



Sodbury Town Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee 17th May 2022, held in The Old Reading Rooms, Chipping Sodbury at 19:30 hrs

Committee Members Councillors: B Allen, J Ball (Chairman), L Banister, C Hays, B Romaine, P Rumney, S Spooner, A Williams

Present:

Cllrs B Allen, J Ball (Chairman), L Banister, C Hays, B Romaine, P Rumney, S Spooner, A Williams

Clerk: Cate Davidson

108. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr James Ball – holiday.

109. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared at this time.

110. Approval of Minutes of 22nd February 2022

Resolved that the minutes of 22nd February 2022 are approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

111. Matters Arising

No matters were raised at this time

112. Budget Reports to 31st March 2022 (circulated by email)

The Clerk circulated the report with the agenda for the meeting and apologised that it was brief. It was noted that due to workload the new Scribe accounts set up has not been completed therefore more up to date accounts are not currently available.

The following items were noted:

- Refund of business rates totalled £47,609.42. Thanks were given to Cllr Spooner and Luke Hall MP for assistance in dealing with the VOA.
- In line with NALC recommendations it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Council ring fences £75,000 as a Reserve which is 3 months worth of annual expenditure. The Clerk is to investigate placing funds in a separate account.
- Annual savings identified since March are:
 - Annual business rates £10,200
 - Annual contribution to reserves £5,000
 - SGC Grass Cutting Contract £7,000
 - **Total £22,200**
- CIL Balances currently stand at £51,751.04. The Clerk is awaiting quotes for the work to re-open the ladies public facilities. Once this is known we can consider the allocation of the balances.
- Electric Bikes – we currently have 3 which are on free rental for 6 months. They are currently used for work around the town as well as leisure activities by staff and councillors. Due to insurance issues it is not possible to lend them out beyond that. Discussion was had about purchasing the bikes after the rental period at



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40% discount, members had conflicting opinions on this. The Clerk is to include this on the next agenda once more information is available about purchasing.

- The Clerk was asked to obtain quotes for new bus shelters on Bowling Hill
- An urgent grant request was considered from the Town Trust for the Platinum Jubilee Beacon lighting event and it was **RESOLVED** that an award of £400 is made towards the costs of the event.
- Members were advised The Rural Service Network membership is due for renewal at £85pa. The Clerk is concerned about the continual stream of lengthy emails this membership attracts and the fact she simply doesn't have time to read them and finds them quite distracting. It was **RESOLVED** that membership is renewed and the emails are delegated to LS who compiles details of what they cover over the next year and reports back when considering next years membership.

113. Bank Reconciliation Statement to 30th April 2022

Members viewed the bank statement to 30th April 2022 and noted that the reconciliation will be available at the next meeting.

114. Website

Members noted that the current website does not meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and currently we have a disclaimer stating that we are working towards fixing this. As member of NALC we receive a discount on the service of Aubergine which build WCAG compliant websites as per the details circulated to members by email.

Member felt that Aubergine built sites look better than our current one and are more easily accessible to the public. The Clerk advised this would need to be a longer term project and suggested that officer work could take place over the summer.

It was **RESOLVED** that Aubergine is appointed to build a new website and that LS undertakes training to populate and maintain the site.

115. Premises Working Group

Following a meeting of the group SS met with Luke Hall MP in relation to the lease he has with STC. There are no plans to move at this time but LH would not want to stand in the way of any plans STC has for TORR and a heritage/tourism centre. The Police have suggested they have a rope barrier at the bottom of the stairs and it was **RESOLVED** that they are permitted to install this in liaison with the Clerk.

It was noted that LH provides income of circa £10k per year but also that STC needs to use the building for the best use for the community.

The Clerk informed members she recently called in to a visitor centre in Tetbury which is managed by the Town Council. Annual costs are £22k. £10k coming from the TC and £12k from the District Council, last year they made a profit for the first time.

It was decided that members would take a look at local offerings – Tetbury/Wotton/Yate and that this is discussed further at the next meeting.

116 The Old Reading Rooms – Maintenance

Members received a quote from M J Hardwick – lime plaster specialist, in relation to the works to the TORR as identified in the maintenance report from Hill construction. The Clerk explained that she has been unable to get additional quotes as this is a specialist area and this seems to be the only contractor locally that can undertake the works.



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It was **RESOLVED** that M J Hardwick is appointed to undertake the internal and external plastering works to TORR as per quote number 696.

117 Internal Audit Report

Members received the report from the internal auditor and noted that no items of concern were raised and that all processes are in line with guidelines. It was **RESOLVED** that the report be accepted.

118 Town Council Insurance

Members received a renewal quote from Gallagher insurance. There is an increase to the premium as the fidelity guarantee has been increased from £200k to £300k and the electric bikes have been added. It was **RESOLVED** that the renewal quote is accepted and insurance renewed.

119. Items to report

CD - We need to be spending funds – items to consider; assisting TT with CCTV provision on The Ridings, water fountains, additional play equipment in open spaces, replacement bus shelters on Bowling Hill – The clerk was asked to include this matter on the next agenda.

CH – Could we consider purchasing something to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee in the town? Members were asked to consider this and it would be raised at the next meeting.

LB – CoC members feel the stalls for the Eat festival are very expensive. STC is charging £500 for the event – this should be given back to the town. To be included on the next agenda.

120. Date of next meeting: 5th July 2022

Meeting closed at 21.00

Signed

Dated