

**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 19th NOVEMBER 2015
IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**

PRESENT: Councillors: A Harrison - Chairman
D Baker R Barnes
P Bettington M Eager
M Mackness N Morris
R Yeoman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs K Mitchell, Clerk to the Council
Mrs M Bradman, Deputy Clerk to the Council
Clare Keetch - Chief Executive of Herefordshire CAB

F.56 - 11.15 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors A Crowe, K Francis, E Harvey, A Manns and A Warmington.

F.57 - 11.15 INTERESTS

None declared at this point in the meeting.

F.58 - 11.15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present.

F.59 - 11.15 CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX

Clare Keetch, Chief Executive of the Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux, gave a comprehensive explanation of the overall funding position, advising that due to loss of its core funding from Herefordshire Council, the service could not continue to operate in the long term unless alternative funding is secured. Members asked what level of funding was required to re-instate a service in Ledbury. Mrs Keetch estimated that £10,000 would allow for a weekly service but stressed that this might only be possible if core funding was restored. Following a questions and answer session, Clare Keetch was thanked for her presentation and left the meeting.

Recommendation to Full Council: That the 2015/16 grant to CAB in the sum of £1,800 be released.

That a provisional sum of £10,000 be put into the budget for 2016/17, to cover a weekly outreach service in Ledbury. Any payments to be made on a quarterly basis.

That the matter be raised at the Market Towns Forum and that Ledbury Town Council and Ledbury ward members be requested to lobby Herefordshire Council to reinstate funding.

F.60 - 11.15 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 22nd October 2015, copies having been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record.

F.61 - 11.15 FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Summary of Receipts and Payments

Members were circulated with a summary of receipts and payments from 10th October to 12th November 2015. Cllr Bettington declared non-pecuniary interest in payment for the October Fair refreshments and refrained from voting.

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

2. Invoices for payment

Members considered a list of invoices for payment, copies having been circulated. Schedule appended to the Minutes.

RESOLVED: That the invoices, no.s 1-7, as presented, be approved for payment.

F.62 - 11.15 BUDGET 2016/17

1. Members further considered the draft budget required by the Finance & General Purposes Committee for 2016/17, examined each budget line, and agreed a number of changes.

2. Members considered the following proposal from Love Ledbury:
“that the Town Council accepts responsibility for the cost of operating the public loos in Bye Street with immediate effect. The annual net cost of running the loos is £9,000 (excl business rates)”.

A background paper prepared by Cllr E Harvey was circulated to members. Following discussion, it was agreed that further information was required on income and expenditure; funding sources/donations; building maintenance commitments and licence conditions.
3. Members confirmed the provisional date for a joint budget meeting (Thursday 26th November, 2015) to consider a final draft prior to Full Council approval.

F.63 - 11.15 TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

Members considered:

1. A proposal for the upgrade of the telephone system to an Avaya IP Office telephone system.
Recommendation to Full Council: That the upgrade be approved.
2. Purchase of replacement blinds for the office reception area.
Recommendation to Full Council: That the Clerk be instructed to purchase new blinds for the reception area.
3. Recommended upgrade of the fire alarm panel to meet British Standards..
Recommendation to Full Council: That the recommendation be accepted, and new equipment be approved in the sum of £830.91 plus VAT.

F.64 - 11.15 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members considered the renewal of the annual subscription to Local Council Review in the sum of £17.00.

- Recommendation to Full Council: That the annual subscription to the Local Council Review in the sum of £17.00, be approved.**

F.65 - 11.15 INSURANCE

The Clerk advised that three quotations for insurance had been received, however, the third quotation, which had only been received that day, was disparate in cost to the others.

RESOLVED: That consideration be deferred to the Full Council meeting on 3rd December, 2015 in order for a comparison to be made.

F.66 - 11.15 RISK REGISTER

The review of the Risk Register was deferred for consideration at the next meeting.

F.67 - 11.15 OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports.

F.68 - 11.15 CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION

Members were informed that the Clerk had received correspondence from the Market Towns Forum with regards to the Herefordshire Council Tax Grant. Copies to be circulated.

F.69 - 11.15 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 21st January 2016.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.25pm.

Chairman Date