

BILLERICAY TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting
held remotely via Zoom on Thursday 25th February 2021 at 7.00pm

Chairman: Cllr A Adshead
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M Roessler
Councillors: J Clark, R Clark, M Dear, J Devlin, M Moore, G Talbot, A Talboys

Also in attendance the Town Clerk and Cllr D Wakefield

145. Apologies for absence

Cllrs C Roberts, J Tutton

146. Declarations of interest with regard to items on the Agenda

Cllrs Adshead, Talboys and Talbot declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 8(b) as they hold positions in community groups wishing to hire the Chantry Centre. However, some members stated that these interests were pecuniary, and the members would therefore be required to leave the meeting when the item is discussed.

147. Public Participation session with respect to items on the Agenda

There were none.

148. Minutes of the Finance & GP Committee meeting held on 3rd December 2020

Members received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3rd December 2020.

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2020 be approved as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

149. Financial Report

Members receiving the following;

(a) Income and Expenditure by Committee 1st April 2020 – 19th February 2021

(b) Payments 1st April – 19th February 2021

(c) Balance Sheet as at 19th February 2021

Resolved: that all of the above information be noted.

150. Working Party/Project Groups

Members received and considered the minutes of the following meetings:

(a) Communications Working Party held on 12th January 2021. Cllr Dear presented the minutes of the meeting and informed members that a decision had been taken not to

produce a physical copy of Town Crier due to Covid-19, but relevant news information for residents was to be made available online via the Town Council's website and social media, and that the Committee Clerk was to be thanked for producing a lovely news sheet containing this information.

Resolved: information noted.

151. Youth Town Council

Members received and considered the minutes of meetings held on 12th January and 9th February 2021. Cllr J Clark informed members that the feedback from the Virtual Music Night which was posted on You Tube was excellent and it has been decided to hold another event at the end of March. It is hoped to start promoting membership once things are more settled. Cllr R Clark asked if members knew that there is currently a petition circulating about the skatepark. Cllr J Clark said that a meeting is being arranged next week to start the project.

Resolved: information noted.

152. Chantry Way Centre

Members received and considered the following:

a) Security

(i) Staff - Cllr Adshead outlined the recent issues experienced by staff which has caused security to be looked at and the following to be implemented. A blind spot was identified at the front of the building so an additional CCTV camera is being installed. The hatch between the foyer and the staff office is being altered so that it cannot be opened fully which will prevent someone being able to reach through, although members agreed this would probably need to be revisited and altered more significantly in the future. The issue of unauthorised parking outside the building was also discussed and members debated whether signs should be erected or some sort of external tannoy system installed so that staff could speak to offenders without having to physically interact with them. Following discussion it was:

Resolved: **(i)** any further incidents of abuse towards staff are to be reported to Police, **(ii)** the Council adopts a zero tolerance policy on verbal and physical abuse towards staff and signs are displayed to that effect, and **(iii)** unauthorised parking is monitored and revisited if incidents escalate.

ii) Front Door – a technical deficiency has been identified with regard to keyless access and this is currently being resolved. Cllr Adshead said that the architect was always aware that a requirement from day one has been that no keys should be needed for out of hours access and although the access fobs are programmable to grant access at specific times and for specific areas, the building is not fully secure unless physically locked with a key. Members suggested that perhaps a councillor is present the first few times that out of hours hire takes place to supervise. It was agreed that this is a good idea initially but is not a solution long term. Cllr Moore asked about the feasibility of hiring a caretaker, and Cllr Adshead responded that that this option is looking likely to meet security, cleaning, out of hours hirers access and hirer support requirements. Cllr Devlin wanted to undertake a hire “walk through” so a card could be produced for hirers giving them the processes that need

to be undertaken whilst hiring. Cllr Adshead felt that procedures for hirers should be discussed further once the front door issue has been resolved.

Resolved: information noted.

Cllr Talboys left the meeting.

(iii) Building Access – Members considered whether there is a reason for councillors to have fob access if not actually attending the building for a meeting. Cllr Roessler reminded members that the office area can be openly viewed by members of the public and members should be mindful of this and only attend the Centre for a specific reason. It was therefore:

Resolved: Council members are given fobs after the elections in May which grant access to the front door, first floor corridor and Council Chamber only.

Cllrs Adshead and Talbot left the meeting and Cllr Roessler took the Chair.

b) Charging Policy

Members considered a report from Cllr Adshead which had been compiled following discussions on expected revenue and anticipated room usage. It is hoped that these rates would see the Council break even and for the starting point should be kept simple. Following discussion Cllr Devlin proposed the following;

(i) That use of the kitchen should be charged separately. Seconded by Cllr J Clark.

Resolved: that hire of the kitchen is charged as a separate item.

(ii) All hire time is chargeable so booking periods will need to cover both set up and take down time. Seconded by Cllr Moore

Resolved: that setting up and taking down time is to be included in the hire period so is chargeable.

(iii) That there are two hire rates for (1) community and (2) commercial organisations. Seconded by Cllr J Clark.

Resolved: that there is both a Community hire rate and a Commercial hire rate.

(iv) That the main hall is hired out in session blocks rather than per hour. Seconded by Cllr Dear.

Resolved: the main hall is hired out on a session basis.

Cllr Roessler proposed that a separate meeting is held to discuss the proposed hire charges. Seconded by Cllr Devlin.

Resolved: that a further meeting of Finance and General Purposes Committee is arranged to discuss the charging policy in greater detail and reach agreement on hire rates.

Cllrs Adshead and Talbot returned to the meeting. Cllr Adshead resumed as Chair.

c) Fire Safety

Members had received copies of the fire risk assessment and draft management plan prepared by MB Fire Risk Limited. Cllr Adshead explained to members that the building's original fire safety measures had passed building control inspection but this subsequent fire safety risk assessment inspection has brought up new issues which means the Council has been presented with a number of requests to enhance fire safety standards now required post Grenfell. A misting system has been identified as a requirement in the community hub/lobby areas and initial quotes obtained by Ingleton Wood show this will cost in the region of £20,000+ to install. If the Town Council does not respond to this advice then there would be severe consequences if there was a fire on the premises which resulted in death or serious injury. However Cllr Adshead reiterated that the Council has sought advice so that we can be absolutely clear as to what has to be done to make the building as fire safe as possible, and the Town Council will undertake this provided it is achievable. He reassured members that the Town Council will not be exposed to any health and safety risk.

Resolved: information noted.

d) Outstanding Snagging Items

Members received a copy of the snagging list prepared by Ingleton Wood and Cllr Adshead informed members that this list is being worked on and the number of items has been reduced. Cllr Adshead also informed members that there are ongoing discussions with the builder and architect about items that the Council feel have not been installed as originally agreed - an example of this is the hall lighting not being able to be switched on and off in banks. The first meeting to agree the final account has taken place and the Town Council has made a case for a number of items that we should not be responsible for.

153. Annual Review 2021

Members received and considered the following:

- (a) Risk Assessment incorporating internal controls
- (b) Asset Register
- (c) Term of Reference

Resolved: that the tables and chairs recently purchased for the Chantry Centre be added to the Asset Register

Recommendation: that the above documents are all reviewed and approved by full Council on 11th March 2021.

154. Interim Internal Audit

Members received and considered a copy of the Interim Internal Audit Report prepared by Heelis and Lodge on 21st January 2021.

Recommendation: that in accordance with Financial Regulation 1.13 the internal auditor's comments under Payroll with regard to carrying annual leave forward as per (The Working Time (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, laid before Parliament on 27 March 2020, are reported as an information item to full Council.

155. Consideration of Material for Press Release/Social Media

Nothing at this time.

156. Questions from the Press and Public

Cllr Dan Wakefield asked about the snagging list issues and whether this should be the sole responsibility of the architect. Cllr Adshead said that there were separate lists as the architects were looking at it from a different perspective to the Town Council who are looking at it from the perspective of an end user of the building.

Cllr A Adshead
Chairman of the Committee

The Vice-Chairman closed the meeting at 9.44pm

Chairman:..... Date: