

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD VIRTUALLY ON MICROSOFT TEAMS AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND POLICE AND CRIME PANELS (CORONAVIRUS) (FLEXIBILITY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY AND POLICE AND CRIME PANEL MEETINGS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2020

ON MONDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2020

Present: Councillor Peter Hollick (Town Mayor), Gloria Martin (Deputy Town Mayor), Sid Abbott (Chairman), Philip Crawley (Vice-Chairman), Wendy Bater, Matt Brennan, John Gurney, Kenson Gurney, Liz Jones, and Johnson Tamara

In Attendance: David Ashlee (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Finance and Procurement Manager, David Brough (Senior Finance Manager), Kelley Hallam (Business Support Manager) and Ian Reed (Democratic Services Manager)

Apologies for Absence: Cameron Restall

Public Attendance: None

102 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 16 March and 18 May 2020 were approved as a correct record and it was agreed that they be signed by the Chairman shortly.

103 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the financial monitoring report for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 August 2020

Members were advised of the following developments -

- The overall projected outturn for the Council was now predicted to be in the region of £20,000 underspent as a result of less than anticipated income from the Cemetery.
- Income levels at Creasey Park Community Football Centre (CPCFC) and Priory House were improving but still well below last years figures.
- The loss of income at CPCFC during the Covid-19 lockdown might be partially offset following Central Bedfordshire Council making an application to the Government for loss of income, although any potential payment might not be received until next financial year.
- In reply to a question from Councillor Gurney the Committee was advised that the Council staff annual pay award was 2.75% (to be backdated to 1 April) and the Council had already budgeted for a 3% increase
- The roof leak at Grove House was now serious and an insurance claim was to be submitted for the damage and repair

RESOLVED: That members note the current revenue and earmarked reserves position for the Council as at the end of August 2020.

104 PROPOSED COUNCIL MEETING DATES FOR THE YEAR 2021

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented the report and sought approval for the draft calendar 2021 report.

RESOLVED: That the Calendar of meetings for the calendar year 2021 be approved

Action: that although the calendar had been prepared on a spreadsheet a word document of the calendar be created and sent to all Members

105 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ACCREDITATION – SILVER AWARD

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented to Members the outcome of the Councils' recent Investors in People (IIP) accreditation. The Committee was reminded that the Corporate Plan for 2017-19 had set an aim of securing silver standard IIP, which was a significant achievement for an organisation the size of the Town Council and in this year the aim had been achieved. Investors in People had identified a range of improvements secured by the Town Council in the past 18 months and listed further recommendations including the adoption of a new staff award scheme(See Minute below).

RESOLVED: that the report on the awarding of the Silver Award for IIP be received

Action: (1) that the improvements required by IIP be completed in 2021
(2) that all staff members be congratulated on the award

106 GROVE HOUSE – LETTING OF MEETING ROOM AND REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE OF HEATING SYSTEM

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive presented a report that covered the occupancy of a meeting room at Grove House by Hospice at Home and the proposed allocation of up to £75,000 from the Grove House allocated reserve to fund the repair and refurbishment of the Grove House heating system.

It was noted that that the first-floor meeting room had been offered to Hospice at Home for a five year and six months licence to occupy the room at a charge of £2,692 per annum.

In relation to the heating system. Members were aware that the condition of the heating system had been of concern for a number of years and now it was recognised action had to be taken as there was no heating system at Grove House.

RESOLVED: (1) That the first floor meeting room as indicated on the plan attached to the report be licensed for occupation to Hospice at Home for a five year and six month period effective from 21 September 2020 on the terms set out in the report.

(2) That the Committee allocates up to £75,000 from the Grove House allocated reserve to fund the repair and refurbishment of the Grove House heating system as outlined in the report

107 STAFF AWARD SCHEME

The Committee discussed a report on proposed changes to the staff awards scheme that had been prepared following the receipt of feedback from a staff working group which had reviewed the current Quarterly Award Scheme

RESOLVED: That the following changes recommended by the staff working group be adopted:

- That staff be nominated and rewarded with a small gift e.g. flowers or wine that is personal to the recipient.
- The new system will allow for cross departmental nominations and nominations at an equal management level or below.
- Nominations be made at any time so that staff are rewarded more regularly and in a timely fashion.
- The nominated person would receive a letter from the Town Mayor, Town Clerk and Chief Executive and relevant Committee Chairman supporting the recognition.
- Any award nomination would need Head of Service or Town Clerk and Chief Executive approval. This would also act to monitor allocation of awards which would not be applicable to Heads of Service and the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. All awards must be made in line with criteria set out in the Council's Corporate Priorities.
- A simplified version of the current form would be used for nominations.
- The new system would exclude councillor authorisation; however, Members be encouraged to make their own recommendations to the Town Clerk and Chief Executive if they personally experienced staff performance that they believe should be recognised. Members to be provided with updates on all awards made through the Personnel Sub-Committee.
- The current £400 per annum budget allocation to remain thereby establishing an annual limit to the number of awards that could be made.
- Awards would be in the form of a gift only, not monetary.
- Awards would be up to a maximum value of £25 per staff member. A maximum of three awards could be made per year per individual staff member.
- Gifts would be purchased from a local Dunstable shop
- That the staff award scheme be reviewed in six months time by the Personnel Sub-Committee

108 REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

- a) CAB Management Committee – no report.
- b) DITA – no update.
- c) Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Jones reported that the Committee was not holding meetings by Zoom at present.
- d) Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillor Hollick advised that a flat was being refurbished

PART 2

109 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: To exclude press and public in accordance with Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 sect 1.2 to discuss matters affecting some town council employees' remuneration and conditions of employment

110 STAFFING MATTERS

Members were satisfied that the proposals were appropriate and passed two resolutions supporting the action recommended.

The meeting closed at 8.04 p.m.