

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
OF DARTMOUTH GUILDHALL ON THURSDAY 25TH JULY 2019

PRESENT: Cllrs: M Baillie; N Bodinnar; C Campos; D Case; G Evans;
S Hibbert (Deputy Mayor) R Rendle; G Webb (The Mayor); D Wells;
G Yardy

IN ATTENDANCE: Cllr R Lyon; Town Clerk: C Pritchard-Williams; Finance Officer: A
McGrigor; District Councillor: H Bastone; a representative from the
Dartmouth Visitor Centre: K Perrow & two members of the public

PART 1 - Open to the Public

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were none

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none

18. PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME

No members of the public spoke

19. TO UPDATE ON THE GRANT AWARDED TO COMMUNITY CHEST

Cllr Baillie spoke about the grant that was awarded to Community Chest at the last Finance meeting for the storage units, she said she had the paperwork from last year and felt that this was quite a jump in finances.

Cllr Campos said she thought this was only for a few months until some land was identified, and Community Chest could purchase a storage lockup.

Cllr Evans said he thought it would be good for Cllr Wells and himself to go and look at the storage units that they are currently using and asked if Cllr Baillie's documentation could be left in the office for Cllrs to look at.

20. TO DISCUSS JOINING THE GREEN COMMUTE INITIATIVE AND PURCHASE A PUSH BIKE FOR OPEN SPACES TEAM

Finance Officer explained that the Groundsman had asked about this to help with getting around the town quicker.

Cllrs discussed that and thought it would be better to purchase a push bike that would belong to Dartmouth Town Council.

Finance Officer to ask the Groundsman to research purchasing a bike for the Open Spaces to use.

Proposed: Cllr Evans

Seconded: Cllr Baillie

Resolved: That the Council will not enter into the Green Commute Initiative but to investigate buying a bike for the Open Spaces team.

Nine Cllrs were in favour

One Cllr abstained

21. TO DISCUSS THE GRANT AWARDING POLICY/CRITERIA

Cllr Case said she had circulated this around to all Cllrs and proposed :

- lowering the minor grant from £500 to £250
- changing the major grants from £251 - £5000

Cllr Case also said that having further discussed this with the Finance Officer she proposed removing item 5.4 and 6.6 because gifting may be misleading, so it was decided to leave gifting out of the proposed grant awarding policy.

There was a discussion about removing item 3.4 which allows charities to apply for a grant towards the cost of hire of Council properties/gardens and it was agreed to remove this, All Cllrs attending agreed with this and felt that this was taking valuable revenue away from the Council.

There was a discussion about item 5.1 - timings for applying for a grant and the Chairman, Cllr Evans said it may be better to have just one date for receiving applications.

There was a discussion about item 5.1 and it was decided that:

Applications could be submitted throughout the financial year for minor grants.

Applications could be submitted once a year for major grants, submitted on the 31st December for consideration by the Committee in Jan/Feb to be awarded in the new financial year in April or soon after.

Cllr Rendle said that Cllrs should remember that Dartmouth Town Council do not have a money tree and we are not a charity, he said that although we should support where possible, we must not assume that we have to support all local organisations who should stand on their own two feet. Cllr Rendle added that as responsible Cllrs, we should know what the money is being used for.

The Chairman asked about the possibility of a clause in this document to allow the Council to have a stand at larger events and Cllr Case said 7.8 should cover this.

Proposed: Cllr Case

Seconded: Cllr Wells

Resolved: To approve this grant awarding policy after removing item 3.4, changing item 5.1, removing item 5.4, removing item 6.6.

All Cllrs attending the meeting were in favour

The Committee thanked Cllr Case for all the work she has done on this grant policy/criteria.

22. TO ANNOUNCE UPDATE OF THE FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT

Cllrs discussed the draft financial risk management document, which was in their green folders, Cllr Case said that Cllrs were invited to submit suggestions but that this was a living document.

Proposed: Cllr Rendle

Seconded: Cllr Yardy

Resolved: To adopt the format of this financial risk management document, acknowledge it's a living document and agree to update it as and when needed. All Cllrs attending the meeting were in favour.

23. TO ANNOUNCE THE COUNCIL'S INSURANCE POLICY HAS BEEN RENEWED

The Finance Officer explained that the Council's insurance policy had been updated and that our broker WPS had moved us from Aviva to RSA. The Clerk said that this new company had reassessed the Butterwalk which was previously insured for 4.5 million but is now insured for 6 million.

24. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed: Cllr Hibbert

Seconded: Cllr Evans

Resolved: That in view of the confidential nature of business about to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and that they be instructed to withdraw.

PART 2 – Confidential

25. TO DISCUSS CHARGING FOR ELECTRICITY FOR REGULAR USERS OF COMMUNITY CORNER

The Finance Officer spoke about an inconsistency with electricity charging for tenants that regularly use Community Corner in the Old Market.

Cllrs discussed this issue and felt that regular hirers should all pay the same for electricity usage dependent on how much electricity they used.

Cllr Baillie left the meeting

Cllr Rendle suggested delaying a decision on this and revisiting it in the new year. Cllr Wells suggested in the meantime taking meter readings every morning for two or three weeks to get an idea of how much is used. Cllr Yardy suggested fitting a smart meter.

26. TO DISCUSS CONTRACT FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Clerk said that £20,000 had been put in the current budget for Christmas Displays, there has also been a Christmas Lights working group coming up with a better solution for the Christmas Lights in the town. It was noted that the previous icicle lights that the Council had purchased a number of years ago, hadn't been reliable and additional parts had been purchased every year to replace the broken ones.

The Christmas Working Group have come up with a solution and are looking at this year hiring lights rather than replacing the icicle lights again as it seems the cheaper option.

We are on year three of a three-year contract with our current supplier who erect and take down the lights and the working group propose to hire lights this year and change the location of them in the town, which means that we need to enter into a one year contract with the hire company for this year.

Next year we will tender again for Christmas lights provision and it is preferable to have a three year contract with providers so the Clerk asked if the same amount would be available in the budget for the next three years.

Cllrs discussed this topic and thought this was reasonable but asked that a service level agreement be put in place with whoever provides the lights, which would cover repairs to the lights and the infrastructure etc...

Proposed: Cllr Evans

Seconded: Cllr Campos

Resolved: To go ahead with the hire of the lights for this year instead of replacing the icicle lights again, and to commit to £20,000 in the budget for Christmas Lights for the next three years.

All Cllrs at the meeting were in agreement.

Cllr Rendle spoke about the possibility of harnessing support from the Chamber of Trade or other groups, it was asked for the Dartmouth Business Club to be approached – Action Cllr Yardy

Cllr Wells said the Christmas Lights used to be managed by the Chamber of Trade, and it was transferred to the Council some years ago.

27. TO DISCUSS DARTMOUTH VISITOR CENTRE FINANCIAL CASH FLOW

The Finance Officer took Councillors through the financial cash flow document from the Dartmouth Visitor Centre.

Cllrs had a discussion about the working relationship between the Visitor Centre and Dartmouth Town Council and it was agreed to arrange a meeting with them to discuss the way forward.

Proposed: Cllr Case

Seconded: Cllr Yardy

Resolved: To authorise Cllr Rendle, Cllr Lyon and the Clerk to talk to the Dartmouth Visitor Centre to talk through future plans.

Meeting finished at 20.00