

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee
held on Monday 1st June 2020 at 7:00pm online using Microsoft Teams

DRAFT
Subject to confirmation

PRESENT

Cllr S Hitchings – Committee Chairman
Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman of Council
Cllr H White
Cllr R Carter
Cllr A Cross

Cllr P Osborne – Committee Vice Chairman
Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr H Mieville

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Nicci Brown (Press)

Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

SITTING IN

Cllr D Russell

Cllr R Holmes

1. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no members of the public present.

2. APOLOGIES

None

3. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16TH MARCH 2020

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

5. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

5.1 Public Conveniences – Tarrant Monkton & Launceston Parish Council has kindly donated £200 towards the public conveniences.

5.2 Cheques – Any cheques received at present are paid into the bank on a fortnightly basis by the Town Clerk.

5.3 Contracts & Manuals – Staff contracts and employee manuals have all been updated to include minor amendments introduced from 6th April 2020.

5.4 Staffing – All staff are working although the hours and shifts for the grounds and caretaking staff members have been amended to enable them to work within the social distancing guidelines.

5.5 Neighbourhood Plan – The Project Coordinator's contract has now come to an end and the Assistant Town Clerk has taken on the administration of the Neighbourhood Plan and the steering group.

Cllr White asked that the Project Coordinator's excellent work with the neighbourhood plan is minuted. The Town Clerk confirmed what had been arranged and done to date, with Councillors invited to contribute to a video or to send a message, and the Chairman of Council offered to send her a card on behalf of the council.

5. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (cont)

- 5.6 Internal Auditor's Report – Councillors will see in the internal auditor's report that we were looking at ways in which we can evidence the publication of the public notice on the website to advise that the Public Rights period to view is available. This has since been resolved by the husband of the Bookings Receptionist, enabling four log-ins for staff who update the website and each will produce an activity log.

The Chairman asked that thanks are passed on to the member of staff's husband who has helped with this.

- 5.7 Ellis Whittam – The Town Clerk has written to seek advice on how to deal with staff absence as a result of the track and trace scheme.

Cllr Carter commented that the grounds and caretaking staff have done well to keep the maintenance of the Town Council's areas up to a high standard during this difficult time.

6. ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- 6.1 Administration Budget for the year to 31st March 2020

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

- 6.2 Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 31st March 2020

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

7. ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR THE FOLLOWING:

- 7.1 Administration Budget for the year to 18th May 2020

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

- 7.2 Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 18th May 2020

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

- 7.3 Reserves Accounts as at 18th May

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

8. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION

- 8.1 To receive and retrospectively approve the list of cheque payments 011100 – 011117 (sheets 862-865) totalling £105,832.79

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED unanimously that

The list of cheque payments 011100 – 011117 (sheets 862-865) totalling £105,832.79 are received and retrospectively approved.

- 8.2 To receive and retrospectively approve direct debit payments for the period 1st February 2020 to 30th April 2020 (sheets 169-171) totalling £85,077.31

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED unanimously that

The direct debit payments for the period 1st February 2020 to 30th April 2020 (sheets 169-171) totalling £85,077.31 are received and retrospectively approved.

- 8.3 To receive and retrospectively approve BACS payments BACS 257 to BACS 264 totalling £35,591.40

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED unanimously that

BACS payments BACS 257 to BACS 264 totalling £35,591.40 are received and retrospectively approved.

8. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION (CONT)

- 8.4 To receive and retrospectively approve CHAPS payments CHAPS 013-014 (Transfer Precept monies to Santander Notice Account and Transfer S106 monies for Cricket Club Refurb and Badbury Heights Public Arts Works to Santander Reserve Account – BFTC) totalling £501,835

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED unanimously that

CHAPS payments CHAPS 013-014 (Transfer Precept monies to Santander Notice Account and Transfer S106 monies for Cricket Club Refurb and Badbury Heights Public Arts Works to Santander Reserve Account – BFTC) totalling £501,835 are received and retrospectively approved.

- 8.5 To receive and retrospectively approve Online Faster Payments FP001 to FP006 comprising of 28 individual payments totalling £134,148.85. Online Faster Payments have replaced cheque payments due to the lockdown and working from home because of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Osborne and AGREED unanimously that

Online Faster Payments FP001 to FP006 comprising of 28 individual payments totalling £134,148.85 are approved retrospectively.

- 8.6 Retrospective approval of the Investment Account for the period 24th January to 19th May 2020

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that

The Investment Account for the period 24th January to 19th May 2020 is approved retrospectively.

- 8.7 Report by Chairman on Bank Reconciliation and Petty Cash check

Cllr S Hitchings carried out a petty cash check on 26th May 2020 and confirmed that the monthly bank reconciliation had been undertaken during the period and everything was found to be in order.

- 8.8 Bank Reconciliation to 30th April 2020

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

9. INTERNAL AUDITORS REPORT

The paper was noted (see Appendix G) and the matter raised by the auditor was addressed the following day with staff now having a log-in to edit the website, a plug-in has been added so we are now able to produce an activity log to prove when exactly the public notice was published.

Cllr Carter thanked the RFO for her contribution to the excellent audit report, which is more difficult to do remotely.

10. REVIEW OF END OF YEAR ACCOUNTS 2019/20

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION** is made to full council that

The end of year accounts for 2019/2020 are approved.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

The Chairman thanked the RFO on behalf of the Committee, and the Council, for preparing the end of year accounts, which is more difficult to do remotely.

11. **TO CONSIDER AMENDING THE TOWN COUNCIL'S PROCEDURES FOR BANKING PROCESSES AND BANK CHARGES**

Every Faster Payment we make is costing the Town Council £5. The Chairman of the Committee asked the RFO to seek a refund from the bank for this and this was approved by Lloyds and refunded for the month of April and will be considered once more when the costs for May are known. The Committee Chairman is concerned about the costs to the Town Council and would like a review to take place at the earliest opportunity regarding the most cost-effective and efficient way we can proceed with online banking.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

The Committee gives delegated authority, for the RFO to review the current banking processes for both the Town Council and Barnes for a Recreation Trust and to make recommendations as to how we can amend them to the Town Clerk, Chairman of Council and Chairman of the Finance & Staffing Committee before taking any action.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

12. **TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS – (CURRENT AVAILABLE BALANCE IS £10,000, WHICH INCLUDES £3,384.22 FROM 2019/20 UNDERSPEND)**

12.1 Freedom Street Party – Justine Templeman (no previous applications)

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (8 in favour, 1 abstention) that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that**

The Town Council does not commit funds or resources to the event at this stage because, although it supports the principle behind it, following discussion Councillors were concerned that it is too early to plan such an event and, in addition, there are too many uncertainties over the full extent of the financial impact the pandemic has had on the Town Council budgets.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

The Meeting closed at 8:08pm.

SIGNED: DATED: