



MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Meeting Details:

Date: 30 May 2023

Time: 10.00 am

Location: Meeting held as a hybrid meeting both at Carnegie House and remotely via Microsoft Teams for Business under the Local Government and Elections Act (Wales) 2021

Staff: D Jones (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO), Leanne Edwards (Town Clerk) H Jenkins (Finance Officer)

In attendance:

Cllr F Bletsoe (Mayor) in person

Cllr A Lloyd in person

Cllr C Webster in person

Cllr A Wathan in person

Cllr D Unwin in person

Cllr M Blundell Humphreys in person

1. To elect a Chair of Finance Committee for 2023/24

The Deputy Clerk RFO welcomed members to the first meeting of the new Mayoral term and were asked for nominations for Chair of Finance Committee.

Cllr A Wathan nominated Cllr D Unwin which was seconded by Cllr C Webster and Cllr A Lloyd and Cllr D Unwin was duly elected as Chair of Finance for the forthcoming year.

Cllr F Bletsoe (Mayor) welcomed the nomination and thanked Cllr D Unwin for his dedication and exceptional service as Chair of Finance over the previous years.

RESOLVED: Cllr D Unwin was elected Chair of Finance Committee for 2023/24.

2. To elect a Vice Chair of Finance Committee for 2023/24

Cllr D Unwin requested nominations for Vice Chair of Finance Committee for 2023/24 and Cllr A Wathan was nominated, and Cllr C Webster seconded the nomination.

RESOLVED: Cllr A Wathan was elected as Vice Chair of Finance Committee for 2023/24.

3. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies were received from Cllr P Settle.

4. To receive declarations of Interests (if any) of Members in respect of the business to be transacted.

Cllr A Wathan declared an interest as a BCBC Councillor.

5. To receive and sign Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting held on the 14th of March 2023

RESOLVED: The minutes were accepted and approved as a true record of discussion and duly signed by the Chair of Finance Committee.

6. To consider matters arising from the Finance Committee held on the 14th of March 2023.

Item 4 – The Chair of Finance requested an update on the job centre noticeboard. The Deputy Clerk informed Committee that she has received an email from the locksmith who had informed her that the replacement lock that had been received was not suitable and no other replacement could be found and suggested the total replacement of the noticeboard. Committee were asked to consider this option and felt that the possibility of other locksmiths was needed, and an update would be provided at a future meeting.

Item 9 – The Deputy Clerk updated Committee that all works had been completed and certified on the damp remedial work at Carnegie House with the remaining scaffolding to be removed shortly from the site. She added that a grant from CADW had been awarded and received of £6,194 as a contribution to costs for the work undertaken.

Action: A letter would be sent to thank owners of the adjacent properties for allowing contractors access to complete the work needed.

RESOLVED: Committee acknowledged the timeframe required for the mortar to dry out completely and agreed to review the situation in a year's time.

Item 10 – The Deputy Clerk informed Committee that she had received a confirmation email from Leander Architectural that the order of the war memorial plaque was completed and due to be dispatched once the pro forma invoice had been settled at a total cost of £750 excluding VAT and a carriage cost of £27.50.

RESOLVED: Committee approved the payment and expressed the high priority of the installation of the war memorial plaque prior to Remembrance Day or earlier if possible.

Item 12 – **RESOLVED: An update was provided to Committee that the schools had accepted the offer of the veggie planters which were due to be delivered to them shortly.**

7. To discuss Bridgend Town Council banking arrangements and sums to be deposited.

Cllr A Lloyd updated Committee on the work she had undertaken to source a suitable bank or building society to allocate the deposit of Bridgend Town Council funds. She noted that due to the volatile banking situation at present very few banks or building societies were willing to open new business accounts for Town Councils.

Cllr A Lloyd noted that the Cambridge Building Society and the Co-operative bank would be willing to open accounts and proposed that £85,000 be deposited with each bank in immediate access accounts.

It was noted that staff would be able to access the accounts online or via the post office due to the lack of branches available within the Bridgend Town area.

Committee thanked Cllr A Lloyd for her hard work and following a discussion approved the proposal of placing £85,000 in the Cambridge Building Society and £85,000 in the Co-operative Bank at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED: Committee approved the proposal of depositing funds within the Cambridge Building Society and Co-operative Bank of £85,000 in each.

8. Budgets

a. To receive budget review 04 as of 31st March 2023.

The Deputy Clerk presented a paper to Committee of the year end budget up to the 31st of March 2023 and noted the earmark of budget to carry over to the next financial year in relation to the following areas:

- Grant funding
- Building Works – window replacement at Town Hall
- Great Western Railway project – funds to be returned.
- Re-generation projects of noticeboards and wildflower planting
- Town Hall – awaiting final invoice

b. To receive General Reserves, Report as of 31st March 2023

The Deputy Clerk presented a paper to Committee of the general reserves of £285,145.31 with the final invoice for the Town Hall to be drawn from this amount. The Deputy Clerk advised Committee that a further update would be given to Committee as soon as the final invoice had been received.

c. To receive Investment Report for financial year 2022/23

The Deputy Clerk referred Members to the report detailing the interest received on funds held in the BTC Bank accounts for 2022/23. It was noted that no investments had been made for the 2022/23 financial year.

RESOLVED: Committee approved the budgets and thanked the Deputy Clerk RFO for all her hard work.

9. To receive 2022/23 Year End Audit update.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO updated Committee that she had sent the year end reports and Annual Governance Form to the internal auditor which would be returned in readiness for signing at the June meeting of full council before being sent to the external auditor.

10. To consider appointment of Internal Auditor for 2023/24

The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that she had made enquiries with the Wales Audit Office to seek advice if there was a timeframe for using the same auditor but had not yet received anything in writing. Initial enquiries had suggested that there was no specific timeframe within the Town Council sector and based the continuation of service on: if it was of good value, if a letter of engagement setting out requirements was issued and if an internal auditor's report was provided.

RESOLVED: Committee requested the Deputy Clerk RFO to make enquiries of legal advice and other internal auditors and update at a future Finance Committee meeting later in the year.

11. To receive Evergreen Hall Charity Constitution and discuss the release of the escrow account funds.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO referred to the Chair of Evergreen Hall Charity attending a previous meeting of the Finance Committee and advised that they had now provided the charities constitution to Committee; she asked if Members were satisfied that the necessary checks had been completed to safeguard the release of the funds back to the charity. Committee considered the paper provided and were confident that the release of funds could now be undertaken.

RESOLVED: Committee approved the release of funds via BACS payment once the final calculation of interest and the holding admin fee had been deducted.

12. To receive an update on the formal transfer of Ruhamah Burial Ground from Bridgend County Borough Council to Bridgend Town Council.

The Town Clerk provided Committee with an email that had been received from Whittingham's Solicitors to confirm the Heads of Terms and wished to draw the attention to Committee to paragraph 11 the pre-emption obligation and paragraph 14 regarding payment of the costs. A plan of the area was also submitted and noted the areas marked which indicated the responsibility for boundaries and maintenance within those areas.

RESOLVED: Committee approved the formal transfer of Ruhamah Burial Ground to Bridgend Town Council.

13. To receive an update and discuss Past Mayors Pendants and Bridgend Town Council Plaques.

The Deputy Clerk RFO updated Committee that there are currently no past Mayor pendants and there were only four Bridgend Town Council plaques in stock.

The Deputy Clerk explained that a quote had been requested but not yet received and advised that previously the past mayor pendants had been purchased at a cost of £295.54 but this cost may have now increased.

Committee discussed the purchase and requested the Deputy Clerk/RFO to obtain a quote for three pendants and ten plaques and gave authority to place the order provided the costs were not significantly higher than previously.

RESOLVED: Committee requested the Deputy Clerk RFO to obtain a quote and to purchase three past mayor pendants and ten Bridgend Town Council plaques.

14. To receive an update on and discuss the purchase of laptops for staff.

The Town Clerk updated Committee on the forthcoming changes to the IT software Citrix which is due to be disbanded in October and is currently used for staff to access work remotely.

Currently there are eight staff with five staff members using independent laptops with one member using an old BCBC laptop and requested Committee to consider the option to purchase six VPN laptops which would be used via a docking station when working within the new Town Hall and for use when working remotely.

RESOLVED: Committee approved the cost of £6,600 to purchase laptops and to enquire at the cost of docking stations.

15. To receive Town Hall update and consider grass cutting quotes.

The Town Clerk was happy to report to Committee that full insurance cover had been finalised for the Town Hall with no additional costs for full building and contents cover.

It was noted that a full handover would be undertaken this week when all documentation such as test certificates would be submitted via hard copy from the contractor even though it had been received digitally.

The Town Clerk updated Committee that the tender for the installation of the new boiler was being undertaken and the current fencing would be removed in September, however a more permanent solution to the fencing and security of the building would need to be considered by the Town Hall working group.

The Town Clerk noted that the work on the adjacent area by Linc Cymru was due to commence in October.

A quote had been received which was presented to Committee on the costs to provide a grass cutting service at the Town Hall with a cost of £400 for the first cut and £200 per month thereafter.

RESOLVED: Committee considered the quote and approved the work to commence.

The quote had also included the repair to damaged fencing at the Waunscil Allotment site which was agreed and needed to be undertaken as a priority.

RESOLVED: Committee requested the Deputy Clerk RFO to speak to the Facilities Team and approved the works to be undertaken at the Waunscil allotment site as a priority and report progress to the Facilities Committee.

Meeting Closed: 11.10 am.

Signed..... (Chair of Finance Committee)

Date.....