



MONMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee of Monmouth Town Council Held on Monday 18th June 2007 in the Community Room starting at 7.00 pm.

Present: Deputy Chairman, Councillor R Hayward
The Mayor Councillor T Christopher, Councillor R Bond, Councillor Mrs S Chivers,
Councillor Mrs A Dewhurst, Councillor N Hacket Pain and Councillor D Stevens

In attendance: Mrs Sarah Robson Town Clerk

In the absence of the outgoing Chairman Councillor Buckland, Councillor Hayward the Deputy Chair led the meeting.

1. Apologies were received from: -

Councillor GFW Buckland and Councillor L Robson

2. 'Declarations of interest' in items on the agenda: -

None received.

3. To Elect a Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee.

Councillor Stevens was the only nominated candidate and was voted for unanimously.

Councillor Stevens took over chairing the meeting.

4. To Elect a Deputy Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee.

Councillor Hayward was the only nominated candidate and was voted for unanimously.

5. To consider for approval the minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee of 30th April 2007.

The minutes were approved and signed as correct

Proposed Councillor Hayward

Seconded Councillor Bond

Unanimous

6. To consider the authorisation of payment of the following invoices and decide where to allocate spending within the agreed budget.

Torfaen CBC – Employers Pension Contribution Shortfall for 2006/2007 - £577.61

The Clerk advised that the shortfall due to be paid was actually £255.32 and this was due to an increase in the percentage of salary that had not been actioned quickly enough by the payroll department. This had resulted in an underpayment at the end of the financial year. Members were advised that there was money left within the salaries budget for 2006/2007 to cover this payment.

It was confirmed that the payment could be made.

7. To receive RFO's report.

Annual Audit.

The Clerk advised members that verbal confirmation had been received from Wales Audit Office that the 2005/2006 audit had now been completed satisfactorily with no qualifications. The delay in receiving this outcome had meant that the 2006/2007 accounts had not yet been closed off in case any adjustments needed to be made. However a meeting was arranged for the following day with the Internal Auditor in order to close off this years accounts and complete the necessary formalities.

Mazars, the new auditors appointed have already sent all of the documentation for the audit for 2006/2007 and the Clerk advised members that the audit date has been set for Monday 1st October. The required notices would be published in advance so that members of the public could be given an opportunity to inspect the accounts, as is required by the accounting regulations.

To confirm signing arrangements for Bank Mandate.

The Clerk advised members that in line with the requirement in the standing orders that four signatories are required for the bank mandate. The Mayor and Deputy, and also the Chair and Deputy of the Finance and Policy Committee. As Councillor Stevens was both the Deputy Chair and the Chair of Finance this would mean that there would only be three signatories on the bank mandate instead of the recommended four. The Clerk suggested that if this was acceptable to members that the mandate would be completed on this basis and that arrangements would be reviewed after a three month period to see whether or not this would be a practical solution. It was suggested that if at this time there were any problems encountered that a change in the present arrangements could be considered.

8. To Review Committee's objectives as set out in 'Shaping Our Future'.

Councillor Stevens reported that good progress had already been made in achieving the objectives that had been outlined in the original document three years ago. He suggested that this item should be deferred for further discussion at the next meeting on 23rd July 2007.

9. To Consider Forward Plan for 2007/2008.

Members considered the previous years forward plan and recognised that most of the items are a necessary requirement within Standing Orders. The Clerk was asked to use this as a template for the coming year and to amend the dates accordingly.

10. To Appoint Councillors to carry out six monthly check of accounts.

The Clerk advised members that as per Standing Orders it is necessary for two members to look at a sample of cheques and petty cash vouchers to ensure that accounting procedures are sound and in order to reduce any risk of financial mismanagement. Two members volunteered to carry out this duty, Councillors Stevens and Hayward.

11. To consider request from Monmouthshire Show Society regarding options for assistance with finance.

A letter was read out to the committee from the Chairman of the Society which outlined plans that are being developed with the purchase of the new showground. There was a request for assistance with funding either by way of an interest free loan or a donation.

Members considered this request and the consensus was that this was seen as a request from a business and as such The Town Council would not provide financial support for businesses. There were general concerns raised about the relocation of the showground which most agreed would be detrimental to the economy of Monmouth and the town on showday. There was also an opinion expressed over the potential traffic and transport problems.

The members agreed unanimously to turn down this request for finance on the basis that it is a commercial enterprise.

12. To formulate policy for compliance of Standing Orders regarding non attendance of members at two consecutive committee meetings.

The Clerk reported that there has been an increase recently in the non attendance of members at committee meetings and often without sending apologies.

The amended Standing Orders which were adopted in Dec 2006 make provision for exclusion from a committee if there is non attendance for more than two consecutive meetings without a reasonable cause.

Members agreed that this needed further clarification as this could result in members not participating in any committees.

It was agreed that Councillor Stevens would draft an amendment to Appendix 2 for consideration at the next Full Council meeting. This will be circulated prior to the next meeting for perusal.

Members were in agreement that it would be a useful exercise to review the attendance spreadsheet at Full Council meetings so that members of the public could see which of their ward members were actively involved in Council business on their behalf, and also those that are not.

13. To consider Town Council's Annual Review for recommendation to Full Council.

The draft Annual Review was circulated for approval but members wanted to see some changes made to the introduction.

Councillor Stevens agreed to redraft this and then it could be referred to the Full Council for adoption.

14. Matters arising from previous meetings.

i) Risk Assessment.

On going.

ii) Connecting the Spheres/Making the Connections/Delivering Beyond Boundaries.

The Clerk reported that a response from Colin Berg had been received entitled 'Making the connections/delivering beyond boundaries'. It was agreed that all members present would be sent a copy in due course.

iii) Shire Hall

The Clerk advised that there would be project team meeting held on 20th June 2007 however there was no agenda available at this time.

iv) Civic Service.

The Clerk advised that there would be a further update with full costings once all of the invoices have been received.

v) Any other matters arising from Finance and Policy Meeting of 30th April not covered elsewhere. As they are not specifically listed, no decisions may be taken on any of these other matters arising.

N/A

15. Any Other Business, ie general information or notification of future discussions, no decisions can be made at this meeting on items that arise under this heading.

Councillor Christopher raised the subject of press releases and it was agreed that this item could be considered in further detail at the next Finance meeting. The Clerk suggested that maybe each committee could submit a quarterly press release of their work and this would hopefully increase the profile of The Town Council and give members of the public a better understanding of the work that is carried out.

Councillor Hackett Pain raised a query in relation to the request for The Town Council to act as a guarantor for the Shire Hall Stewards fund raising to a maximum of £28,000.00. He asked what the perceived likelihood of having to make any payment towards this was. Councillor Hayward reminded members that even if funds did need to be made available that due to the legal charge that had been proposed any monies could be re-couped from future revenue by The Stewards.

16. Next meeting Old Library Community Room Monday 23rd July 2007.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.25 pm.