

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

11 December, 2018

MINUTES pages 1 - 6

Present
Councillors:

Rolfe	Griffiths
C Bates	Jackson
J Fradgley	Wall

Clerk: Deputy Town Clerk

Public: No members of the public were present

Press: No members of the press were present

Schools: Absent

At the start of the meeting, the Chairman welcomed Cllr Griffiths to his first meeting since being elected as a Town Councillor for Welcombe Ward on 29 November, 2018.

38) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Alcock, Bott, Fojtik and Mayor Bicknell and accepted for the reasons given.

39) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

40) To receive written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests (if any);

There were none received.

41) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

There were none required.

42) Public Participation

None.

43) Minutes

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Draft Open Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 23 October, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

44) Sub-group Notes

- Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing Panel

After confirmation of two amendments made to the original draft, it was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Draft Notes of the Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing Panel Meeting held on 28 November, 2018 be adopted.

The next meeting will be scheduled when details are available for advising members of progress on ongoing activities, and priorities and costs of further activities.

- Ward Watch

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That the Draft Notes of the Ward Watch Meeting held on 6 December, 2018 be adopted.

The next Stratford Community Forum is scheduled for 17 January, 2019. The next Ward Watch meeting is scheduled for 14 March, 2019 which is expected to feed into the subsequent quarterly Community Forum meeting, the date of which is still to be confirmed although expected to be in April 2019.

45) Budget Review 2018/19

The Deputy Town Clerk updated the Committee on the Budget Variances for the current financial year.

Explanations of deficits within the budget were explained and included the following:

- Town Hall Commercial – Expenditure – PRS and Licences – the Marriage and Ceremony licence is for a three year period so the fee reflects this and has gone over budget for the current year. This will be adjusted at year end and next year's budget needs to be amended.
- Town Hall Commercial – Expenditure – Operating Equipment – there have been maintenance call-outs and repairs required to the lift, which have caused the budget to be exceeded.

These budget deficits will be taken to the Finance & Scrutiny Committee to recommend a virement from Reserves to cover the current year deficit.

It was confirmed that the Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing Panel are aware of the need to look at ways of maintaining or raising the income generated from Town Hall events, including promoting the Town Hall as a wedding venue.

Further explanations of deficits included the following:

- The Tranquility Garden income has a deficit of just over £1,000, though the ongoing deficit on memorial fees has been partly offset by an increase in purchase & interment fees.
- There is also a significant shortfall on purchase and interment fees in the Cemetery of nearly £11,000. It was recognised that it is difficult to accurately predict fee income in these areas.
- There is a year to date deficit on the Cemetery management charge. Another full time operative is now in the team and was appointed after the budget was set, so there will be additional costs this year. A third party contractor continues to be employed but his time will be less during the winter months. Expenditure is expected to balance out for the remainder of the financial year and will continue to be monitored. The budget for 2019/20 needs to be reviewed.
- Holy Trinity Churchyard / Garden of Remembrance – the deficit here relates to unexpected repairs to the War Memorials.
- Market & Christmas Festival – the deficits on expenditure are down to timing and the situation will be clearer once the shared costs for the Christmas Festival have been finalised with the District Council following this year's successful event earlier in December.

- Special Projects and Grants – Localism Project (NDP) – this will be covered by Designated Reserves funding. Following confirmation of the ‘Yes’ vote on 29 November, 2018 after the Referendum campaign, the costs of this project will shortly be finalised and the required Reserves adjustments will be made at year end.
- Operational & Administration – the deficits on General Repairs and Professional Fees relate to the additional Town Hall maintenance and Building Consultant fees which it has already been agreed will be paid for out of the Building Maintenance Reserve.
- Election costs of the Welcombe Ward by-election and the Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum in November are still to be confirmed, but will result in a budget deficit for the year. It should be noted that a contingency provision has been made each year for elections costs, so the deficit should be covered by Reserves.

46) Town Hall Maintenance List

The Finance & Facilities Officer has scheduled a meeting with the Building Consultant for 19 December, 2018 to review maintenance activities to date and to prioritise the items on the Maintenance Schedule.

Outstanding items on the previous version of the Town Hall Maintenance List have been appended to the new version of the Maintenance Schedule.

47) Reduction of Plastic Waste in the Town Hall

A verbal update was given.

A water sample for testing as drinking water has been taken by a specialist but results will not be known until January 2019.

The specialist has also advised that monthly checks should be made to the Town Hall as a public building and a quotation provided for a Water Systems Survey and Legionella Risk Assessment, which would include training of the Finance & Facilities Officer to undertake the monthly testing going forward. It was therefore AGREED that the work should be undertaken.

48) Town Hall Income, Facilities and Wellbeing Panel update

A verbal update was given by Cllr Jackson, who had been Chairman at the meeting on 28 November, 2018.

The Panel had RECOMMENDED that maintenance work to the front door access system be implemented, to fix a recent fault but also improve security for officers at the Town Hall. This work would also include replacing the swipe card access system to internal office doors with the same fob system to be used for the front door.

It was Proposed, Seconded and

RESOLVED: That maintenance work to the security system on the doors should be undertaken.

49) Holy Trinity Churchyard Signs

It was reported that the situation had improved, with fewer incidents of dog owners ignoring the signs and not keeping dogs on leads, exercising them in the churchyard and not clearing up after them.

However, the Open Spaces Foreman had reported a related incident in the Cemetery, which had also been reported on social media and had understandably caused upset and attracted negative comments.

Members discussed options around changes to signage but the consensus was that signs are likely to be ignored by people who do not control their dogs and who do not take responsibility for their dogs' actions. After further discussion, it was AGREED that the Finance & Facilities Officer should contact the Dog Warden to ask if a few ad-hoc visits could be made to the Cemetery in an effort to catch culprits and issue them with fines, the publicity from which would then act as a deterrent.

50) Cemetery Kerbs

Two quotations for comparison with the one provided by the Approved Contractor were made available to members. Members noted that costs were all very similar and the Approved Contractor was indeed the cheapest.

As the work is non-urgent, and given that it would be better for it to be scheduled after the winter, it was therefore Proposed, Seconded and

RECOMMENDED: That £14,000 be added to the Cemetery General Ground Maintenance budget for 2019/20 to cover the costs of further improvements to the Cemetery driveways and roundabouts.

51) Deputy Town Clerk's Verbal Report

The District Council has now confirmed the Tax Base and Community Tax Reduction Grant for 2019/20.

Tax Base (**13,190.30** – up by 234.34 from 2018/19)
Council Tax Reduction Grant (**£3,660** – down by £5,770). N.B. this is the final year the District Council will be allocating such a grant.

The effect of maintaining the precept at £38.32 per Band D household is a Precept request of **£505,452** for 2019/20 – a net increase in income of **£3,210**.

52) Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 9 April, 2019 at 6:30pm.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:32pm.