

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

01305 239839 - office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk

**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Finance and Governance Committee

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 25 September at 7.00pm

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

**Present:**

**Councillors**

Cllr David Harris (Chair)

Cllr David Northam (VC)

Cllr Peter Barrow

Cllr David Gray

Cllr Howard Legg

Cllr Ryan Hope (Sub)

Cllr Lucy Hamilton

Cllr Richard Nickinson

Cllr Luke Wakeling

Cllr Graham Lambert

**Officers**

Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk)

Matt Ryan (Deputy Town Clerk)

Ian Milne (Business and Finance Manager)

Johanna Hardy (Finance Officer)

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| F0021 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Harris welcomed those in attendance. |
| F0022 | **Apologies for Absence**  Apologies from Cllr Wheller, Cllr Huckle and Cllr Taylor. Cllr Hope acted as substitute for Cllr Taylor.  Members voted Cllr Northam as Vice-Chair for the meeting in Cllr Huckle’s absence. |
| F0023  F0024 | **Declarations of Interest**  Cllr Wakeling declared an interest in Item 11 – Grants, as a previous member of Weymouth Christmas Committee.  Cllr Harris declared an interest in Item 11 – grants, as a member of the Weymouth Museum Trust.  **Minutes of the last meeting**  The minutes of the last meeting held on 24 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record and were duly signed. |
| F0025 | **Councillors Questions**  None. |
| F0026 | **Public Comments and Questions**  A member of the public raised a question about the reserves of Dorset Council, Jane Biscombe advised that she was unable to comment on Dorset Council’s reserves as we are unable to see Dorset Council’s financial information. The member of the public also raised a question about Rodwell Trail and Cllr Harris advised him to contact the Dorset Councillors for Rodwell and Wyke Regis as it is Dorset Council who are responsible for the trail and most of it was in their patch. |
| F0027 | **Public Toilet Charging**  Matt Ryan advised the cost of the beach toilets charging units would be coin system attached to the new stalls circa £103,000, combined coin and card system on all doors would be £127,000 and if 50% of the toilets had combined coin and card system would be £119,000.  Income would be based on 20p like the Swannery Toilets.  The life span for the charging units would be 10-14 years.  Cllr Legg suggested people would be happy to pay a little more to have decent toilets. Cllr Gray advised there could be a turnstile at the entrance on the new toilets, but this could be looked at once the toilets have been built. Matt Ryan raised concern due to the width of the pavement available for a new entrance way.  Jane Biscombe advised that the choice in front of Members is not between high quality toilets or toilet charging, as there are other ways to pay for attendants and cleaning.  Cllr Harris asked that solar panels to heat hot water are looked at in the future.  Both underground and above ground toilets are needed to meet the demands.  Recommendation A was proposed by Cllr Northam and seconded by Cllr Barrow.  Councillors agreed unanimously to not charge for the use of the public toilet facilities at the new beach office development.  B and C did not require a vote due to the agreement of A. |
| F0028 | **Health and Safety Policies**  Cllr Legg raised a question about working at heights and the use of scaffold towers, Matt Ryan would check the guidance on HSE.  The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Northam and seconded by Cllr Barrow, Councillors agreed unanimously to recommend the policies to Full Council for final approval. |
| F0029 | **Appointment of External Auditors**  Ian Milne informed Members that opting out of the appointment of external auditors (PKF Littlejohn) would involve a lengthy and costly process. Full Council would need to form an audit panel to appoint the new auditors. All town and parish councils in Dorset currently have the same auditors. No Councils in England have opted out yet.  The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Legg and seconded by Cllr Gray, voted by all.  Councillors agreed unanimously to stay in the central regime for external audit until the end of this 5-year period (2022) |
| F0030 | **Income Generation**  The recommendation was proposed by Cllr Gray and seconded by Cllr Hope.  Councillors agreed unanimously to agree the Terms of Reference. |
| F0031 | **Grant Applications**  Jane Biscombe informed Members there is £50,000 in the budget for grants. Officers have checked all applications on the agenda, and they comply with the policy and the requested supporting paperwork has been received unless otherwise detailed in the report.  *Lantern Trust:*  Cllr Legg questioned the amounts, Jane Biscombe explained that the Council were being asked for part funding as the agreed policy limited applications to £2,000 except in exceptional circumstances e.g. immediate risk to a vital service for a vulnerable community, or immediate risk due to fire, flood etc. Cllr Gray was happy to support the £2,000 and asked that the applicant was told they could come back if the project becomes at risk due to a lack of funds.  £2,000 allocation proposed by Cllr Gray and seconded by Cllr Nickinson, agreed unanimously.  *Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue*  Cllr Lambert asked why 12 young women had been selected and was advised the pilot project is to support teenage girls who live locally and are struggling with their attendance in education.  £1,000 allocation proposed by Cllr Lambert and seconded by Cllr Wakeling, voted by all except Cllr Barrow who abstained as a former employee of the Fire and Rescue Service.  *Weymouth Skate Park*  Cllr Northam asked who owned the Park, Jane Biscombe advised Weymouth Town Council has never owned the park, it was owned by Weymouth and Portland Borough Council now Dorset Council. Planning permission is not needed to purchase the container.  £2,000 allocation proposed by Cllr Gray and seconded by Cllr Hope, agreed unanimously.  *Weymouth Museum*  £2,000 allocation proposed by Cllr Wakeling and seconded by Cllr Barrow, voted by all except Cllr Harris who had previously declared an interest.  *Weymouth Cougars*  Members questioned the funding of the club and discussed the excellent job the organisation does in supporting young and disabled people in sport.  £2,000 allocation proposed by Cllr Hope and seconded by Cllr Barrow, voted by all except Cllr Legg.  *Friends of MV Freedom*  A spokesperson from Friends advised they had saved and fund raised a lot towards this but were short of about £20,000, they had had lots of support from the Weymouth Community.  Cllr Gray asked if any other grants had been made; Friends have 4 pending grants at the moment, they had approached Dorset Council but no grant had been given.  Friends advised that they need the £20,000 to get the contract price for this year, otherwise will increase by 3% next year.  Cllr Legg suggested the £2,000 but that the applicant could re-apply if they can’t make the deadline for this year.  £2,000 allocation was proposed by Cllr Legg and seconded by Cllr Nickinson, agreed unanimously.  *Let’s Make It!*  £1,150 was proposed by Cllr Nickinson and seconded by Cllr Hope, agreed unanimously.  *Young Enterprise*  Cllr Harris suggested allocating Budmouth College £500 and All Saints £1,000.  Cllr Northam asked why Wey Valley School wasn’t on the list, Jane Biscombe will talk to Young Enterprise about putting Wey Valley on the list in future.  £1,500 proposed by Cllr Harris and seconded by Cllr Barrow, agreed unanimously.  *Christmas Committee*  Cllr Lambert enquired what community this is for, Jane Biscombe advised it’s between the Gurkha and the Palm Tree and open to all. The Christmas Committee has been accepted as a CIC and has been created to create Christmas festival for all families.  Cllr Nickinson would like to see accounts after this has happened, Jane Biscombe advised that the recipients of any grant must sign an agreement regarding the use of the grant. Information on the full expenditure of the grant must be sent to the council within 6 months, if not actioned then the Council could ask for the grant back. If the committee winds-up, then anything that the grant has bought, would go to the Joseph Weld Hospice. None of the directors will get paid only contractors who provide a service will be paid. Cllr Gray commented that no fund raising had been done in the past or appeared to be planned for the future.  Cllr Nickinson asked if a grant application had been made to Weymouth BID, Jane Biscombe advised not for this specific event. Councillors felt they did not have enough information on the finances and organisation of the event.  Councillor suggested sending the application back to the Christmas Committee for more information, Jane Biscombe advised next meeting of this Committee is 6 November and that would be too late to award the grant in time.  Councillors agreed the following questions to be asked prior to a grant being awarded:   * + Have the CIC approached Weymouth BID, if not, why not, if so what was the outcome, Jane Biscombe to contact Weymouth BID   + Where is the other £1,000 coming from and if this is from profits form the event, what is the plan should there be a shortfall   + That the Council sees full income and expenditure accounts by 31 March 2020   + Confirmation that the directors are not taking any profits directly or indirectly from the event   Members agreed that £1,500 would be awarded to the group, subject to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee being content with the responses to the above questions. Proposed by Cllr Barrow and seconded by Cllr Hope.  Vote: For 5, Against 3, Abstentions 2 |
| F0032 | **Information items – Budget Timetables**  Ian Milne suggested a budget workshop in October as well as the workshop in November; which is already stated in the agenda. This additional session would give Councillors the opportunity to discuss the draft budget in light of some of the significant difference between the budgeting for town councils and other local authorities.  Cllr Barrow asked could we do more in grass cutting to supplement the Dorset Council cuts. Jane Biscombe confirmed that this is something Councillors could allocate funds to with the agreement of DC.  Cllr Lambert would like more information on the cost/maintenance of our assets, Ian Milne advised that some assets are easier to cost than others and the current budget position can give more information regarding these assets.  Jane Biscombe advised this year is a year of discovery regarding the budget and assets, Cllr Nickinson added that this is going to be a long-term project and several budget cycles may be needed to get a real picture of expenditure.  Cllr Gray would like to see the list of WTC assets. Matt Ryan said that we are working on getting the asset list online.  Cllr Hope asked for a discussion with DC on future possible asset transfers.  Councillors discussed future precepts and the appetite is for raising it to achieve specific outcomes or projects.  Meeting closed at 8.42pm |
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