

The New Town Hall, Commercial Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 8NG

01305 239839 - office@weymouthtowncouncil.gov.uk

**Minutes of meeting**

**MEETING:** Finance and Governance Committee

**DATE & TIME**: Wednesday 9th November 2022 at 7.00pm

**PLACE:** Council Chamber, The New Town Hall, Commercial Road, Weymouth,

Dorset, DT4 8NG

**Present:**

**Councillors** David Gray (C) Kate Wheller Ryan Hope

Ken Whatley Graham Lambert David Harris

Howard Legg Richard Nickinson Colin Huckle (VC)

Michael Frost Peter Dickenson Lucy Hamilton

**Officers:** Jane Biscombe (Town Clerk)

Ian Milne (Deputy Town Clerk)

Charmaine Denny (Assistant Town Clerk)

Freya Stewkesbury (Democratic Services Officer)

Tony Hurley (Operations Manager)

Tara Williams (Parks and Open Spaces Manager)

Shane Smythe (Property Manager)

Jacob Drew (Contracts and Procurement Officer)

**Members of the public and press:** There were 7 members of the public in attendance.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| F0284 | **Welcome by the Chair**  Cllr Gray welcomed those in attendance as well as those following the meeting live via YouTube. |
| F0285 | **Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**  All Members of the committee were present. |
| F0286  F0287 | **Declarations of Interest**  Cllr Huckle declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 for both the Westham Community Group and the Wyke Regis Christmas Fayre Committee. He also declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 15.  Cllr Hope, Cllr Harris and Cllr Wheller all declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 regarding the Westham Community Group.  Cllr Wheller and Cllr Hamilton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 for the Wyke Regis Christmas Fayre Committee.  **Minutes of the last meeting**  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Whatley Seconder: Cllr Frost  Members voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the last meeting held on the 28th September 2022 as a true and accurate record. |
| F0288 | **Councillors Questions and Statements**  None. |
| F0289 | **Public Questions**  There were5members of the public present as well as Cllr Gill Taylor and Cllr Luke Wakeling. There were no public questions. |
| F0290 | **Grant Applications**  Jane Biscombe introduced the item.  **Wyke Regis Christmas Fayre Committee**  Cllr Legg asked the following the questions:   1. How is the tree lit now? 2. What alternatives to a fixed power supply have been considered? (e.g. battery supplying low voltage DC lighting, battery and invertor supplying mains voltage, other greener solutions) 3. How does the expenditure of £2,866.80 be value for money?   Cllr Wheller, ex-chair of the committee, gave the following answer:  The tree is currently unlit. Previously, the tree was lit from the supply of a neighbouring lamppost. The new supplier, however, cut off the supply and denied access. Dorset Council are the owners of the lamppost and insist on their designated contractor, the cost quoted by them is non-negotiable.  This is a one-off cost, after which the committee will pay for the electricity supply itself.  Alternative power supplies have been investigated, but all other options were rejected by the provider of the tree. All the lights on the tree, however, are LED and therefore are low cost for operation and maintenance.  It was noted that any underspend will be returned to the Council, as stated in the grant application policy.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Nickinson  Members voted with a majority of 9, in favour with 3 abstentions, to allocate £1,000 to the Wyke Christmas Fayre Committee.  **Refresh** and **Westham Community Group (WCG) – Warm Spaces**  Members were informed that all churches in the area have been contacted regarding the option to be part of the grant application. Progress is being made with regards to increasing the number of spaces available and groups involved.  There was discussion around both groups requesting the same amount, despite Refresh’s overall project requiring more than WCG’s. The notion was raised that the resources from the funding will be shared as the groups are in tandem.  If there is a need then a second application can come back to Committee for further funding to be considered.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr Whatley  Members voted unanimously to allocate £5,000 jointly to Refresh and the Westham Community Group to start the project, provided both groups can agree how the money is split between them.  Members were informed of underspend in the community development budget that could potentially provide additional funding for similar initiatives.  **Ridgeway Community Radio CIC (Trading as Keep 106)**  The applicant informed Councillors that further funding will be provided through advertising and sponsorship revenue, as well as through other grant applications. Dorchester Town Council have been approached for funding.  There was discussion regarding the need for this project now, given the needs of more urgent initiatives during the cost-of-living crisis. The applicant responded that significant cutbacks to local news and radio have been made recently and without a back-up generator a power cut could leave the area without local information. It was argued that radio is an accessible and inexpensive way to get news during a power cut, and furthermore they can assist with getting information to those in need regarding community events and initiatives.  It was also noted the Council have previously supported grant applications to fund local radio transmitters.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr Harris  Members voted with a majority of 11 in favour, with 1 abstention, to allocate £1,200 to Ridgeway Community Radio CIC.  **Friends of Weymouth Peace Gardens:**  Concerns were raised regarding the price of the bench and the necessity of the style of bench chosen. Members were informed that other styles of benches and suppliers were investigated, but other options were either more expensive or weren’t in keeping with the appeal and aesthetic of the gardens.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Wheller Seconder: Cllr Dickenson  Members voted with a majority of 11 in favour, with 1 abstention, to allocate £2,500 to the Friends of Weymouth Peace Gardens.  The Council will look into promoting the £250 community grant applications, to encourage more groups to apply. |
| F0291 | **Q2 Finance Report**  Ian Milne introduced the report.  It was clarified that the staff pay award is decided by national government and is not an increase set by this Council.  It was commented that the seafront cleansing costs will be seeing a significant increase and that the council are looking into other options, such as other contractors or a reduction of seafront cleansing services, to cover costs.  Officers assured Members that front line services are being maintained at the highest standard possible during this difficult financial period, and costs are being reduced wherever possible.  It was noted that the Council has had difficulty in isolating vandalism costs, as repairs are often made with existing stock and it can be difficult to ascertain officer time spent on incidents. It is believed approximately £5,000 a year is spent on vandalism and this will be factored into future budgets.  It was commented that revenue from cemeteries is beginning to decrease and that this needs to be monitored closely going forward.  There was discussion regarding the vehicle reserve budget and the need for clear information on these assets, including shelf-life, so that costs can be assessed. Members were informed this is currently being worked on by staff.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Nickinson Seconder: Cllr Hope  Members voted unanimously that Councillors agree to recommend the Quarter 2 finance report for the period ending 30th September 2022 to Full Council. |
| F0292 | **Request for release of reserves for works to the New Town Hall**  Shane Smythe introduced the report.  An asset maintenance plan will be included in a future finance and governance agenda.  Concerns were raised regarding spending all the reserves at this time and whether this could cause future funding issues if more repairs are required. It was commented, however, that the works are essential to meet health and safety requirements and could lead to significantly higher costs if postponed.  It was commented that a future schedule of repairs will be vital to adhering to the maintenance budget. A report will be brought back to the Committee regarding this.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Legg Seconder: Cllr Huckle  Members voted with a majority of 11 in favour, with 1 abstention, that the Committee recommends to Full Council the release of £67,000 from the Property Reserve - Commercial Road in order to fund fire safety and maintenance works to the New Town Hall. |
| F0293 | **Attraction Licenses for 2023 Season**  Tony Hurley introduced the report.  Cllr Gray stated his objection to relocating all of the attractions to a single site with one provider due to the risk of relying on a single provider. This is a proposal within the draft seafront strategy.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Harris Seconder: Cllr Dickenson  Members voted unanimously that the Committee agrees that the Council will offer single season licences for 2023 for the four attraction sites (A3, A4, A5 and A6) on Weymouth Beach and gives the Town Clerk delegated authority to award the licences following a procurement process. |
| F0294 | **First Bus Information Kiosk**  Charmaine Denny introduced the report.  Members suggested that First Bus be asked to provide wrapping or otherwise enhance the look of the kiosk.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Wheller Seconder: Cllr Whatley  Members voted with a majority of 11 in favour, with 1 against, that the Finance & Governance committee agrees to the issuing of a two-year licence to First Buses to operate a bus information kiosk on Weymouth Seafront for the licence fees as detailed within confidential Appendix G. |
| F0295 | **Land Train Proposal**  Charmaine Denny introduced the report.  It was clarified that the proposal is for a new route, not a new train.  Councillors discussed possibilities relating to encouraging and enforcing more environmentally friendly energy sources for the land train, including the significant initial costs to the operator to replace the current model for an electric version. It was commented a one-year lease this time would enable changes to be made going forward.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope Seconder: Cllr Nickinson  Voted with a majority of 11 in favour, with 1 abstention, that the committee agrees to offer Weymouth Land Trains Ltd a one-year licence for the operation of a land train on the promenade between Greenhill Sluice Gardens (opposite the Sealife Centre) and Weymouth Beach Office as per the times detailed within the report and fee as set out in Confidential Appendix H. |
| F0296 | **Information Items**  Jane Biscombe introduced the item.   * Community Governance Review   The Council is working on obtaining more detailed maps with regards to the proposed ward changes.   * Digital Screen Updates   Cllr Wakeling informed Members that an advertising policy is being drafted and sent to Councillors. He urged Members to send in comments regarding the policy by emailing him directly.   * Review of Seafront Cleansing and Recycling * Actions from previous meetings * Forward Plan   Members noted the information items. |
| F0297 | **Exclusion of the press and public.**  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Hope Seconder: Cllr Frost  Members voted with a majority of 11 in favour, with 1 against, to exclude the press and public. |
| F0298 | **Confidential Item – The Look Out Café – Lease**  Charmaine introduced the item.  Members discussed the information outlined in the confidential appendix.  **Resolved:**  Proposer: Cllr Nickinson Seconder: Cllr Legg  Members voted with a majority of 11 in favour, with 1 abstention, that officers are instructed to enter negotiations with the lease holder and report back to the Committee. Rent increase based on proportional increase of covers. If an agreement cannot be met, then the Council will enter into action regarding the breach of the lease. The rent will then further increase in line with the RPI rate each November as per the terms of their lease. |
| F0299 | **Confidential Item – Debtors Update**  Members were a provided an update on outstanding debts owed to the Council. |

Meeting ended at 21:20

N.B The livestream of this meeting can be found on the Weymouth Town Council

[YouTube page](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UM8_jfgKCps).