

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

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**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Finance and Governance Committee

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 18 March 2020 at 7.00pm

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

**Present:**

**Councillors**

Cllr David Harris (Chair)

Cllr Howard Legg

Cllr David Northam

Cllr Peter Barrow

Cllr Lucy Hamilton

Cllr Luke Wakeling

Cllr David Gray

**Officers**

Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk)

Kevin Good (Beach Manager)

Charmaine Denny (Contracts and Facilities Officer)

Niki Ayles (Democratic Officer)

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| F0071 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Harris welcomed those in attendance. |
| F0072 | **Apologies for Absence**  Apologies were approved from Cllr Huckle, Cllr Nickinson, Cllr Lambert, Cllr Taylor and Cllr Wheller. |
| F0073  F0074 | **Declarations of Interest**  There were no declarations of interest.  **Minutes of the last meeting**  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Gray Seconder: Cllr Wakeling  Members voted unanimously to agree the minutes of the last meeting held on 5 February 2020 as a correct record and these were duly signed. |
| F0075 | **Councillors Questions**  There were no Councillor questions. |
| F0076 | **Public Comments and Questions**  There were no members of the public in attendance. |
| F0077 | **Full Asset Review – Approach/Plan**  Jane Biscombe introduced the item on behalf of Matt Ryan, Deputy Town Clerk, as detailed in the agenda documentation.  Cllr Harris highlighted that the Committee is being asked to agree to the development of a Town Council Asset Management Plan and nominate up to 4 Members to progress the plan as set out in the report, and suggested that the Budget Working Group be asked to do this. However, concerns were raised that the role of the Budget Working Group is to look at financial issues but asset management is a distinct activity and is not purely about finances.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously to agree the development of a Town Centre Asset Management Plan and nominated Cllr Barrow and Cllr Northam along with two members of the Budget Working Group to progress the plan as set out in the report. |
| F0078 | 1. **Grant Policy 20/21** 2. In a similar way that WTC asks whether the applicant has the support of the local police and/or crime officer if the funding is for security measures, there was a request to ask whether the applicant has the support of Dorset Council Adult Services and Children’s Services should the funding be to support vulnerable children or adults.   Concerns were raised that increasing the funding limit to £3000 would reduce the number of projects that could be supported. Members were reminded that in extraordinary circumstances, a higher level of funding could be agreed by the Committee.  Jane Biscombe explained that a number of Members had requested this increase prior to the meeting. However, it is within the Committee’s gift to decide what limit it wishes to be implemented. At the time of the request, there was an underspend in terms of the funding allocated. However, there have been a few late applications.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Wakeling  Members voted unanimously for the funding limit to remain at £2000.  Cllr Gray highlighted that organisations are asked to complete an End of Grant report after 12 months confirming that the money has been spent for the agreed purpose. However, he would also like to know that these reports have been received so that if an organisation applies for an additional grant next year, it can be highlighted if an End of Grant report has not been received. This will be included in the reports to Members.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Gray Seconder: Cllr Northam  Members voted unanimously to agree the Grants Policy and Form for 2020/21, taking in to account the funding limit of £2000 agreed above and the request for organisations to state whether they have the support of Dorset Council if working with vulnerable children or adults. |
| F0079 | **Grant Applications**  *Home Start West Dorset*  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously to award the recommended amount of £1,715.00 to train 10 volunteers for the Weymouth area.  *Nu: Waves Youth Support*  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously to award the recommended amount of £2,000.00 to run two Children and Young Peoples Recovery Toolkit – Trauma Treatment courses in the Spring/Summer 2020.  *Read Easy Weymouth & Portland*  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously to award the recommended amount of £1,040.00 to provide training for eight new volunteer coaches, and one set of coaching manuals and associated readers per coach.  *Westham Community Group*  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously to award the recommended amount of £2,000.00 to run 6 youth events at The Marsh and other venues in the area close to Westham. The request covers hiring equipment i.e. BBQ, gazebo etc and purchase of food and refreshments.  Cllr Legg was concerned as to whether the event will still go ahead given the current situation. Jane Biscombe explained that the agreement is that the funding can only be used for the purpose for which it is given and if the organisation wishes to change this, they have to approach WTC regarding this. Officers would then bring the matter back to this Committee. However, given the current situation, if Members are happy for her to agree any changes with the Chairman alone, she will do that.  Cllr Legg was mindful that this Committee may not be meeting for a long time and confirmed that he was happy to delegate the Chairman to change the conditions if appropriate. As a Committee, Members recognised the current fluid position.  *The Weymouth Carnival Group CIC*  Jane Biscombe confirmed that the new CIC is not connected with the previous Carnival charity which, it is understood, has disbanded.  Cllr Gray was concerned that this would be a revenue grant, which has never been allocated by WTC, and he did not want to set a precedent that WTC would be funding revenue. Jane Biscombe assured Members that the CIC has been informed that this would be a one-off and that it cannot rely on the Council in future years. The CIC have stated that the insurance in future years would be funded from revenue made this year. She can also speak to them before any grant is awarded.  Cllr Wakeling was concerned about the funding being used for the purchase of radios, which do not last long if they are used once then stored for 11 months of the year. He would be happier with the radios being rented for one event.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Northam Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members agreed unanimously to award the recommended amount of £2,000.00. However, there are concerns regarding insurance and the purchase of radios and, therefore, no funding will be allocated until the Town Clerk has worked with the CIC to identify what the funding could be spent on that this Committee agrees to.  *Activate Performing Arts*  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Wakeling Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members agreed unanimously to award the recommended amount of £2,000.00 to provide support towards the finale event(s) taking place in Weymouth Town Centre, as part of Inside Out Dorset 2020 Festival, free to the public. This award is made on the proviso that the event goes ahead. Should the event not take place, the organisers will be required to return the funding.  *Friends of MV Freedom*  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members agreed unanimously that granting a second allocation during this financial year could set a precedent for the future and that the Friends of MV Freedom should be advised to submit an application again in the next financial year for consideration by the Committee. |
| F0080 | **Mayoral Celebration Event**  Cllr Wakeling introduced this item on behalf of Charlie Sheppard, Events Manager, as detailed in the report.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Northam  Members voted by a majority of 5 in favour, with 2 abstentions, that the Committee gives final approval to hold a new Mayoral Community Celebration event on a trial annual basis and funded from the existing Civic and Mayoral Budget.  A discussion was held regarding allocating any civic underspend to help the local community, given the current circumstances and Jane Biscombe advised Members that there is also a £7,000 underspend in terms of unallocated grant monies.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Barrow Seconder: Cllr Gray  Members voted unanimously to allocate the remainder of the grants fund for this financial year to an Emergency Relief Fund that the Town Clerk is authorised to spend on the Committee’s behalf and which will be reported back to this Committee fully. Additionally, any Mayoral Fund not spent this financial year will be added to the Emergency Relief Fund. |
| F0081 | **Budget lines for 20/21, identifying funding sources and outcomes arrangements**  Cllr Harris introduced the item as detailed in the report and a discussion was held regarding the identification of WTC’s priorities and project management strategy. However, given the current situation, it was suggested that this item be deferred for the time being.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Northam  Members agreed unanimously that this item be delayed for a period of at least 3 months in light of current circumstances. |
| F0082  F0083  F0084 | **Information Items**  Forward Plan:  Cllr Gray highlighted that he is keen to see some sort of income monitoring year on year in the papers for this Committee so that comparisons can be made year on year, and he has spoken with Ian Milne regarding this.  Jane Biscombe explained that due to the current situation a significant impact on WTC income is being expected this year and Members will be kept up to date. This may have an impact on the amount of additional funds that may, or may not, have been expected after year end. A significant impact is expected on deckchair and windbreak hire, and rental income. The Council may be asked to consider what support it gives its tenants.  Jane Biscombe explained that, given the current situation, some items will be deferred until a later date. There is expected to be a reduction in meetings and therefore only urgent items will be considered as it will be a long process to consider all items “virtually”.  Cllr Harris suggested a Scheme of Delegation so that Members may decide that certain decisions can be made by an Officer working with the Chair or items being circulated electronically. Jane Biscombe explained that she has a Scheme of Delegation prepared but is waiting for the Coronavirus Bill to go through. She already has financial delegated powers in emergencies but is looking at decision making powers.  Resolved:  Members noted the information items.  **Exclusion of press and public**  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Wakeling  Members voted unanimously to agree to exclude the public and press to consider the confidential item Beach Office Lettable Unit Business Case. Additionally, Members agreed unanimously to suspend Standing Orders for five minutes whilst members of the press and public left the Council Chamber.  **CONFIDENTIAL – Beach Office Lettable Unit**  Kevin Good introduced the item as detailed in the report and the confidential paper circulated prior to this meeting, and a discussion was held regarding the options for the Beach Office Lettable Unit.  Since submission of the papers the social and business landscape has changed significantly and timescales must now be considered subject to change in terms of all of the options. However, it is imperative that WTC is ready to progress with the unit as soon as it is possible.  Resolved:  Proposer: Cllr Barrow Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members voted unanimously to approve the operation of a Council run outlet on Weymouth seafront in line with the information provided, with an extended timeline to allow Officers to develop the unit with the most effective Weymouth brand.  Cllr Nickinson was unable to attend this evening’s meeting due to exceptional circumstances but had notified the Committee via email that he was opposed to the proposal for the Council to run the Beach Office Lettable Unit themselves and would have voted against this.  Meeting closed at 9.19 pm |