

Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

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**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Finance and Governance Committee

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 24 July 2019 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Town Council Offices, Commercial Road, Weymouth, DT4 8NG

**Present:**

**Councillors**

Cllrs David Harris (Chair)

Cllr Colin Huckle (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Peter Barrow

Cllr David Gray

Cllr Howard Legg

Cllr David Northam

Cllr Gill Taylor

Cllr Kate Wheller

Cllr Richard Nickinson

Cllr Luke Wakeling

Cllr Graham Lambert

Cllr Lucy Hamilton

**Officers**

Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk)

Ian Milne (Business and Finance Manager)

Niki Ayles (Democratic and Administration Officer)

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| F0010 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Harris welcomed those in attendance. |
| F0011 | **Apologies for Absence**  There were no apologies for absence. |
| F0012  F0013 | **Declarations of Interest**  There were no declarations of interest.  **Minutes of the last meeting**  The minutes of the last meeting held on 12 June 2019 were agreed as a correct record and were duly signed. |
| F0014 | **Councillors Questions**  A question had been received from Cllr Gray regarding membership of the Weymouth BID and members had been provided with a copy of the response. A copy of this response is also appended to these minutes. Cllr Gray was happy with the response provided.  Cllr Nickinson asked what was happening with regards to road closures during the Weymouth and Portland Pride event this weekend.  Jane Biscombe explained that the Pride Parade is no longer taking place on the seafront on Saturday and will now take place at Radipole Park Drive on the Friday afternoon. Radipole Park Drive will be closed on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Signs have been placed at both ends of Radipole Park Drive informing the public of this closure, and the Dorset Council website provides a good description of what roads are going to be closed and why. |
| F0015  F0016 | **Public Comments and Questions**  A member of the public raised questions relating to the lack of speed signs on the Rodwell Trail, the amount of weeds along Radipole Lake, and the shutting of the public toilets at Weymouth Railway Station and the multi-storey carpark which had been shut by Dorset Police due to inappropriate use of the facilities.  Jane Biscombe informed the member of the public that these matters are dealt with by Dorset Council and, in the case of the toilets, Dorset Police and Network Rail and cannot be resolved by Weymouth Town Council. The member of the public expressed disappointment at this.  Action – Jane Biscombe to ask Cllr Orrell to raise the issue of the weeds along Radipole Lake with Dorset Council, of which he is a member.  Cllr Harris stated that when talking to Dorset Police on other matters the issue of the shutting of the toilets will be raised. However, it is a private matter.  **Public Toilet Charging**  Councillors were asked to discuss the options for income generation from charging for the use of public toilets, and had been provided with a report regarding this.  Cllr Gray felt that the estimated seven-year payback, is too long. Cllr Barrow felt that, financially, it does not seem worth doing and that if Weymouth Town Council starts charging it will antagonise the public. Cllr Barrow asked whether there were any advantages to charging such as a reduction in vandalism.  Cllr Wheller explained that charging had not been specified in the original design as the decision to charge was a decision to be made by Weymouth Town Council, not WPBC, and it had been felt that this could not be imposed on an organisation that was not yet in existence. Although the report details charging for the underground toilet facilities, Cllr Wheller felt that it was only the new facilities that would be charged for. The reason for the charging, which at the time of the consultation was between 50p and £1, was to cover the cost of an attendant which it was felt was needed as parents wash their children down and wash out swimming costumes and it is the sand that causes the blockages. A significant number of people have said that they would happily pay for clean and fully equipped facilities.  Cllr Taylor was concerned about reputational damage to Weymouth Town Council. The organisation is new, and the precept was been set at a level that was felt to be acceptable for the responsibilities the Council has. She would be concerned if the Council were to start to charge residents for facilities that were previously free and was concerned that it may disadvantage certain members of the public who often rely on facilities.  Cllr Wakeling felt that if Weymouth wants to be an upmarket resort, the condition of a lot of the toilets needs to improve, and he would support charging for use of the new facilities only.  Cllr Harris felt that Weymouth Town Council would be wise not to charge for the toilets but should try to ensure that, when the existing toilets have been modified, they are kept cleaner because the contract for cleaning the toilets will be monitored more closely by the Town Council. Free use does not mean that an attendant cannot be employed.  Jane Biscombe informed Members that the papers for next week’s Full Council meeting will be despatched the day after this meeting and would include an item on the predicted overspend on the new toilet facilities, and Members will be asked to agree funding.  Cllr Wheller felt that the design had changed and the Town Council is now faced with a design that it should refuse. DC are working on behalf of Weymouth Town Council and she therefore feels that DC should be working to what Weymouth Town Council wants. Cllr Huckle agreed that Weymouth Town Council should revisit the designs. Additionally, he feels that DC should pay for the overspend given the amount of reserve that was handed over. Cllr Harris requested that, if possible, the original designs are circulated so that Members can see what it was meant to achieve.  Jane Biscombe explained that it is within Members gift to discuss this at the Full Council meeting and decide the way forward.  After further debate the following was proposed by Cllr Wakeling and seconded by Cllr Gray, and was agreed unanimously by Members:  The Council agreed to:   1. continue not charging for any of its toilets that are not currently charged for. 2. defer this item to the next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee. |
| F0017 | **Grant Policy and Application Form**  A small Working Group has made some modifications to the Grants Policy and Application Form which Members had in front of them.  Resolved:  Proposed: Cllr Barrow Seconder: Cllr Nickinson  Members agreed unanimously to adopt the Grants Policy and Application Form for 19/20 for immediate use. |
| F0018 | **Dependent’s Care Expenses**  Jane Biscombe introduced the report to Members.  Resolved:  Proposed: Cllr Wheller Seconded: Cllr Legg  Members voted unanimously to support the efforts of NALC and other bodies in calling for a change in legislation to allow the payment of dependents’ care expenses.  Jane Biscombe will be writing to the Chairman of NALC, DAPTC and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to ask that this inequality is changed. |
| F0019 | **Financial Monitoring**  Ian Milne, Business and Finance Manager, introduced the Quarterly Financial Report and recent expenditure, and said that what the team have tried to do for this quarter is give Members a view of the expenditure over the last three months. They have also tried to gain an idea of where the finances will be at the end of the year but it is hard to get that accurate outturn at this moment in time as the organisation has only been in existence for three months.  Ian Milne was conscious that Officers will be asking Members to start setting priorities for next year in October 2019 therefore there is a need to give a better indication of where any overspend and underspend will be. At the next meeting Members will be provided with a list of where budgets have been aligned.  Cllr Northam stated that he would like to be able to identify project costs i.e. something that has a start and finish such as events and parks projects.  Following comments from Members, Ian Milne explained that the team are looking to change how the coding is done, and for reports to have a line for each individual event to give Members more detail.  Cllr Northam would also like to know how many people are brought to Weymouth for various events in order to gauge how worthwhile it is to run them.  With regards to the Payment Summary report, Cllr Legg said that it is not necessary to know about small expenditures. Jane Biscombe explained that financial regulations dictate that this information is provided and she is keen for it to come to this Committee as it is part of the Town Council’s transparency. However, it may be possible to post the Payment Summary on the Town Council’s website so that Members can look at it and raise questions outside of this Committee.  Cllr Wakeling queried a payment to NPower in respect of decorative lighting and asked whether this related to the laser lights along the seafront. Jane Biscombe responded that it was her understanding that it was repairs to the uplighters along the promenade, and Ian Milne will respond to Cllr Wakeling’s query.  Cllr Wakeling queried a payment of £800 for ploughman’s lunches. Jane Biscombe explained that this related to Veterans Weekend, for which the Town Council receives a grant of £5,000 from the MoD.  Cllr Wakeling felt that there could be more detail of expenditure on events. Ian Milne explained that these costs will be detailed on the next report and that this report details the invoices that have been paid so far.  Action – Ian Milne to circulate a Veterans Weekend Expenditure Report outside of this Committee.  Resolved:  Proposed: Cllr Wheller Seconded: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously to note the reports. |
| F0020 | **Information Items**  Councillors noted the forward plan. |

The meeting ended at 8.32 pm.



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Item 5

**Question from Cllr Gray**

I would like to know what contribution we make to the BID annually and in context of Dorset Council having 2 nominated councillors on the BID board why we have not been offered a BID board representative?

Response from Jane Biscombe, Town Clerk.

As BID levy payers, the Council will pay a levy on top of business rates which equates to 1.5% of those business rates to the BID each year. We anticipate WTC’s annual BID levy to be in the region of £2,500. This is not a grant, and the Council is legally required to pay this as a local business rates payer.

The Council has been asked to nominate a Councillor to attend BID meetings in a non-voting capacity. This is the same basis as Dorset Council representatives as per the extract from the BID constitution. Any BID member organisation or business can choose to put forward nominations to the board when the board is elected.

