



Ross-on-Wye Town Council

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the
Finance & Property Sub-Committee
held on Tuesday 9th April 2024 at 7.00pm
at the Town Hall, Cantilupe Road, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7AN

Present: Councillors J Utting (Chair) C Bartrum, L Delves, L Stark and J Winder

In attendance: Mrs C Boyles - Town Clerk

There was one member of the public and no members of the press present.

FP24/04#21 Apologies for Absence

[Local Government Act 1972 s85 \(1\)](#)

Cllr S Freer.

RESOLVED: To accept the apologies given.

Absent: Cllr Foreman

FP24/04#22 Declarations of Interest

[Local Authorities \(Model Code of Conduct\) Order 2007 SI No. 1159](#)

None.

FP24/04#23 Dispensations

[Standing Orders Clause 13](#)

None.

FP24/04#24 Public Participation

[Standing Orders Clause 3 \(e, f, g & h\)](#)

A representative from the Tennis Club spoke about improvements they were hoping to carry out at the club. There was an agenda item relating to this, but took the opportunity to explain the works and answer any questions.

The Chairman brought forward item FP24/04#35.

FP24/04#35 Ross Tennis Centre

To receive details of works proposed by Ross Tennis Centre Committee to improve infrastructure and consider approval.

Proposed: Cllr J Utting

Seconded: Cllr E O'Driscoll

Unanimous

RESOLVED: That the work proposed by the Tennis Centre, utilising S106 funding, including resurfacing of two courts, a paved path and replacement of the roof, windows and door was supported in principle, subject to final details of the project and confirmation regarding any required planning approvals being obtained and submitted to the Sub-Committee for approval.

7.22pm A member of the public left the meeting.

FP24/04#25 To resolve to exclude members of the press and public

[Public Bodies \(Admission to Meetings\) Act 1960](#)

To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded as publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

There was no confidential business to be transacted.

FP24/04#26 Finance & Property Sub-Committee Meeting - Minutes

[Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12 Para 41\(1\)](#)

To confirm and sign the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Finance & Property Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 6th February 2024.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Finance & Property Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 6th February 2024 be signed as a correct record.

FP24/04#27 Action Review Summary

To receive and review Outstanding Actions Summary.

- The painting of the weather station had not happened yet as the weather had been too wet. The budget would be carried over to the new financial year and the work completed as soon as the weather allowed. The MET Office would reimburse 50% of the cost.

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report.

FP24/04#28 Town Clerk's Report`

To receive and note update from Town Clerk (for information only)

- The energy saving measures outlined in the Severn Wye Energy Audit for the Town Hall (formerly The Old Chapel) had been investigated for grant funding towards implementation. The LED lighting specified in the report only had an anticipated cost of £88, meaning this was unsuitable to apply for grant funding for. The other measure of solar panel installation had an anticipated cost of £10,000 and funding that could be applied for would only cover £1,000 towards this, with the Town Council required to fund the difference. The payback period would be 9 years. The advice had been to undertake a more detailed report in several months time when the premises had been in use as Town Council offices for longer so that a more accurate energy usage was known.
- Homeless Pods – Herefordshire Council had not provided an update.

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report.

FP24/04#29 Town Clerk's Delegated Powers.

[Local Government Act 1972 s101](#)

The Town Clerk will give Council details of any matters dealt with under delegated powers since the last meeting.

None.

FP24/04#30 Finance

i) To receive the Year-to-Date income and expenditure report for the Budget 2023/2024

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report.

ii) To receive the Balance Sheet and note bank account balances and funds in earmark reserve and general reserve accounts

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report. Cllr J Utting highlighted a possible discrepancy and requested the Clerk clarify this following the meeting.

iii) To approve expenditure for the purchase of a laptop, including setup, Microsoft Office and accessories at a cost of £1,274 plus vat from the Equipment/Admin Budget 2024/25 (Nom 4185/101).

Proposed: Cllr J Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr E O'Driscoll

RESOLVED: To approve the purchase of two laptops at a cost of £1,274 plus vat each from the Equipment/Admin Budget 2024/2025 (Nom 4185/101).

FP24/04#31 Finance - Bank Reconciliations

[Financial Regulations Clause 2.2](#)

To receive verbal confirmation from the appointed verifier that the bank reconciliations have been checked to the Council's bank statements and cashbooks for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2023/2024.

Councillor Utting confirmed he had checked the accounting records for the fourth quarter and reported he was satisfied and the reconciliations were correct.

FP24/04#32 Finance – Investment options

To receive details of investment options available for Town Council funds and agree action required.

Investment options had been researched and details of products from Lloyds Bank and the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund provided to members.

Proposed: Cllr J Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr E O'Driscoll

RESOLVED: To invest up to £500,000 from the Town Council current account into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund, subject to confirmation of no penalties for same day access. Advice from the Internal Auditor would be sought. Authority was delegated to the Town Clerk to undertake this, subject to approval from Cllr J Utting, following satisfactory responses regarding the above.

FP24/04#33 Finance - Twinning

i) To review the Council's Twinning Policy.

Proposed: Cllr E O'Driscoll
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr J Utting

RESOLVED: To update the Twinning Policy to include funding allocations for Condé-sur-Noireau of £1,500 per year, Betzdorf of £1,500 per year and Namatumba of £1,000 per year, to be reviewed in May 2027. The funding could be used to support hosting, travel costs for Ross residents to visit the twin towns and community projects (Namatumba). The twinning associations would be required to give a presentation annually at the Town Meeting and to provide details of expenditure.

ii) To consider proposals for distribution of the budget (4660/110) and agree the terms and conditions for funding allocations.

A request for £1,500 from the Betzdorf Twinning Association had been received, towards coach travel for their trip in May. An email from the Condé Twinning Association, regarding a gift from the Mayor to Condé for their upcoming visit had been received.

RESOLVED: To approve expenditure from the Twinning budget (4660/110) for 2024/2025 of £1,500.00 to Betzdorf Twinning Association towards travel costs. The

Mayor would purchase a gift of up to £100 from the Mayor's Allowance for the Mayor of Condé, to be presented during their visit at the end of April.

iii) To consider approval for the Mayor of Ross-on-Wye to send a letter of invitation to the 2024 Namutumba visitors for the Visa Application Office.

RESOLVED: To approve the letter of invitation to the 2024 Namatumba visitors, to be signed by the Mayor.

FP24/04#34 Fixed Assets

To receive and note the written report on Fixed Assets and consider and approve the updated register of Assets for Financial Year 2023/24 [subject to any other additions to year end].

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report and approve the updated value on the register of Assets for Financial Year 2023/24 of £956,006.00 subject to any other additions to year end.

FP24/04#36 Larruperz Centre

To review the recommendations in the Risk Improvement Report and agree action required.

This was deferred to the next meeting as clarification on current arrangements was awaited.

FP24/04#37 Policies

To review the Council's policy on the following and agree the frequency of the review period;

i) Corn Exchange Lettings [Last reviewed March 2023]

Proposed: Cllr J Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr J Winder

RESOLVED: To approve the draft Corn Exchange Lettings Policy (now the Town Hall Lettings Policy), with immediate effect.

FP24/04#38 Finance & Property - Market House Working Group

[Councillors Freer, O'Driscoll, and Utting] (Terms of reference – FP23/12#59)

i) to receive a verbal report on progress to date and proposed next phase.

Discussions were ongoing with the Historic England officer regarding the stone to be used to ensure the best match. A further meeting would be held with him on the 22nd April to allow him to access the scaffolding to look at the windows. The legacy projects required progressing and the interpretation board project would need to follow the procurement guidelines provided by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Proposed: Cllr E O'Driscoll
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr L Stark

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that an Interpretation Board Working Group of the Finance & Property Sub-Committee be formed. The membership and terms of reference to be drafted by the Working Group.

ii) to confirm Contract Works insurance arrangements.

The architects had confirmed the Contract Works insurance proposal covered the necessary requirements.

RESOLVED: To confirm the Contract Works insurance schedule and terms for the Market House construction works.

iii) To confirm Licence to Occupy with The Courtyard for use of The Corn Exchange.

The Courtyard were satisfied with the Licence to Occupy and had signed the documentation.

Proposed: Cllr J Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr E O'Driscoll

RESOLVED: To authorise the Town Clerk to sign the Licence to Occupy on a Short Term Basis with The Courtyard for use of The Corn Exchange during works to the Market House.

iv) To confirm arrangements for weekly markets during the works to the Market House and approve expenditure.

Discussions with market traders to minimise disruption to the Markets during the works had been ongoing. Several options had been explored as the compound required by the contractors would significantly reduce the available space on the market apron and with the undercroft of the Market House not in use, market pitch space was limited. A road closure on Thursdays for the section of Broad Street from the junction with High Street to the junction of New Street had been applied for but due to planned roadworks during April, May and June, this could not be granted and the outcome of the application for July, August and September was awaited. Existing regular traders could be accommodated for pitches and a 50% reduction in fees had been agreed by the Communities, Markets & Tourism Sub-Committee to reflect the inconvenience to traders caused by the Market House works. An armoured cable to supply electricity to the traders who require it could be installed for £635.00. If the road closure application was successful, there would be a charge of £125.00.

Proposed: Cllr J Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr L Stark

RESOLVED: To approve expenditure of £760.00 for electrical works and a road closure from the Market House Building Maintenance and Repairs budget (4170/380).

v) To review project expenditure, including cash flow and grant admin.

The contractors had been asked to provide an estimate of the first contractor payment and the programme of works, but this was still awaited. The National Heritage Lottery Fund grant required a work brief and CV for the legacy projects. Some of these had been provided to them and the brief for the interpretation boards could be looked at by the working group. Payment requests and progress reports were required quarterly. The Wolfson Foundation required a progress report by the end of April and The Pilgrim Trust required a progress report and proof of expenditure when the grant claim is made.

RESOLVED: To receive and note the report.

FP24/04#39

Ross Skate Park

To receive draft Licence to Occupy on Short Term Basis between Herefordshire Council and Ross-on-Wye Town Council and consider for recommendation to Full Council.

Proposed: Cllr J Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr E O'Driscoll

RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that the draft Licence to Occupy on a Short Term Basis between Herefordshire Council and Ross-on-Wye Town Council for Ross Skate Park be signed, subject to the footprint of the site being amended to include the skate park only.

FP24/04#40 Corn Exchange

To receive a request from The Courtyard/Made in Ross to undertake works at the entrance to the Corn Exchange.

A request from Made in Ross to clean and paint guttering and downpipes, improve screens by boarding and painting the trellis and boxes and by adding plants to the boxes and to clean and paint the walls had been received. They had also suggested the possibility of the nearby delicatessen using some of the courtyard area for tables and chairs to provide additional space for their customers to eat.

RESOLVED: That in principle the works were agreeable, however it was noted that some of the painting proposed was not on Town Council property and therefore permission from the Kings Head for any works to their property would be required. It would also be conditional upon seeking advice from Herefordshire Council as to whether any planning consent was required to undertake the works requested. The painting and planting of the trellis and boxes was agreed. Any use of the courtyard by local businesses would be chargeable and authority was delegated to the Town Clerk to make arrangements within the terms discussed, if they were willing to pay for use over the Summer.

8.53 pm It was agreed to extend the meeting by ten minutes to enable the business to be concluded.

Proposed: Cllr J Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr J Winder

FP24/04#41 Town Hall

To receive quotes to upgrade the lighting in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

Quotes were still awaited and therefore this was deferred to the next meeting.

FP24/04#42 Utility Contracts

To review current utility services provision and consider the use of an energy broker.

This would be reviewed when the current contracts were up for renewal.

FP24/04#43 To confirm date of next scheduled meeting of the Finance & Property Sub-Committee and propose items for consideration

Date of next ordinary meeting – TBC

Larruperz Review Insurance recommendations/Town Hall lighting/Market House project update.

There being no further business the meeting closed 8.59pm

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Chairman

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Date