

FARINGDON TOWN **COUNCIL**

The Corn Exchange, FARINGDON, Oxfordshire, SN7 7JA

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Clerk: Sally Thurston



Minutes of a Finance & Audit Committee meeting held on Thursday 27th November 2014 at 7.15 pm in the Jubilee Room, The Pump House, Faringdon

PRESENT: Cllrs. Steve Leniec (Chairman)
Julie Farmer
James Gregory
Andrew Marsden
David Price
Mike Wise
Ian Bell (deputising as vice chair for R&OS)

In Attendance: Sally Thurston, Town Clerk

70/14 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr. Angela Finn

71/14 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Mike Wise declared an interest in the grant application from Friends of Folly Trust as he is a member.

72/14 Minutes of Last Meeting: 22nd October 2014

The Minutes were signed as a correct record.

73/14 Items for Information Only

None

74/14 Public Speaking Time

None

75/14 Public Question Time

No questions had been received.

76/14 Applications for Financial Assistance

The following applications were considered:

The Independent Advice Centre, Wantage £1000	Cllr Leniec proposed that funds were transferred from reserves to meet this grant in full as the advice centre provided a valuable service helping a total of 442 Faringdon
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	residents in the last year. This was seconded and AGREED
Friends of the Folly Trust £26.88 to cover room hire	Cllr Leniec informed members that the Folly Trust had already been awarded a grant this financial year. To award a second grant was not usual. However, as the grant was for room hire it was proposed that on this occasion the grant be awarded. This was seconded and AGREED. The clerk was asked to make the Folly Trust aware that they should only make one grant application per year in future

77/14 Half Year Reports

Received and NOTED

Members were reminded that reserves were low and that expenditure must be carefully monitored.

78/14 Precept 2015/16

Precept figures for a to d below were discussed as follows:

a) Office & Establishment

(i) Revenue Budget & Grants

- It was noted that FAZE salaries were not part of the Office and Establishment budget. It was proposed that they be included under this budget heading for 15/16. This was seconded and AGREED.
- The clerk informed members that currently the alarm was not being used. It was proposed that £500 for the maintenance and monitoring of the alarm be included in the budget and the alarm be used to protect the building. It was also proposed that a full review of all council alarms be undertaken and a policy regarding the use of alarms be produced. This should be reported back to committee. These proposals were AGREED.
- The clerk advised that C&TIC merchant charges were included in the bank charges budget. It was proposed that £220 be moved to the C&TIC budget for this purpose. This was AGREED.
- It was proposed that a grant policy should be created to ensure there was enough monies to help the vital services and groups in the town. It was suggested that this be discussed by the new Strategic Working Party. This was AGREED. The clerk was asked to provide a breakdown of grants over the last three years.

These changes resulted in an initial revenue budget of £ 268,880.00

b) Faringdon Community & Tourist Information Centre

(i) Revenue Budget

£220 was added to the budget for merchant charges. No further changes were made resulting in an income of £2,580.

c) Direct Council Expenditure

(i) Revenue Budget

- It was proposed that the Community Awards and Civic events budget be reduced to £300. After discussion this was AGREED. This resulted in an initial revenue budget of £18,300

d) Asset Replacement Fund

The way the Asset Replacement fund was budgeted for was discussed. Cllr Marsden explained that the principle of the fund was sound but felt the way it was funded was flawed. It was proposed that:

1. A budget line be added to the Office and Establishment budget for this fund.
2. This budget line remain at £0 for 2015/16 as the fund was large enough to cover any replacement that may be necessary.
3. More research be undertaken into a more efficient way of making provision for asset replacement be undertaken and that this be discussed by the strategic Working Party.

This was seconded and AGREED. The clerk was asked to research the way other councils manage their asset replacement and report findings to the working party.

e) To review the following Committees' Budgets

(i) *Venues Committee*

An initial revenue budget of £16,775 was received and NOTED

(ii) *Recreation & Open Spaces*

An initial revenue budget of £15,125 was received and NOTED

Cllr. Leniec asked the committee to consider if the increase in the Christmas Light provision should be a capital project.

(iii) *Planning & Highways*

An initial revenue budget of £2,730 was received and NOTED.

(iv) *Youth Services*

Salary figures were removed from this budget and added to Office and Establishment resulting in an initial revenue budget of £19,435.

f) Capital Expenditure

The following capital projects totaling £52,165 were proposed:

1. Direct Council Expenditure: £20,000 – for the possible purchase of the FAZE Youth Centre building
2. Venues: £17,265 – Corn Exchange Floor and Blackout Blinds. £1,000 Pump House – Lighting
3. Recreation and Open Spaces: £12,000 rubber play surface - £1900 Mower

Cllr. Leniec asked committees to rank their projects in order of importance and produce full costings. Members were reminded that capital expenditure could not be funded from reserves and that capital bids must be both necessary and realistic.

79/14 Requests from other Committees

The committee received a request to release £3290 from reserves for essential repairs the Corn Exchange roof from the Venues Committee. The clerk advised members that a sum of £3541 had just been received from WWHDC as a final payment for repairs during the transfer of ownership of the Corn Exchange. It was proposed that this fund be used to make the essential repairs to the roof. This was seconded and CARRIED.

80/14 Bank Mandates

- (i) Committee RESOLVED to add Sally Thurston, Cllr. David Price and Cllr. Julie Farmer as signatories on the following accounts:
 - Lloyds Bank
 - Bank of Ireland
 - Nat West
- (ii) Committee RESOLVED to add Cllr Steve Leniec as a signatory on the Lloyds bank account.

81/14 Utility Bills

The committee discussed reverting to a variable monthly standing order to assist in accounting for VAT. The clerk explained that it was very difficult to record VAT on the current set monthly direct debit. It was proposed that the direct debit be changed to variable with immediate effect. This was seconded and CARRIED.

82/14 S106 Payment

Members discussed receiving S106 funds from Oxfordshire County Council for the Better Ways to School Program, following a meeting between OCC, WWHDC, Farcycles, Cllr Mike Wise and the clerk. Members were informed that S106 monies were being held by OCC to fund cycle ways to school in the Town. Farcycles had created a wish list of works that could be done with the fund. OCC will deploy an officer to assess if the projects are viable then once quotes are received will transfer the money to the Council.

It was proposed that the Town Council accept this money and the Planning and Highways Committee manage the project. This was AGREED.

83/14 Staff Matters

- a) Members considered uprating staff pay as necessary reflecting the rise in the Living Wage to £7.85 per hour. It was proposed that:
 - 1. The Town Council remain a living wage employer.
 - 2. The minimum pay scale that council staff received be the SCP closest to the 'living wage'.
 - 3. Any affected staff received the increase backdated to 3rd November 2014 when the new living wage figure was implemented.

This was seconded and AGREED.

Cllr Leniec proposed invoking Standing Order 1(c) due to the confidentiality of the following items. This was seconded and CARRIED.

- b) Members considered employing a Safeguarding Officer to work on an on call basis for FAZE. It was proposed that a Safeguarding Officer be employed under a 2 hour per week contract plus any necessary call out fees at JNC pay scale point 11. This was seconded and AGREED. The Clerk recommended a budget of £1,500 this was AGREED.

- c) Sally Thurston

The committee considered recommendations from Cllrs. Leniec, Price and Farmer following an end of probation review.

It was proposed that:

1. A 1 SCP salary increase be awarded and back dated to 1st November following successful completion of the probationary period.
2. Council fund Sally Thurston to undertake a Degree in Community Governance at a cost of £1800 per annum for 6 years. This would bring considerable benefits to council ensuring that council were advised correctly.
3. Sally be encourage to attend the annual conference of SLCC at a cost of £450
4. The current job description be reviewed and converted to the standard Town Council format and agreed by the Staff Working Party.
5. A formal review program be put in place which will include an annual appraisal in November and quarterly review meetings with Cllrs Price, Leniec and Farmer.

These were seconded and AGREED.

Cllr Farmer asked if Town Council had a policy whereby staff would be contracted to the council for a set period after completion of any funded training. The Clerk informed members that this was not in place. It was proposed that this be discussed further by council.

This was AGREED.