

Wellington Town Council

Town Mayor
Cllr P. Fairclough



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POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting held via Zoom on Tuesday 1st December 2020 commencing at 7.08pm due to technical issues.

Present - Cllr S. de Launey (SDL), Chairman Cllr L. Carter (LC), Cllr S. Hall (SH), Cllr M. Hosken (MH), Cllr P. Morris-Jones MBE (PMJ), Cllr A. McClements (AMc) Cllr J. Gorse (JG) (logging on late due to technical issues)

Also In attendance – Cllr P. Fairclough, A. Roberts- Deputy Town Clerk and K..Roper- Town Clerk.

- 27/20 Chairman's Welcome** – Cllr. de Launey welcomed everyone to the meeting and reminded members that proceedings are being live streamed on Facebook. He then proposed that items 10 and 14 on the agenda be moved to private session due to possible changes to commercial contracts. He was seconded and the proposal was unanimously agreed by members.
- 28/20 Apologies for Absence** – Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Davis.
- 29/20 Declaration of Interest** – There were no declarations of Interest made at this point.
- 30/20 Matters Arising from the Minutes of the meeting dated 3rd November 2020**
- a Tribute to George Evans** – The Clerk reported on a meeting with a local sculptor who had agreed to offer some sketches for members to consider at the January meeting.
 - b Obscured Sign** - The Clerk had circulated before and after photographs on the completed work done by the WEST team. Members were pleased with the work.
- 31/20 Finance** – Members had received papers, Cllr Hosken proposed the finance reports referenced 6a – 6c be accepted, this was seconded by Cllr Hall and members voted unanimously in favour. Cllr Morris-Jones MBE asked if the amount of £1,554.67 posted for toilet cleaning was a monthly amount. The Chairman confirmed the amount covered both sites and was a monthly payment. Cllr Hosken said he found the accounts to be presented in a clear and professional easy to read format. Thanks were given to the Deputy Clerk for achieving this.
- 32/20 Budget 2021/22**– The Chairman presented the draft budget to the meeting explaining the following points;
- Communications** – Events and Communication budget had increased significantly over the previous Promotions and Liaison heading due mainly to the inclusion of Communications (which had moved from the Management and Administration budget) and the transfer of Events from the Civic Expenses budget.
- I.T. Costs** – He explained this figure covers the anticipated future needs of both Officers and Members.

Public Conveniences –The budget figure had decreased due to reduced personnel costs and included an amount for maintenance and managements costs. Members were asked note the loan payments for the Bowring building had gone from the budget because it was proposed to pay it off.

The ICM payments remained although the scheme was being replaced by the Community Action Team.

Partnership Funds- The uncommitted partnership funds (£15,000) provided funds for projects which are as yet unidentified - this funding allows us to participate in joint funding opportunities that arise during the year.

Town Centre Regeneration - Regeneration costs had been split to show the personnel element and funds available for promoting regeneration efforts. The town centre property loan costs budget had also been moved into Regeneration.

Contingency – It was proposed to increase this figure from £5K to £10k to ensure we have appropriate reserves.

Audit Fee – Cllr Hosken said the budget assumes the fee had reduced. The Chairman said there had been no challenge to the figures this year so we have assumed the cost would reduce.

Community Funding – This heading included funds allocated to the Dothill Nature Reserve, the Town Band and support for Arleston Community Centre.

The Chairman said that in total this budget amounts to a 2% increase and overall expenditure was under control. A band 'D' property would pay £73.10 per annum up from last year's figure of £68.03. He confirmed the document was a draft and members now have a 5 week period to digest and discuss before it comes back to the next meeting on 5th January 2021.

Cllr Morris-Jones MBE said he thought the overall increase was larger than 2% but was excited at the proposals included to regenerate the town. He felt the Personnel costs had increased by 12% and should be looked at because we should bear in mind the people who will have to pay for the increases.

Cllr Carter said the Climate Change Staff Costs are for information and as the group settles this may resolve itself. He also questioned maintaining a figure for rental income at £8k bearing in mind this year's lockdown situation. He requested a separate line in the budget for Arleston Community Centre so the money is guaranteed.

Cllr McClements said she would support this because the Arleston Community Centre is run by volunteers who offer its services across the Town and provide the Council with a full set of accounts papers every year. Financial support from the Town Council is needed to keep it going. Cllr Gorse agreed the Centre needs the reassurance that the money will be there for them.

Cllr McClements asked for an amount to support Senior Citizens as other parishes in the Borough had done, stating that many older people had suffered from isolation this year. She additionally suggested an increase in the Community Funding budget as next year was likely to be tough for many people.

Cllr deLauney said that other parishes have smaller populations and for Wellington to offer a bonus of some sort to its Senior Citizens would mean a significant increase in the budget but it could be done.

The Chairman in his closing remarks said we can do whatever members wish and asked that they give it some thought over the next 5 weeks and come back with suggestions.

- 33/20 Windsor Road / Harvey Crescent Play Area** – The Clerk explained that the play area could not be re-opened after lockdown having failed risk assessments. A significant trip hazard was identified and subsequent assessments had acknowledged that the play area was in need of resurfacing. The total cost of the project is £16,700, T&W can put £12,600 leaving a shortfall of £4,100 which is requested from the Town Council. Members debated the scheme and it was proposed by Cllr Carter, 2nd by Cllr Gorse and agreed unanimously by members to support the project. Cllr Carter asked that additional information including photos are requested when any future requests for funding projects of this type are made.
- 34/20 Terms of Reference & Grievance Policy Documents** - The Chairman explained these documents have been slightly updated so they pair with the Independent Grievance Panel as appointed at the Annual Meeting in September. Cllr Hosken proposed acceptance of the documents, he was seconded by Cllr Gorse and the proposal was agreed unanimously by members.
- 35/20 Climate Change Emergency Working Group** – The Clerk had circulated the reports to members. Cllr de Launey suggested they are noted by this Committee, he was seconded by Cllr Gorse and the proposal was agreed by members. Cllr Gorse asked how often the group were meeting as it seems to be twice a month. The Chairman said hopefully this will settle down to once a month as time goes on.
- 36/20 Events and Communications Committee** – Cllr de Launey proposed members note the circulated minutes, he was seconded by Cllr Hall and members unanimously agreed.
- 37/20 WEST Team Report** – This was circulated to members. Cllr Carter said they were doing lots of fantastic work which should be widely publicised. He felt that everything they do should be promoted with before and after photos on our website. Cllr Hosken agreed. Cllr McClements said the last Town Council tweet was on 23rd November and we should be tweeting every day. Cllr Gorse said the Town Council should be taking the lead in communications for example with the changes to the Victoria Road Car Park. The Clerk said the information was put on the ‘Love Wellington’ site at the weekend. Cllr McClements said we should be promoting and putting out messages at least 2 to 3 times per week on the Town Council website as communications were so important.
- 38/20 The Next Virtual Meeting Date was agreed as 5th January 2021**

39/20 Closure of the Meeting

The Clerk asked members to agree a proposal to close the meeting to the press and public for items 10 and 14 on the agenda in accordance with paragraphs 2 & 3 of the LGA Act 1972. Cllr Gorse proposed the closure and was seconded by Cllr Hosken. The proposal was unanimously agreed by members and the Facebook live stream was stopped by the Deputy Clerk.

