

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 18th JANUARY, 2018
IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES, LEDBURY**

PRESENT: Councillors: - R Barnes - Chairman
A Bradford M Eager
K Francis J Hopkins
N Shields A Warmington

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs K Mitchell, Clerk to the Council
Mrs Karen Edwards, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice South
Worcestershire

F.1 – 01.18 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs D Baker, E Fieldhouse, A Manns, N Morris, J Roberts and J Simpson.

F.2 – 01.18 INTERESTS

There were no interests declared at this point in the meeting.

F.3 – 01.18 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No members of the public were in attendance.

F.4 – 01.18 CITIZENS ADVICE - OUTREACH

The Chairman welcomed Karen Edwards, Chief Executive Officer at Citizens Advice South Worcestershire to the meeting. Mrs Edwards gave an overview of the service provided in Ledbury since taking over from the Herefordshire branch in October 2017. She advised that the outreach service in Ledbury runs on the first Tuesday of the month with a drop-in from 10am -12.30pm followed by appointments from 1.15pm. This format appeared to be working well with numbers increasing as the word spread. The service has seen an increase in demand for help with issues related to welfare benefits, particularly Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments.

Following a short question and answer session, Mrs Edwards was thanked for her informative introduction, after which she left the meeting.

F.5 – 01.18 MINUTES

1. The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 23rd November, 2017 were confirmed as a correct record with the following correction:

Add Cllr A Bradford to those present.

2. Members approved a correction to a typographical error in the Minutes of the meeting held on 19.10.2017.
Referring to F.95 – 10.17, 4.1 Specified Grants for 2017/18; The grant amount to Ledbury Poetry Festival should be corrected to read £2,000.

F.6 – 01.18 FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Members received the summary of receipts and payments from 1st November to 31st December 2017, copies having been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the summary, as presented, be approved and adopted.

2. Members received a quarterly summary of income and expenditure related to budget.

RESOLVED: That the summary be noted.

3. Members considered a list of invoices for payment (1-20), copies having been circulated. (Schedule to be lodged with the Minutes).

RESOLVED: That the invoices be approved for payment.

4. External Audit – Year ended 31st March 2017.

Members received an update on works relating to the formal objections to the Annual Return for 2016-17.

The Clerk advised that the external auditors had requested additional information and documentation in order to address five objections to the Annual Return. Cllr Bradford asked if the objectors could be named and the nature of the objections; the Clerk advised that the objections had been lodged by three Councillors and two members of the public and gave a summary of the issues raised. The Clerk was asked to ascertain whether the complainants had a right to anonymity.

5. Grants

5.1 Members considered a request from Community Action Ledbury (CAL) to vary the approved specified grant for 2017-18 to take account of the closure of the mobility and volunteer centre.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve the variation, with the grant being split 50:50 between Community Transport and Ring and Ride.

It was agreed that a CAL representative should be invited to talk to the committee about its requirements for 2018/19.

5.2 Portas Funding - Members received an interim report on progress achieved at Ledbury Youth Drop In.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the last tranche of the earmarked grant money be issued.

F.7 – 01.18 RISK MANAGEMENT

1. Health & Safety

Members considered the Fire Risk Assessment Action Plans for the Market House and Town Council Offices prepared by Fire & Risk Management Services consultant following an inspection on 30th November 2017. (refer F.87 – 09.17)

Fire Risk Assessment – Town Council Offices and Market House

Risk rating: Moderate

Recommended action: That risk reduction measures be implemented with a defined time period

The Clerk highlighted a number of actions with high priority.

RESOLVED: That the identified actions be implemented. Costs to be met from budget and reserves if required.

2. Risk Register

It was **RESOLVED: That a Task and Finish Group be set up to review the Risk Register, comprising Cllrs: Barnes, Eager, Hopkins and Shields.**

F.8 – 01.18 BUDGET 2018/19

Members further considered the draft budget required by the Finance and General Purposes Committee for 2018/19.

Members reviewed the budget sums for each cost centre/nominal codes and made the following changes:

Cost centre & Nominal Code	Budget line	2017/18	2018/19
220/	New budget line for Health & Safety	0	5,000

Referring to 220/4551, Data Protection, Cllr Hopkins reported that she had taken advice from the Information Commissioner and that each Councillor should be registered as a data controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). The Clerk advised that this was not a requirement for Town and Parish Councillors as they were covered under the register entry for the Town Council. The Clerk to seek confirmation prior to budget setting.

Referring to 220/4590 Professional Services overspend, Cllr Warmington thought that this should be allocated in a different way and shown as a

negative earmarked reserve line on the budget sheets to show that funds will be repaid to reserves over a number of years. The Clerk to seek advice from the internal auditor on this matter.

Members were reminded that the budget would be further reviewed at the Budget meeting on 25th January, 2018

F.9 – 01.18 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members considered the renewal of the annual subscriptions to:

1. The Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal Trust in the sum of £25.00.
2. Clerks & Councils Direct in the sum of £12.00.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to renew the annual subscriptions.

F.10 - 01.18 AWARDS

Members considered the arrangements for the Distinguished Citizens Awards 2018. Awards to be presented at the Annual Town meeting on 26th April 2018.

RESOLVED: That the Clerk proceed with arrangements for the Distinguished Citizens Awards 2018.

F.11- 01.18 WORKING PARTIES AND TASK & FINISH GROUPS

Members received the report from the ICT Working Party meeting held on 8th January, 2018, copies having been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve and adopt the report.

F.12 - 01.18 OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no outside body reports.

F.13 - 01.18 CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION

None.

F.14 - 01.18 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA INCLUSION

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be held on 22nd February, 2018.

Meeting closed at 9.31pm.

CHAIRMAN DATE