

F.56 – 06.17 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9th May, 2017 were not yet available due to the Clerk's heavy workload. These would be presented for approval as a correct record at the next meeting.

F.57 – 06.17 FINANCIAL MATTERS

1. Summary of Receipts and Payments

Members were circulated with a summary of receipts and payments from 1st February to 30th April 2017.

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 to be lodged with the Minutes).

RESOLVED: That the invoices be approved for payment.

3. Internal Audit Report 2016-17

Members considered the detailed final update for the year 2016-17, copies having been circulated.

The internal auditor had concluded that, on the basis of the programme of work undertaken, the Council had maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements during the year and had completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Annual Return for the year ended 31st March 2017.

Referring to the recommendation identified at the interim visit (refer F.50-05.17, 1a), it was confirmed that the General Power of Competence would be relied upon when considering grant applications and that this would be referred to in the Minutes.

A query was raised over the use of the word 'adequate'; the Clerk was requested to query the terminology with the internal auditor.

Referring to Assessment and Management of Risk, it was pointed out that the Risk Register was reviewed at every meeting and was adopted annually by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report be approved and adopted.

4. Effectiveness of the system of Internal Audit

Members received copies of the updated document as completed at the meeting held on 9th May 2017 and reviewed Part 1- Meeting Standards. (refer F.50-05.17, 1b)

Referring to item 4, it was noted that training of members is available through the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED: To answer YES to all parts (1-5).**

5. External Audit 2016/17

Audit for the year ended 31st March 2017 – intermediate review

The Town Council is advised that the Annual Return must be completed and submitted to the External Auditor by 16th June 2017.

a) Balance Sheet for 2016-17.

RESOLVED: To approve the Balance sheet for 2016-17.

b) Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement.

Hard copies of the 'Practitioner's Guide to Proper Practices to be applied in the preparation of statutory annual accounts and governance statements', were provided to members at the meeting. (Copies previously circulated to all Councillors by email on 28th March 17)

Members spent approximately 30 minutes carefully reading through each section of the above guidance whilst simultaneously considering their responses to the Annual Governance Statement assertions 1-9.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to answer YES to assertions 1-8 and NOT APPLICABLE (N/A) to assertion 9 of Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement 2016/17.**

c) Section 2 – Accounting Statements

Members considered the Accounting Statements which had been certified and signed by the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) as fairly representing the financial position of the Town Council for the year ended 2016/17.

The Clerk (RFO) explained that re-stated figures for line 4 (Staff Costs) and line 6 (All other payments) were due to re-coding of items previously included under 'staff costs' instead of 'all other payments'. The figures in line 9 (Total fixed assets) had been re-stated due to actual purchase costs coming to light from the original deeds.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve the accounting statements for 2016/17.**

Cllr K Francis left the chamber during discussion of the following item.

6. Earmarked Reserves

Members considered the allocation of earmarked reserves as at 1st April 2017, copies having been circulated.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve earmarked reserves totalling £249,667.**

Cllr K Francis re-joined the meeting at this point.

7. Grant Applications

- a) Review of the frequency of consideration of grant applications.
Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: To continue to consider unspecified grant applications on a quarterly basis.

- b) Members considered one application for funding.
Ledbury Allotment Association - amount requested - £500 for an Allotment Mini-beds project.
(Power relied upon: General Power of Competence)

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve a grant in the sum £500 for the mini-bed project to be met from the Allotment earmarked reserves.

8. Portas Funds

Members considered the disbursement of funds (£10,000) received by the Town Council on behalf of the by Town Plan bid team in October 2013. (C.72 - 05.17 refers)

The following queries were raised which required further information:

- Details of when and how the call for applications had been advertised.
- Outcome of Love Ledbury grant awarding panel deliberations.

At this point in the meeting Cllr E Fieldhouse and N Morris declared the following interests and remained in the meeting.

Cllr E Fieldhouse - Non-pecuniary interest as a volunteer at the Ledbury Youth drop-in

Cllr N Morris - Pecuniary Interest as a Trustee of Love Ledbury.

Following detailed discussion,

it was **RESOLVED: That further consideration be deferred pending a response to queries raised.**

F.58 – 06.17 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members considered two renewals.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to renew the following subscriptions:

1. Clerk's membership to The Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC), in the sum of £250.
2. Herefordshire Tree Warden network in the sum of £25.

F.59 – 06.17 HOSPITALITY

Members considered providing hospitality on Ledbury in Bloom Judging day on Monday 17th July, 2017.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to provide hospitality within a budget of £250.

F.60 – 06.17 TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

1. Members considered commissioning a fabric report for the Town Council offices and Market House. The last full inspection was undertaken in September 2008.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to commission a fabric report for the Town Council offices and Market House.

2. Renewal of the Marriage Room licence (expires 03 Nov 17).
The Town Council is notified that fees for attendance of Registration staff will increase from 2018, as follows:

	2017	2018
Each notice of Marriage	£35 per person	£35 per person
Attendance of Registration staff	£195	£365 (Mon-Fri) £390 (Sat)
Room hire fee	£225	£225
Marriage Certificate	£4	£4
Commemorative Certificate	£10	£10

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to renew the Marriage room licence on the basis of the existing annual payment terms.

F.61 – 06.17 MARKET HOUSE

Members considered a request from 'Joined Up Heritage' to part fund exhibition materials for the 400th Anniversary of the Market House.

- Pull-up banners (1 or 2) – full colour - £200 each
- Booklet - £300 contribution

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to approve making a contribution of up to £700 from the Tourism earmarked reserves to fund exhibition materials.

F.62 – 06.17 WORKING PARTIES

Members considered a report from the ICT Working Party meeting held on 16th May, 2017, copies having been circulated, together with a draft article for publication in the Ledbury Focus.

Referring to item 4, quotations for replacement computer equipment and broadband upgrade will be obtained and presented for consideration at a future ICT working party meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council be recommended to:

- 1. approve and adopt the report.**
- 2. approve the draft article for publication in the Ledbury Focus.**

F.63 – 06.17 OUTSIDE BODIES

1. Members received the Report from Herefordshire Market Towns Forum meeting held on 29th March 2017, copies having been circulated.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

2. Cllr Francis advised that a report from the HALC meeting he had recently attended would be presented to the next meeting.
3. Ledbury Food Bank

In light of comments made during the public participation session, it was agreed that measures to improve privacy be implemented.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council continue to issue food bank vouchers.

F.64 – 06.17 RISK REGISTER

There were no new items raised.

F.65 – 06.17 CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION

The Clerk read out items of correspondence received.

1. Thank you letters were received from:
 - The Friends of The Master’s House for the grant towards the Joined Up Heritage project.
 - The Ledbury Town Crier, Mr William Turberfield affectionately known as ‘Bill The Bell’ for his recent Distinguished Citizen Award.
2. Mr L Meredith had written to advise the Town Council that for the year-ending 30th April 2017, flags had been flown on the town centre flag poles for various occasions for a total of 61 days.
3. Ledbury Community Brass Band had written requesting a meeting with Ledbury Town Council to look at support for the band.

Cllrs E Fieldhouse, K Francis offered to attend a meeting. When elected, the Town Mayor will also be invited to attend.

F.66 – 06.17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDA INCLUSION

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee is scheduled for 6th July, 2017. Councillors are respectfully reminded that this particular item is not an opportunity for debate or decision making.

The meeting closed at 9.45pm

Chairman

Date