

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

12 DECEMBER, 2017

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Present
Councillors:

C Bates	J Fradgley
T Bates	Jackson
Bicknell (Chairman)	Rolfe
Fojtik	Wall

Clerk: Deputy Town Clerk

Public: No members of the public were present

Press: No members of the press were present

Schools: Absent

53) Apologies

Apologies were received from Mayor Alcock and accepted for the reason given.

Cllr Bott was absent from the meeting.

54) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests received.

56) To grant any requests for dispensation as appropriate

There were none required.

57) Public Participation

None.

58) Minutes

It was Proposed, Seconded and unanimously

RESOLVED: That the Draft Open Minutes of the General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 24 October, 2017 be approved as a correct record.

59) Ward Member Operational Issues including amenities

The subject of grit bins was raised, as the Budget for 2017/18 included a provision for 2 additional bins. However, no Members present at the meeting were aware of any outstanding requests.

60) Budget Review

See item 66) below.

61) Town Hall Maintenance

Some progress had been made on the list since the last meeting. It was AGREED that the list should be changed to create a separate 'Completed' section so that it was clearer to identify outstanding tasks.

After reviewing the list, it was further AGREED that priority should be given to addressing issues with the flower troughs and brackets on the outside of the Town Hall, and issues with the tiles on the outside balcony floor and the need to refurbish the ironwork of the railings.

62) Town Hall Sustainability & Income Task & Finish Group and Town Hall Facilities & Wellbeing Panel

A verbal update was given on matters arising from the combined meeting on 6 December, 2017.

The two Town Hall sub-groups have agreed to permanently combine and retain existing membership. New Terms of Reference will be issued.

62.1) **Town Hall Kitchen**

The meeting focused on issues arising from the problems with kitchen equipment and ventilation. The sub-group are continuing their deliberations on the various possibilities for future events and the kitchen facilities which could be offered.

One event in February 2018 has had to be cancelled, as the kitchen facilities will not be in place to support this. There was some concern expressed that the Town Council had let down the customer, though it was recognised that this was unforeseen and could not be helped in the circumstances. It was AGREED that, should the customer be unable to find an alternative venue, the Town Council should be prepared to offer them a reduced rate for hire of the Town Hall, providing they can source their own external catering facilities.

62.2) **Town Hall Accommodation**

The Town Hall office accommodation project from previous years has been resurrected, to identify whether planning consent is still valid and the potential current costs of this project as a number of years of elapsed since this was previously considered. Investigations are ongoing and will be discussed at the next sub-group meeting.

63) Dog Hygiene Bin for Avenue Ward

Unfortunately, the Ward Member on the General Purposes Committee was absent from the meeting, so no further update was available and the matter was deferred again to the next meeting.

64) Bridging the Gap Newsletter

Considerable discussion took place on the benefits and costs of the Council's newsletter, and options to consider if it was felt that changes were required.

To gauge public opinion on format and content, it was suggested that a questionnaire / feedback could be sought in a future edition.

It was noted that the District Council's newsletter is effectively cost-free due to advertising.

It was also noted that Bridging the Gap was originally councillor-led rather than officer-led, but Members were not aware of the impact on

time and effort required to compile it, though there was no indication that Officers had raised any concerns that it was becoming a burden to produce. Although it was suggested that a Task & Finish Group could be set up to review the newsletter, it was AGREED that the Town Clerk and other Officers involved would be asked for feedback before any changes were proposed.

The most recent issue had featured the inaugural Victorian Christmas Festival and it was asked that the Council's thanks be minuted to all Officers involved for their excellent work on this very successful event.

The consensus of Members at the meeting was that Bridging the Gap is, on the whole, a well-liked and well-received newsletter and that it would be a retrograde step if it was withdrawn.

65) Great British Spring Clean

It was acknowledged that not all Members may want to volunteer to help with activities such as litter picking, though it was agreed that education is important, to get into schools to promote awareness.

Other organisations need to be contacted to see what they want to get out of the campaign and what support they would like from the Town Council.

There was a consensus that the Town Council should consider a financial contribution to assist with costs of those organisations which may be involved. One aspect may be the removal of graffiti.

It was therefore AGREED to budget up to £400, depending upon the outcome of these responses.

Cllr J Fradgley has since indicated she is awaiting a response from the District Council, and will then contact potential partnership organisations to see what could be tackled.

66) Budget 2018/19

66.1) **Budget Review 2017/18**

The deficit in the Town Hall Income [Net] has continued and is now unlikely to be recovered within the current financial year, given the situation with the Town Hall kitchen facilities, which is likely to impact on future bookings. No allowance was included in this year's budget to replace kitchen equipment.

The surplus in the Cemetery [Net] expenditure offsets the approved overspend on the new car park and driveways resurfacing, shared costs with the Tranquility Garden. The new car park means the turning point is no longer required and can be returned for use as additional burial plots. Quotes have been received indicating costs expected to be under £3,000, with the additional 20 – 25 plots estimated to produce fee income in the region of £25,000 to £31,000 at current rates.

Members were reminded that significant additional security costs for civic events, which were not known prior to approving the budget, will be incurred this year and will continue to be required for future events.

66.2) General Purposes Budget 2018/19

Other than provision for the funding mentioned in 65) above, no further budget requirements had been identified since the previous meeting, so no further specific recommendations were made.

67) Deputy Town Clerk's Verbal Report

- **River Avon Mooring**

The existing tenant had indicated he would be willing to continue with the lease agreement if he could be granted occasional use of the land around the mooring. It was agreed that this would be possible, but exclusive use could not be permitted as there is no fencing and the area is open to the public.

68) Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 27 February, 2018 at 6:30pm

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8:22pm.