



## MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021, 10am held remotely via video conference

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr. David Unwin Cllr. Lyn Walters Cllr. Steven Bletsoe Cllr. Alan Wathan Cllr. Ian Williams Cllr. Tim Wood
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**In attendance:** Mrs L Edwards (Town Clerk), Debra Jones (Deputy Clerk) and Mrs H Jenkins (Finance Officer)

**1. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies received from Cllr. Matthew Voisey and Cllr. Tim Wood

**2. To receive Declarations of Interest**

Cllr. David Unwin declared an interest in agenda item 16d as his role as vice chair of Brynteg School of Governors.

**3. To Elect Chair of Finance Committee for March – May 2021**

Finance Committee nominated and approved Cllr. D Unwin as the duly appointed Chair of Finance for March to May 2021.

**4. To Elect Deputy Chair of Finance Committee for March – May 2021**

Finance Committee nominated and approved Cllr. L Walters as Deputy Chair of Finance for March to May 2021.

**5. To receive minutes of the meeting held on 1st December 2020**

Finance Committee approved the minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 as a true and accurate recording of discussion.

**6. To consider matters arising from the meeting held on 1st December 2020**

Page 2 – Item 11 – A request for an update on the consideration of remembrance donations to the Bridgend Veterans zone was discussed. The Deputy Clerk RFO informed Committee

that she had been unable to make any contact with the Bridgend Veterans zone and therefore this issue would be updated at a future meeting.

Page 4 – SLA Building Maintenance suspension of contract with BCBC – The Town Clerk informed Committee that the Acting Facilities Manager is currently seeking quotes for a new SLA contract, as BCBC are now only able to deal with in house issues.

**RESOLVED: Finance approved the minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and duly signed.**

**7. To receive minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2020**

Finance Committee approved the minutes of the 8th December 2020 as a true and accurate recording of discussion.

**8. To consider matters arising from the meeting held on 8th December 2020**

Page 1 (4) – An update was requested on whether quotes had been received in relation to the outstanding works such as the windows, doors and the Clerk updated Committee that quotes have been sought and are currently awaited.

The Clerk informed Committee that the issue of damp within the Carnegie House building had been caused by the deterioration of the mortar on the side of the building and quotes for the mortar repair were currently being sought. It was noted that due to the listed status of the building, advice will be sought from the BCBC Conservation Department.

Page 2 – The Chair of Finance requested an update on the NNDR at the Town Hall and the reduction in NNDR due to the pandemic at Carnegie House. The Deputy Clerk (RFO) informed Committee that the relevant forms had been sent to BCBC and were currently waiting for a response from them.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee approved the minutes of the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and duly signed.**

**9. Budget Review**

**a) To receive Budget Review to date**

**b) To receive Expenditure Forecast to March 31st 2021**

The Deputy Clerk (RFO) provided Committee with an updated budget review with an actual spend as of 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021. It was noted that the forecast had not changed significantly from when it was brought to Committee in December 2020 and overall a positive balance was recorded.

The Deputy Clerk informed Committee that a new budget heading 1615 was created for the property purchase against income and expenditure with a current negative balance, this includes payments of Solicitor fees, land tax and searches, which are accounted for in budget heading 1620 Additional Premises; however, reserves of £53,000 previously agreed would be added.

The Town Clerk informed Committee that the forecast spend on the additional premises was reduced to £113,370.07 and highlighted that some of this budget will need to be earmarked for next financial year.

The Chair of Finance raised the issue to Committee to consider the need to allocate expenditure for Parks and Play areas for the next financial year further to discussions at the Regeneration Committee meeting. The Deputy Clerk (RFO) advised she would amend the forecast as requested.

**c) To consider virement of budgets for the year ended 31st March 2021**

The Finance Committee agreed under the scheme of delegation that the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk (RFO) identify budgets for virement for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021. The Deputy Clerk (RFO) advised that she would calculate and present the actual general reserves after the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 as well as identify budgets to be earmarked; she advised that the reports would be presented to Members at the next Finance Committee meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk and Deputy Clerk (RFO) complete the virement of budgets for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 and present it to Committee at the next meeting.**

**d) To discuss the presentation of Carnegie House and Town Hall budgets form 1st April 2021**

The Chair of Finance suggested that a clear distinction of the accounting costs involved for both the Town Hall and Carnegie House were required to determine income and expenditure with the hope that costs would be presented six monthly to the Finance Committee. The Deputy Clerk (RFO) agreed that this would initially be a large piece of work to undertake but once in place would be a beneficial way of reporting spend moving forward.

**RESOLVED: Finance approved the distinction of Town Hall and Carnegie House budgets to be reported to the Finance Committee.**

**10. Allotments**

**a) To receive an update on the collection of Allotment rent 2020/2021**

The Deputy Clerk (RFO) updated Committee that a number of BACS and cheque payments had been received to date with the cheques being banked by the end of the financial year.

**b) To note date of collection of Allotment rent 2021/2022**

Further to the decision of Council for collection of allotment rent for the period April 2021 to end of March 2022, the Finance Committee agreed that letters would be sent out from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 with a deadline for a return of rent and tenancy agreements by the end of October 2021.

**RESOLVED: Finance approved the date of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021 for the collection of allotment rent for 2021/2022.**

**c) To consider Allotment rent charges for 2022/23 and date of collection**

Finance Committee considered the increase in rental costs for allotments, which had remained at 25 pence per 25 metre squared for the past three years, and raised the issue of research to be undertaken on the rental cost comparison to other allotment sites.

The Deputy Clerk (RFO) informed Committee that costs are even as to the income brought in, however following a discussion the Finance Committee agreed to raise the rental charges for the period 2022/2023 to 50 pence per 25 metre squared.

**RESOLVED: Finance approved the increase of 50 pence per 25 metre squared for the rental year 2022/23 and requested research into rental charges in other locations.**

**11. IT Network & Printing**

**a) To consider ICT Service Level Agreement costs for Carnegie House and Town Hall**

The Town Clerk presented a report to the Finance Committee for consideration, which outlined costs for each individual member of staff to access Microsoft Office 365 along with individual costs for a Citrix licence.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed to approve the overall cost of £3,000 for Microsoft Office 365 and Citrix licences for the current calendar year.**

**b) To consider printer costs for Carnegie House and Town Hall**

The Town Clerk informed Committee that the current printer based at Carnegie House is no longer fit for purpose and a report was presented to Committee to consider the future printer requirements for Carnegie House and the Town Hall.

The Town Clerk noted that should Committee agree to the provision of the printers then Cannon could replace the current printer at Carnegie House with the new large printer destined for the Clerk's Office at the Town Hall and would then move the printer to the Town Hall when required with the other printers being installed at each correct location.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed the costs to enter into a contract with Canon to supply printers and consumables to the Town Hall and Carnegie House.**

**c) To consider costs to purchase BCBC laptops with VPN connection**

The Town Clerk updated Committee on the issues she had been experiencing using a personal lap top and requested the Finance Committee to consider the purchase of two BCBC laptops with secure VPN connection for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) at a cost of £1,100 each. This would allow the laptop currently used by the Deputy Town Clerk (RFO) to be utilised by the Finance Officer who is currently using a personal laptop. It was noted that the BCBC laptops last several years longer than that of personal laptops.

The issue of docking stations at the Town Hall was discussed and the Town Clerk was asked to investigate the compatibility of a docking station and any Health and Safety issues. She advised she would update the Committee at a future meeting. It was noted if docking stations could be utilised the Clerks PC's could be passed to new members of staff negating the need to purchase PC's in the future.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed the purchase of BCBC laptops with a secure VPN connection for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk (RFO).**

## 12. Facilities Management

The Acting Facilities Manager submitted a paper to the Finance Committee for their consideration.

### a) To consider the purchase of an outdoor trolley for the emptying of dog bins

**RESOLVED: Finance agreed the purchase of the Slingsby Cleaning Trolley from Viking.**

### b) To review the existing dog bins and consider the purchase of replacement dog bins

Finance Committee discussed the current provision of dog bins and the need for them to be replaced. The Chair of Finance asked Committee to consider the replacement of the six existing bins along with the purchase of two further bins, one to be sited along Mill Lane and the other to retain in stock.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed the purchase of eight dog bins from JRB Enterprises.**

### c) To consider a request from Cllr C Webster to install a dog bin at Mill Lane, Newcastle Ward

The Chair of Finance Committee noted that he had recently visited Mill Lane in the last few days and a clean-up had been undertaken. Following a discussion Finance Committee agreed for a convenient location to be sought and a new dog bin to be installed further to the granting of permission from BCBC/Landowner.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed the purchase and installation of a dog bin at the Mill Lane, Newcastle Ward area.**

### d) To consider cost of IOSH Working Safely training

The Town Clerk updated Committee on a previous discussion for Health and Safety training for staff. The Acting Facilities Manager had provided costings from quotes obtained and had recommended TSW in house training as the most cost effective.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee approved the recommendation for training to be undertaken by TSW.**

### e) To consider and review quotes for Summer Floral Displays 2021

Finance Committee were asked to consider quotes for summer floral displays with the company Plantscape having supplied Bridgend Town Council since 2002 remaining as a competitive option.

The Chair of Committee recommended Committee to consider the purchase of 22 five-tier towers and 2 three-tier planters for a one-year contract.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed the contract be awarded to Plantscape on a one-year contract.**

### **13. Town Hall**

#### **a) To note PWLB repayment for March 2021**

The Deputy Clerk (RFO) informed Committee that the PWLB repayment was scheduled for March 2021 and the Finance Committee noted this.

**RESOLVED:** That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and representatives of the press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of agenda item 13 as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**b) To review costs and discuss Town Hall Project Manager Contract**

The Town Clerk gave an update to the Finance Committee on the costs to date for the Town Hall Project Manager contract. The first phase of the contract of £4,500 being awarded for undertaking research and the preparation of the business plan and the provision of support for the loan application.

Due to the pandemic, priorities and workloads changed which necessitated the extension of the contract to support a number of projects including the internal and external building work and pedestrian access project. The extension of the contract was £6,000.

At a meeting of the Full Town Council in January 2021 in order to pursue a planning application, for pedestrian access to the northern entry of the Town Hall it was resolved that the Town Hall Project Manager was offered to undertake this work at a cost of £1,200.

The Town Clerk requested the Finance Committee to consider the budget allocated for the Project Manager, to consider the involvement of the Project Manager going forward and to seek clarity when the contract should end.

Following discussion the Finance Committee agreed that the Project Manager should remain until an architect and or contractor for the building works is appointed, which is included in the second contract awarded and for the completion of planning in relation to pedestrian access. It was agreed that following completion of works, the Project Manager's contract would not be extended.

**RESOLVED: That following completion of works already agreed the Town Hall Project Managers contract will end and not be extended.**

**RESOLVED:** The public and representatives of the press were permitted to re-join the meeting.

**c) To review quotes for Town and Community Council Fund applications**

The Project Manager Mr Bob Burns attended the meeting via video link.

The Town Clerk noted that the Town and Community Council fund applications had been submitted to BCBC and confirmation had been received of receipt of the applications. It was noted that quotes to be submitted along with the application are yet to be sent to BCBC, as the Finance Committee need to review them prior to submission.

**d) To review additional responses to the Town Hall Architect/Contractor Brief**

The Project Manager was invited to speak; he spoke of the information received to date and gave a view on the responses to the Town Hall Architect/Contractor Brief.

The Town Clerk informed Committee that she had sent an email to One Voice Wales, a copy of which had been submitted to the Mayor and Chair of Finance, seeking legal advice regarding the awarding of a contract to an architect and contractor or contractor only, due to the limited responses to the brief in light of the pandemic.

The Town Clerk noted that One Voice Wales were seeking advice from their financial adviser on this issue before responding to Bridgend Town Council on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed that before any discussion or consideration could be made on this issue guidance from One Voice Wales was needed and suggested a further meeting would be required.**

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed a meeting be convened for Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 11 am.**

**16. Correspondence**

**a) Letter from Welsh Government: Appropriate Sum under Section 137(4) (A) of the Local Government Act 1972 - Section 137 Expenditure Limit for 2021-22**

**RESOLVED: Members noted the Letter from Welsh Government in relation to the S137 limit for 2021-22.**

**b) Letter from Welsh Government: Preparation and Publication of Statutory Financial Accounts for 2020-21**

The Deputy Clerk (RFO) informed Committee that there was some allowance with the deadline of the publication of the statutory financial accounts for 2020/21 due to the pandemic however, it was hoped to submit the accounts by the original deadline.

**RESOLVED: Members noted the letter from Welsh Government in relation to the preparation and publication of financial accounts for the period 2020/21.**



**c) Letter from BCBC: Potential for Holiday Programmes Summer 2021**

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed approval for BCBC to continue to arrange the holiday programme for the summer of 2021 if it was going ahead this year.**

**d) Email from BCBC: Tree planting at Brynteg Comprehensive School**

The Chair of Finance gave an overview to Committee of the tree-planting project at Brynteg Comprehensive School and asked Members if they were in support of providing funding to the project. It was noted that the planting would be adjacent to the A48 within the boundary of Brynteg School.

**RESOLVED: Finance Committee agreed to fund £500 towards the costs of planting trees on the site of Brynteg School.**

**Due to time constraints, the remaining agenda items were deferred to the next Finance Committee meeting to be held on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 11am.**

- 14. To discuss funds deposited in an Evergreen Hall Lease Escrow account**
- 15. To consider Grant Aid Applications**
  - a) To receive further information requested from Bridgend Carers Centre**
  - b) Application from Wales Air Ambulance Charity Emergency Appeal**
  - c) To receive Bridgend Association of Bowls, Tennis and Squash Clubs application update**

**The Meeting Closed 11.55 am**

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

**Date.....**