



Finance and Governance Committee

Minutes of the Finance & Governance Committee held on Wednesday 10th June 2020 Due to the Covid19 pandemic and related restrictions the meeting was held remotely using video-conferencing software

Present: Councillors Grisenthwaite (Chair); Branyan; Bromilow; Gardner; Jones, Parker & Watson

In attendance: Bob Bailey, Town Clerk

20027 **Apologies:** There were no apologies

20028 **Declarations of Interest and Dispensations:** Councillor Jones declared an interest on any discussions relating to the Salvation Army and/or Carnforth Carnival Committee.

20029 **Minutes of previous meeting:** With one minor amendment, it was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th May 2020 be approved.

20030 **Urgent Business:** The Town Clerk informed Members that the notice to renew the Town Council's insurance policy had just been received. Members considered the policy schedule noting that the Civic Hall building is insured for over £1M. Members considered all the liabilities set out in the policy and, after some discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the policy schedule provides adequate insurance cover for all liabilities with the exception of fixtures and fittings and contents which needs to be updates in line with the recent review of the Town Council's fixed assets. **ACTION:** Town Clerk to provide the insurers with the up-to-date schedule of fixed assets.

Further to Minute 20033 c) the Town Clerk showed Members the debtor invoices outstanding as at 31st March 2020. At that date there were 19 unpaid accounts totalling over £1,500 (including three accounts over £100). All are for the hire of Carnforth Civic Hall and include eight accounts due at the year-end and eleven unpaid accounts, despite previous reminders, to just two hirers. It was acknowledged that the coronavirus lockdown will have had an impact on some outstanding debts (including the possibility that some may no longer be trading) but several need to be chased for payment. After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk and Cllr Jones review the outstanding debts, taking necessary action, and report back to the Finance and Governance Committee.



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20031 **Payments List:** The Town Clerk presented Members with the Payments List for recommendation to the June meeting of the Town Council. Members noted that the payments included the amount due for the annual insurance and a repayment of the Covid-19 Business Support Grant from Lancaster City Council (£10,000) that was awarded 'in error'. A letter explaining the reasons for this error had been received from Lancaster City Council and previously circulated.

After some comments, it was **RESOLVED** that, subject to any amendments to the insurance policy invoice, the payment list be recommended for approval by the Town Council.

20032 **Risk Assessment 2020:** The Town Clerk presented and updated assessment of the risks facing the council, including risks associated with the Coronavirus pandemic.

Members were reminded that an annual review of risks and arrangements to mitigate them is an essential internal control and a statutory requirement of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

Members noted that the risk assessment includes a range of risks associated with the governance, accountability, reputation and business continuity of the Town Council as well as physical and health and safety related hazards.

Members agreed that the risk log was a comprehensive assessment of current risks and the controls in place and/or actions needed to mitigate or eliminate their impact on the business of the Council. It was acknowledged that in many cases there will always be an inherent risk and that some level of risk is essential to realise opportunities.

An additional risk around the mitigation around the loss of the Town Clerk due to Covid19 was suggested and there was a question about how the Council assesses and manages risks throughout the year, not just at the end of the municipal year when required to do so.

It was then **RESOLVED** that subject to the suggested amendment the Risk Assessment and Log for 2020 be recommended to the Town Council and that arrangements be put in place to review, in more detail, high level risks and all general risks at least twice a year.



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20033 **Standing Orders and Financial Regulations:** The Town Clerk reminded Members that they had agreed to fully review the existing Standing Orders and Financial Regulations in 2020/21.

It was reported that revised model versions are now available from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) that appear to be more streamlined or, it could be argued, less comprehensive than the Town Council's which were last reviewed in detail some years ago.

After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillors Gardner, Jones and Branyan (if required) assisted by the Town Clerk undertake a full review of the Town Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and reports back to the Finance and Governance Committee in due course.

20034 **Updates on activities:**

a) **Bus Shelters:** Cllr Gardner provided an update on the latest position with the two bus shelters to be installed on Back Lane and Lancaster Road. Necessary permissions, planning applications and other associated paperwork have been established and ready to be submitted. There will be an initial cost to both City and County Council's for the planning permission, although the requirement for the Town Council to pay these will be challenged later.

The Outdoor Maintenance Operative has provided a quote for the materials to lay the base for the Back Lane shelter. Arrangements need to be made to provide adequate traffic management arrangements for the period of the installation of both bus shelters in late August.

b) **Civic Hall maintenance work:** Cllr Watson gave an update on the latest position regarding the essential remedial works needed at the Civic Hall following the building condition report commissioned by the Town Council. Unfortunately, due to the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and the national lockdown commencement of the works had been delayed. Cllr Watson reported that the impact of Covid 19 had also resulted in the appointed contractors not having the necessary resources to do the work in full - including a subcontractor who is no longer trading.



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The appointed contractor has now provided a significantly reduced quotation for the elements of the work that he is able to carry out. This, however, means that the Town Council needs to find another contractor to carry out the remainder of the necessary building work.

After some discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that update on the installation of the bus shelters and next actions be noted and that the revised quotation provided by the approved contractor be accepted and that expressions of interest be sought from suitable contractors for the remaining work.

20035 **Date and time of next meeting:** The next meeting of the Finance and Governance Committee will be held on Wednesday 8th July 2020 at 5:00pm. The meeting closed at 5:55pm

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert B. B. B.", is written over a horizontal line.

Town Clerk

11 June 2020

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