HTC grant applications: -**

- **Member's Bid – Consider suggestions including bus shelter and CCTV.** The priority would be for a bus shelter to be erected in Church Street. The cost for this is £4k but a canopy would also be an option. This will be put to next FC. The District Councillors will be contacting Clive Tombs at WBC. **Action:** Office to do so also
- **Parish Plan Grant – Consider suggestions including replacement of Library lighting.** All agreed to pursue this grant for replacing all the lights in the Library.
- **Crime Prevention grant – Consider suggestions including CCTV and street lighting.** Some residents think all the town exits should be covered by CCTV. This

would mean an extra 4 cameras at £2,500 each and each camera would need a pole and electricity supply. The Police are donating £800 this year. There was a discussion as to whether the CCTV should be monitored at the Police Station.

Cllr Brookman proposed the Crime Prevention grant be used to install CCTV at The Bear, seconded by Cllr Crane, all in favour.

9. Lamp posts –

- **Consider policy for adoption and future expenditure** – a report was circulated (see attached). We have a number of options and need to have a plan and reduce our liability. We are looking at a budget of £14k for 2019/20. *The committee agreed the aim would be to get as many lamp posts as we can replaced by 2028 or sooner if possible.*
- Agree replacement of Lamp post at Tally Ho! at cost of £555.21. *It was agreed to delegate this decision and similar decisions on repairs/replacements of individual lamp posts to the Clerk.*

10. Annual Review of Standing Orders – Circulated for comment. Cllrs Benneyworth, Knight and Simpson will go through the Standing Orders. **Action:** Clerk to arrange meeting.

11. Consider adoption of a training policy for new councillors and staff as required in the Local Council Award Scheme – *Cllr Benneyworth proposed drafting and adoption of a training policy, seconded by Cllr Knight, all in favour.*

PART 2

Confidential

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960.

12. Propose payment of additional hours worked by RFO – *Cllr Winser proposed RFO should receive payment for the additional hours worked, seconded by Cllr Brookman, all in favour.*

Meeting closed at 9.35pm