

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 7.00pm

The Guildhall, Butchers Row, Barnstaple

Present: Councillors:

J Phillips (Chair), V Monk, V Elkins, I Roome, J Hunt, J Carter, L York, A Shah, J Coates & J Orange.

In attendance:

Robert Ward (Town Clerk),

Sue Petters (Assistant Town Clerk)

Members of the Public:0

**21. Apologies for absence**

Apologies and reasons for absence were received and approved from Councillors J Wilsher (health), A Rennles (Fremington PC) & V Nel (work) (NC).

**22. Dispensations and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

Cllrs I Roome, J Hunt, J Phillips, L York and J Orange as members of North Devon District Council, have a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Cllrs I Roome, as a member of Devon County Council, has a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

**23. Minutes of the last meeting**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2021, are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (NC)

**24. Budget Monitoring Report and Finance Reports**

The Town Clerk explained that there are two calculation errors in the Budget Monitoring Report that had been circulated, both relate to income and neither has a significant impact on the information reported.

**RESOLVED:** To approve and note the Budget Monitoring and Finance Reports (NC).

**25. Proposal to purchase a Committee Meetings Management System.**

The Town Clerk presented a report with a proposal to purchase software that will support the management of the council's committee paperwork, ensure the requirement for transparency and accessibility.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the adoption and purchase of the Civica Modern.Gov committee management solution and to agree the sum of £10,000 to be allocated from reserves.

To make an additional allocation in future years budgets (NC 9025) IT Support and Upgrades of £7,500 per year (NC).

**26. Proposal to purchase the Phone box in the Pannier Market.**

The Town Clerk reported that the Barnstaple Heritage Society had now purchased the phone box.

**RESOLVED:** To note that the purchase by the Town Council was not going to proceed (NC).

**27. A proposal to approve a proposal to enable staff members to use the Cycle to Work scheme and the purchase of cycle racks for Barum House at a cost of £250**

**RESOLVED:** To note the adoption of the Cycle to Work scheme and to approve the purchase of cycle racks for Barum House at a cost of £250 (NC)

**28. Matters to be taken in the absence of press and public, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, as the item contains exempt information as defined by Standing Order 81(c, d and f) (NC).**

**29. A proposal to develop a Town Council Strategic Plan, Communications Strategy, budget proposals and future service delivery.**

The Town Clerk presented the report setting out the need to refresh the Strategic Plan, in particular because of the way the Town Council has evolved over the last 3 to 5 years.

Councillors discussed the proposal and emphasised the need to ensure there is public consultation and engagement with partner organisations as part of the approach.

**RESOLVED:**

To approve the setting up of a working group of committee chairs as a steering group for developing a strategic plan.

To approve the appointment of consultants to facilitate the process of developing a Strategic Plan and agree the sum of up to £5,000 to be allocated from reserves.

To approve the development of a Communications Strategy with the support of consultants who will undertake analysis of our current communications and develop templates and training to support future Town Council communications. To agree the sum of up to £5,000 to be allocated from the current communications budget

To agree to sign up to the Local Council Award Scheme with the objective of achieving The Quality Gold Award, within three years.

To approve the above resolutions (NC).

**30. An update following discussions with Age Concern and options for future support.**

The Town Clerk reported that following the request for funds from Age Concern at the April meeting (F&GP 21-76) to help meet their budget

shortfall there had been a number of meetings between Town Council Councillors and officers and the trustees to better understand the situation and the viability for support from the Town Council.

The outcome from the discussion and the information received is that Age Concern have a significant budget shortfall over the coming years, following changes in funding sources over recent years.

Councillors feel there is a need for discussion about the wider community needs in the Town and where financial and practical support can be given.

**RESOLVED:** to note the Town Clerk report (NC).

Meeting closed at 7.55pm.

Chairman.

Signed: .....

Dated: .....