



Ross-on-Wye Town Council

Minutes of the ordinary meeting of the
Finance & Property Sub-Committee
held on Tuesday 6th February 2024 at 7.00pm
at The Corn Exchange, 7 High Street, Ross-on-Wye HR9 5HL

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

In attendance: Mrs C Boyles - Town Clerk

There were no members of the public and no members of the press present.

FP24/02#01 Apologies for Absence

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

Councillor O'Driscoll

RESOLVED – To accept the apologies given.

Absent – Councillor Foreman

FP24/02#02 Declarations of Interest

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

None

FP24/02#03 Dispensations

[Standing Orders Clause 13](#)

None

FP24/02#04 Public Participation

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

None

FP24/02#05 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.

Proposed: Councillor Bartrum

Seconded: Councillor Winder

Unanimous

RESOLVED – that agenda item FP24/02#19 - 'Commercial in Confidence' be treated as confidential and be dealt with after the Public (including the Press) have been excluded.

FP24/02#06 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 12th December 2023.

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Finance & Property Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 12th December 2023 be signed as a correct record.

FP24/02#07 Action Review Summary

To receive and review Outstanding Actions Summary.

- Implementation of recommendations for the Severn Wye Energy Agency Energy and Resource Efficiency reports would be progressed when there was capacity in the office available.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

FP24/02#08 Town Clerk's Report`

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

- High interest investment options with little restrictions on accessing the funds - currently being investigated.
- Weather Station – there was a budget for maintenance works for this financial year and the latest report had identified some minor defects. The Met Office would contribute 50% towards the works required. Quotes for the painting work would be obtained, with the work to be undertaken this financial year. Members were happy for work to proceed within the allocated budget.
- Larruperz Centre – the recommendation in the insurance inspection report for monitoring of the fire alarm was outstanding. Although it was a recommended item and not mandatory, members requested an agenda item for the April meeting to consider the Council covering the cost.
- Homeless Pods – Herefordshire Council were sourcing areas to locate these and had identified the space where the EV charging points had been at Red Meadow Car Park, adjacent to the public toilets. Members requested the clerk ask for a progress update and also ask the police for their opinion on the location and whether CCTV covers that area.
- VAT on Market 'optional extras' – the NABMA legal expert had advised that while market pitches were exempt from VAT, now that the Town Council is VAT registered, VAT should be charged on any optional extras that are paid for, that are not included in the pitch price. Therefore, VAT on table hire and electricity would be charged.
- Skate Park – a meeting of interested parties had taken place and there would be an agenda item to discuss this at the next Amenities Sub-Committee meeting, however, Herefordshire Council were in the process of drafting a license agreement to regularise the Town Council's current occupation.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

FP24/02#09 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.

- The clerk reported that the Council's engineering insurance policy had been renewed, effective from 21st January 2024 with the provider recommended by the broker as meeting the Council's insurance requirements. The increase in premium on last year was 9%.
- The drafting of a lease with the Allotments Association had been in progress since 2021 and the previous Town Clerk had advised that this required completing. In order to move the process forwards, the Tudorville Allotments Association representative had edited a template provided by The Allotments Society and this had been sent to the Town Council's solicitor for opinion.



- The direct debit for the ICO Data Protection Fee had not been changed to the new bank account. The Town Clerk had paid by debit card for this year and the direct debit transferred to the new bank account.

RESOLVED – to receive, accept and note the report.

FP24/02#10 Finance

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

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report. It was requested the Clerk escalate the issue of the outstanding rent for the Old Chapel with the Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council.

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.

iii) to consider carry forward budgets into Financial Year 2024/2025 for approval

RESOLVED – to approve carry forward budgets into Financial Year 2024/2025 of £37,135 for the Market House, Building Maintenance & Repairs (4170/380) and £21,000 for CCTV Capital (4802/392).

FP24/02#11 Budget

[Financial Regulations \(Section 3 Annual Estimates and Forward Planning\)](#)

- *agree the one-year budget forecast as part of the 2024/ 2025 budget submission,*
- *ensure that any capital project (including building maintenance) has an appropriate project plan identifying the schedule of works (to an appropriate level of detail) and the source of funds e.g., budget or reserves,*
- *identify impact of capital projects on revenue budget for the first 5 years.*

Budget forecast figures for 2024/2025 were discussed. The in-principle agreement of setting a 5% increase to the Band D was the preferred option.

Proposed: Councillor Bartrum
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Stark

RESOLVED – to agree the one-year budget forecast as part of the 2024/2025 budget submission.

FP24/02#12 Finance – Banking Arrangements

To review banking arrangements, authorisation of payments and instructions for the making of payments

Proposed: Cllr Stark
Unanimous

Seconded: Cllr Utting

RESOLVED – to amend the signing instructions for the Lloyds Bank online access to have two Councillor signatories to authorise payments and the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk to create payments and view the accounts. A new debit card in the new Town Clerk's name would be ordered.



FP24/02#13 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 request that the Clerk check the requirements for including the skate park and for this to be deferred until the April meeting.

FP24/02#14 Finance - Twinning

To review the Council's Twinning Policy and consider proposals for distribution of the budget and agree the terms and conditions for funding allocations.

8.23pm Councillor Bartrum left the meeting

8.24pm Councillor Utting left the meeting

8.25pm Councillor Bartrum and Councillor Utting returned to the meeting

A meeting with the Twinning Associations had taken place and they had completed a questionnaire regarding the history of and criteria for each of the Twinning Associations. After some discussion it was agreed to defer this to the April meeting.

FP24/02#15 Town Council Office Move

- i) To receive a verbal update on arrangements for the premises move.*
- ii) To approve expenditure relating to the premises move.*

The plans for the office move were progressing well. The name change to Ross Town Hall had now been confirmed. Costs identified for the move had been collated and were discussed. Members were satisfied with the costs, but felt CCTV was not required and that additional help from the removal firm may be necessary. The cost to move the phone and change of internet could be reduced by the current provider if a new three year contract was signed as the current contract was due for renewal imminently.

Proposed: Councillor Stark
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Utting

RESOLVED – to waive Financial Regulations to allow a price to be negotiated without competition due to the satisfactory performance of the current provider, continuity of service provision during the transition between office premises and the favorable contract price offered.

Proposed: Councillor Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Stark

RESOLVED – to renew the contract with the current provider for three years as per the costs provided in their quotation.

Proposed: Councillor Utting
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Stark

RESOLVED – to approve an allocation of up to £10,000 of unbudgeted expenditure from the Property Portfolio Fund for office move expenses with authority delegated to the clerk to determine requirements and incur expenditure.

FP24/02#16 CCTV

To receive an update on CCTV monitoring and capital grant funding and consider action required.



A meeting had recently taken place in Hereford to discuss the shortfall in funding for CCTV monitoring due to Hereford City Council withdrawing funding from May 2024. If the shortfall couldn't be found, they were looking at a reduction of almost half of the monitoring hours per week. The Safer Streets capital funding for new CCTV had been put on hold until the monitoring had been dealt with. Herefordshire Council agreed to draft a briefing paper and call another meeting for next week, due to the urgency.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

FP24/02#17 Policies

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

- i) Annual Investment Strategy [Last reviewed March 2023]
- ii) Financial Reserves Policy [Last reviewed March 2023]
- iii) Statement of Internal Control [Last reviewed March 2023]

Proposed: Councillor Stark
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Bartrum

RESOLVED – to approve the draft policies.

FP24/02#18 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*
- ii) to confirm progress on arrangements for signing the Contract for building services*

Work was scheduled to commence on the 2nd April 2024. A pre-contract meeting was due to be arranged by the architects, in addition to the signing of the contract. Made in Ross would vacate the Market House and have moved to the Corn Exchange by the 18th March.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report.

8.58 pm It was agreed to extend the meeting by fifteen minutes to enable the business to be concluded.

Proposed: Councillor Winder
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Bartrum

FP24/02#19 In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, it is likely that the press and public will be excluded during consideration of this item (Item FP24/02#05 above refers)

Commercial in Confidence

- i) To consider confidential report outlining potential options for income generation at Homs Road car park and agree action required.*

The Operations Manager had provided a report with options for income generation at Homs Road Car Park. Members required further information and therefore this was deferred until September time.

- ii) To consider confidential report outlining potential options for public toilets income and refurbishment and agree action required.*

Proposed: Councillor Stark
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Freer



RESOLVED – that from 1st April 2024 the public toilets at Wye Street and Red Meadow would be free of charge to use.

Proposed Councillor Utting

Seconded: Councillor Stark

RESOLVED – that the quotation received for refurbishment of Red Meadows toilets be accepted with authority delegated to the Town Clerk to determine underspent budgets to cover the additional cost.

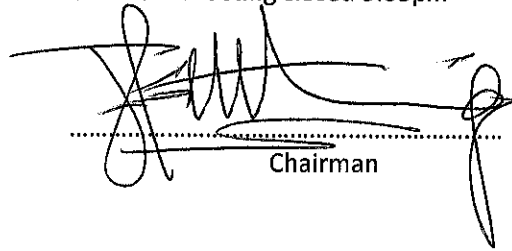
FP24/02#20

To confirm date of next scheduled meeting of the Finance & Property Sub-Committee and propose items for consideration

Date of next ordinary meeting – Tuesday 9th April 2024

Larruperz Review Insurance recommendations/Purchase of laptop/Homs Road Car park charges/Twinning/Review of utility contracts/Market House project expenditure (cash flow, grant admin).

There being no further business the meeting closed 9.05pm


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Chairman


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Date