



MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 6th October 2020, 10am held remotely via video conference

Present:	Cllr. David Unwin – (Chair) Cllr. Lyn Walters Cllr. Steven Bletsoe Cllr. Matthew Voisey Cllr. Alan Wathan
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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 were received and noted from Cllr. Carolyn Webster and Cllr. Tim Wood

2. Declarations of Interest of Members (if any)

No declarations received.

3. To receive Minutes of the Meeting held on 4th February 2020 and Matters Arising

Item 8.3 – The Town Clerk informed Committee that the issue of the replacement flagpole would be completed before Remembrance Day.

Grant payment to Bridgend Athletic Club of £5,000 – The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that payment was made in May 2020.

Item 6 – Income payment of £10,000 from BCBC towards Asbestos Damage had been made at the end of the last financial year and allocated to the Contingency budget.

Carnegie House Programme – The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that there were no grant monies received to date for this financial year. Grant funding received in the previous financial year from the Arts Council of Wales for the Who is Bridgend Project had been assigned for this financial year with the project making good progress online due to the current COVID crisis.

Cllr. Lyn Walters wished it noted that the Finance Committee had met in September 2020, the Deputy Clerk/RFO apologised that the minutes had not been distributed and advised they would be included on the agenda of the next Finance committee meeting.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held on the 4th February 2020 were agreed as a true and accurate recording of discussion and duly signed by the Chair of Finance Committee.

4. To receive an Audit update for the year ended 31st March 2020

The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that the Audit had been completed following guidance received due to the current COVID-19 restrictions ensuring full compliance.

The Annual Governance Statement and a report from the Internal Auditor had been issued to the Full Town Council at its 22nd June 2020 meeting and then forwarded with supporting documentation to BDO, BTC's external auditors. The Notice of date appointed for the exercise of electors' rights under the Public Audit (Wales) Act 2004 has been published on the Council website and notice board.

BDO, BTC's external auditors have advised that due to their office closure because of COVID-19 an audit opinion will not be provided by 30th September as in previous years therefore BTC's unaudited accounts have been published online along with a statement advising this as required to ensure compliance.

5. To receive a Payroll and Cllr Remuneration update

The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that payroll has now been outsourced. She reported that Cllr. Remuneration payments for the past two financial years have been calculated and the details provided to BTC's payroll provider in order that the payments are processed via HMRC. It was advised that the payments would be made shortly.

The payment of 2020/21 remuneration would be discussed at a future meeting.

6. To receive half-year budget review

The Chair referred Members to the Half-Year Budget Review spreadsheet for review and approval.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO and Members reviewed each budget heading by income, expenditure, variance to date as well as forecast expenditure to the 31st March 2021 and forecast variance to the 31st March 2021.

It was noted that:

- NNDR – a minus figure is currently being forecast however further rate relief is currently being sought.
- Evergreen Hall – Quarter 4 payment was not made in the last financial year. If payment is required the Chair of Evergreen Hall has been advised to write to BTC with a formal request to draw down the payment.
- Donations and Grant Aid – An allocation of £4,500 from the last financial year and £500 from this financial year had been allocated to the Bridgend Bowls, Tennis and Squash Clubs Association. It was reported that the BCBC Town and Community funding application had been unsuccessful. Members resolved to donate £5,000 to the Bridgend Bowls, Tennis and Squash Clubs Association from Bridgend Town Council providing confirmation is received from the Association that the proposed works are to be completed.
- Christmas Lighting – An invoice for the 2019 installation was received in April 2020 and paid.
- Floral displays – a zero forecast spend was shown at present and this was agreed by Committee due to the current COVID crisis.

- Dog Waste Removal – It was noted that income is received for the removal of dog waste from Newcastle Higher Community Council.
- Carnegie House Programme – a budget review is due to be discussed at the Community Engagement and Wellbeing Committee on Wednesday and an update will be provided at the next Finance meeting.
- Town Centre Events – budget currently showing a zero forecast spend due to the Wartime Bridgend event not going ahead this year. A further discussion to take place at a future Finance meeting.
- Staff Training – SLCC training - the Clerk and Deputy Clerk were due to commence training however it was unable to go ahead due to the training being oversubscribed therefor the budget has been earmarked until training can be provided.
- The Town Clerk wished it noted that at the next budget review a discussion would be necessary to identify projects to be completed by the end of the financial year.

7. To receive a Facilities Management update.

The Town Clerk provided the Finance Committee with a report from the Facilities Manager that outlined costs incurred in essential maintenance of £2,093.74 from April 2020 to date.

A forecast of future anticipated costs of £2,816.20 that included quotes received for the deep cleaning of Carnegie House and an Electrical Wiring test required approval from Committee.

Resolved: Committee agreed that a three monthly deep clean of Carnegie House be approved using the Company Genie Bio Clean and the contract for the fixed wire testing be given to the company Surge Electrical Engineering to ensure Health and Safety compliance requirements are met.

8. Ty'r Ardd/Evergreen Hall

The Town Clerk gave an update to Committee informing them that BCBC have now signed the legal documents for the sale of Ty'r Ardd There are still a few remaining outstanding issues such as an access road and the heating and alarm systems to the building yet to be resolved. It was hoped that completion of the purchase would be imminent.

a) To receive a Ty'rArdd/Evergreen Hall update

A final inspection of Evergreen Hall has taken place and the keys handed to the Town Clerk in readiness for the completion.

The Chair of Finance informed Committee of a quote for the removal of items from Evergreen Hall to Ty'r Ardd, which included Outdoor Worker items that were stored at Evergreen Hall along with a donation of furniture from Evergreen to Bridgend Town Council.

Resolved: Committee agreed to approve this costing.

b) To discuss Evergreen Hall final payment

The Town Clerk informed Committee that the sale of the Evergreen Hall lease sum of £39,000 would be paid to the Evergreen Charity and a discussion took place on how this money would be managed. The Town Clerk informed Committee that Bridgend Town Council does not have the remit to decide

on how the money would be spent, as this would lie with the Evergreen Hall Management Committee. However, Committee felt that as the Town Council are custodians of the lease then it would be important to ensure that the money is used to benefit the its users and should be managed and spent appropriately.

Resolved: Committee agreed to write to the Evergreen Hall Committee to convene a meeting in order to determine the rules of reference for the future. It was agreed to produce papers to circulate to the Evergreen Hall committee to outline the Town Council's perspective going forward.

c) To discuss Ty'r Ardd budget for the financial year 2020/21

The Town Clerk referred the Committee to the precept budget of £117,662.06 allocated for the purchase of Ty'r Ardd. She advised that a budget has been prepared and updated as inspection reports and quotations are received.

Action: The budget including forecast expenditure will be finalised and reported to the next Finance Committee meeting.

9. To receive Malta flights refund update

The Town Clerk informed Committee that airline tickets were purchased by credit card for the HMS Urge memorial due to take place in Malta in April 2020. This was cancelled due to the COVID-19 crisis. Vouchers had been issued by the Airline, however due to the ongoing crisis it was felt that a refund on the purchase of the tickets was required. An email was sent to request the vouchers be exchanged for a full refund.

Action: An update on this issue will be brought to the next Finance Committee meeting.

10. To discuss purchase of ICT equipment

The Deputy Clerk/RFO asked for approval from Committee for the purchase of BCBC laptops for staff. This would enable staff to log in directly to the BCBC network when working from home. An estimated cost of £600 per laptop was given but further clarification would be sought and brought back to the Finance Committee for approval.

A request to purchase printers would also be costed and these would in turn be used within the new office area when staff are able to return to the work place.

Resolved: The Deputy Clerk/RFO would seek costs for the purchase of laptops and printers and update at a future Finance Committee meeting.

11. To consider quotes for external Christmas Lighting installation 2020

The Town Clerk stated that she had emailed BCBC for quotes for this year's Christmas lighting but had received no response. The cost incurred last year of £16,241 was agreed in principle by the Committee should this year's quote be no more than this figure. The Chair of Finance proposed that he also write to BCBC to try to seek a quote for this year.

Resolved: Chair of Finance to write to BCBC to obtain a quote for Christmas lighting installation 2020.

12. To consider quotes and contract length for Finance and Allotment Hosted Services

The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that the current AdvantEdge subscription is due to expire in November 2020 and referred Committee to quotes received for either a three or five year contract. The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that the current system works well, a high level of support is provided by AdvatEdge, and moving to a new system would be difficult at this current time and may affect year on year budget comparison reports at year-end. The Committee accepted the recommendation and following discussion agreed to renew the contract for a five-year period.

Resolved: A continuation of the contract with AdvantEdge for a further five-year period.

13. To consider the collection of Allotment Rent for the financial year 2020/21

Committee considered the delay in obtaining allotment rents due to the COVID-19 crisis and felt that it was now a moral obligation to the residents of Bridgend that rents owing should be paid for the year 2020/21.

Following a discussion, it was agreed that a separate bank account for Allotments should be opened and that tenants be given the option to pay directly into the new bank account or to pay by cheque. It was noted that tenants be given a unique reference to provide when paying via bank transfer.

The Town Clerk informed Committee that due to the lack of staff resources Allotment inspection visits had not been undertaken. She further advised that due to the pandemic it was agreed that non-cultivation letters would be sent to tenants at this time.

Members discussed staff resource and the temporary cover of the Facilities Officer post.

Resolved: Committee agreed to seek a temporary member of staff for a three-month contract to commence as soon as possible.

Resolved: The Deputy Clerk/RFO to set up a new bank account for payment of allotment rents going forward. Allotment Tenancy agreements to be updated informing tenants of the new payment procedure and sent with the rental invoices as soon as possible.

14. To consider Grant Aid applications

a) St John's House Trust Bridgend

Members reviewed a request for Grant Funding from St John's House Trust requesting £6,000 to aid with the replacement of windows and heating to ensure the property can be maintained and opened to the public during the winter months. Following a discussion, Committee agreed to donate the sum of £3,000 to St John's House Trust.

Resolved: that a donation of £3,000 is made to St John's House Trust.

15. Update on partnership tree planting scheme

The Chair informed Committee that an application for Welsh Government funding for environmental projects had been submitted however due to the current COVID epidemic this now appears to be on hold.

Resolved: Committee agreed to defer this item to a future Finance meeting

16. Update on completion of Town Centre signage renovations

The Chair of Finance updated Committee that currently Bridgend Town Council have sixteen finger post signs, two thirds have been painted with the remaining to be completed. It was stated that none of the signs point to Carnegie House and with the purchase of Ty'r Ardd a further signpost would be required.

The Chair of Finance confirmed the former supplier of the finger posts is no longer in business and that quotes would be obtained from Leander Architecture Ltd the company who supplied the Town's blue plaques and any other suitable provider.

Resolved: The Chair of Finance to provide a report on the particular renovation and budget required for the budget/Precept setting meeting.

17. To review Bridgend Town Council Statement of Internal Control

A paper distributed to Committee was accepted however, Committee agreed that a COVID-19 note should be inserted highlighting any change in process due to the pandemic and lockdown restrictions.

Resolved: Committee approved the Statement of Internal Control with the inclusion of COVID-19 note.

18. To review Bridgend Town Council Asset Register

The Deputy Clerk/RFO proposed to defer this issue to a future Finance meeting in order that she liaise with the Chair of Finance and Facilities Manager to review the condition of older assets.

The Deputy Clerk/RFO informed Committee that the Asset Register does not allow for the reporting of depreciation of assets, only the reporting of assets to be written off.

Resolved: An update on the Bridgend Town Council Asset Register to be made at a future Finance meeting to be approved and signed off.

19. To consider NALC pay award update for the financial year 2020/21

The Town Clerk reported that the 2020/21 national salary award pay scales agreed by the NJC had now been provided by NALC and One Voice Wales and referred members to the document.

Resolved: Committee agreed to the updated pay scales.

20. To discuss and plan Bridgend Town Council Precept Requirement 2021/22

The Town Clerk informed Members that Committees are due to meet in the coming weeks to discuss budgets, in order to report to the Finance Committee in readiness for the Full Town Council December 2020 meeting.

Committee supported the recommendation to bring forward the Full Town Council December meeting by one week to the 14th December, with a Finance meeting to be convened early December in preparation for the budget/Precept setting meeting.

It was agreed to hold a November meeting of the Finance Committee to allow for review of quotes where necessary, review and approve governance documents as required and to receive updates and discussion regarding Evergreen Hall and Ty'r Ardd.

Resolved: to convene a meeting of the Finance Committee in November as appropriate.

Meeting Closed: The Meeting Closed at 12.12 pm

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

Date.....