



Devizes Town Council

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Community & Civic Resources Committee

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Community & Civic Resources Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: Tuesday, 25 July 2017

Time: Immediately after the Planning Committee Meeting

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, St John's Street, Devizes

Enquiries: Town Hall - Tel: 01380 722160

The Town Mayor (Councillor Carter)

Chairman: Councillor Bridewell

Councillors: Burton
Geddes
Nash
Von Berg

Corbett
Godwin
Rose

Evans
Hopkins
Stevens

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2017 and which have been circulated alongside the agenda.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURE(S) OF INTEREST

To receive any disclosure(s) of interest by a Councillor or an officer in matters to be considered at this meeting, in accordance with provisions of Sections 94 or 117 of the Local Government Act 1972 or the National Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

At the Chairman's discretion, members of the public attending the meeting will be allowed to ask questions, make a statement or address the Council upon a matter of concern to that person which is relevant to the Council. A time limit of 5 minutes per person will be permitted, but this may be extended at the Chairman's discretion and a maximum period of 20 minutes has been allocated by the Council for this item of business

5. VISIT FROM WILTSHIRE POLICE

It is anticipated that an officer from Wiltshire Police will be in attendance, subject to operational restraints.

6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – SCHEDULE OF ACCOUNTS PAID

A Schedule of Accounts Paid is attached for information (doc 6/1 – doc 6/2).

7. NARRATIVE INCOME & EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT & KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2017/2018

JUNE 2017

The document has been amended after discussion with Councillor Corbett and now contains year to date data, year to date budgeted data and full year budget and forecast.

It was agreed that a narrative should form part of the main report.

8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – BUDGET SPLIT BY MONTH

The Admin & Finance Manager has prepared a split of the 2017/18 budget to enable direct comparison with the 2017/18 actual spend. The following assumptions were used with regard to the budget headings.

Income

Twining

EU grant assumed to be received in September 2017.

Civic & Ceremonial

Even budget split during the year.

Corporate Management

Precept is received in April and October each year.

Commercial Properties

2 commercial properties remain vacant at the start of the financial year whilst 9 Properties pay on a quarterly basis. It is assumed that the two vacant properties will be let and income generating by December 2017.

Town Hall

Officers have assumed income of 80% against budget. Income has been split according to a weighted average using the past three years' income in an attempt to avoid seasonal variations.

Corn Exchange

Officers have assumed income of 85% against budget. Income has been split according to a weighted average using the past three years' income in an attempt to avoid seasonal variations.

Hillworth Park Cafe

Income has been split taking into account the first years' trading at the Café. Income is reliant on the weather and events at the Park.

Community Spaces

Spikes in income received when the fair utilises the Green in May and July. Allotment income is received predominantly in September and March.

Public Conveniences

Even budget split during the year

Christmas Trees - Business

Income received during November and December 2017.

Christmas Festival & Lights

Income received during December 2017.

Cemetery

Even budget split during the year.

Expenditure

Committee Services

Even budget split during the year.

Member Support

Even budget split during the year.

Twinning

Majority of expenditure incurred during June/July 2017.

Civic & Ceremonial

Even budget split during the year.

Communications

Spikes in expenditure in May, August, November and February due to production and delivery of The Messenger.

Corporate Management

Even budget split during the year

Grants

Grants in respect of Devizes Museum, Devizes Hospital radio and Drews Pond Walk assumed to be paid in July 2017 whilst Grants General assumed to be split over October 2017 and March 2018.

Commercial Properties

Provision for empty properties made in June and September 2017. Commercial property fee payable in July, October, January and March. Legal fees paid in May 2016 and assumed to be payable in July 2017 whilst bad debt provision to be made in March 2018.

Arts Development

Quarterly payment of DOCA grant in June, September, January and March. Festival Free use incurred in June 2017 whilst carnival free use incurred in September 2017.

Town Hall

Even budget split during the year.

Corn Exchange

Even budget split during the year.

Devizes Leisure Centre

Quarterly payments in May, August, November and February

9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – RECRUITMENT

Officers have successfully recruited to the vacant Parks and Open Spaces team position.

Andy May will be joining us on Thursday 20th July 2017.

10. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – DEVIZES DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

Treasurers Report

At this time the cash flow forecast indicates that revenue and expenditure are where they are expected to be and the organisation should break event this year. The DDP Board were reminded that reserves held are low, therefore the opportunity to fund significant repairs or replace equipment would be limited.

CCTV updates

In summary there has been an increase in shoplifting, particularly higher end alcohol such as champagne. Assaults are also up, with much of the problem centred around the Silk Mercer public house.

There is to be a review of the policy that CCTV control rooms has access to police radios. These were temporarily removed following a breach in protocol by one control room, but were then reinstated pending a more comprehensive review.

The system is currently fully operational, however the cameras in the Brittox and on Nat West are showing signs of age, reducing their effectiveness. The cost of their replacement is in the region of £6,000 and it was hoped this could be fund from.

- Area Board Grant - £2000
- Town Council Grant - £2000
- DDP - £2000 (*if the Town Council agree that the DDP can reduce the level of reserves held for any potential future closure of the system*)

Larger Business Forum

The Area Board Chairman has met with some of the larger businesses in the town. The meeting was not only an opportunity to listen to some of their issues, but also provide a change to advise them how they can support local projects and events.

The outcome identified that as Devizes has fairly high levels of employment it makes it difficult to recruit staff locally. The shortage of housing makes it difficult to attract skilled staff to the town.

It was explained that the Town Council were also planning to meet with the larger businesses in the town therefore there needs to be a more coordinated approach to reduce duplication of effort.

There was a general view that the DDP should be the organisation that leads on the initiative as it is “a” political.

There is a follow up meeting in early October.

Events Coordination Group

It was agreed that Devizes needed to have a more coordinated approach to event planning. Too often events overlap, which dilutes potential audiences. There is also a lack of support for those organisations who have limited experience to managing events

It was agreed that a small working group would be set up to try and coordinate town activities and promotes what is going on. In addition, this group could offer advice and support to event organisers, where needed. The following will sit on the working group.

- Noel Woolrych
- Jo Batchelor
- Iain Wallis
- Simon Fisher

The next DDP board meeting will be on the 10 October.

11. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – MAYORAL ALLOWANCE

The mayoral allowance regarding the previous Town Mayor, Councillor Jane Burton straddled the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years.

The full year spend with no further costs anticipated of £4,425.93 equates to £66% of the annual budget for the year of £6,687 detailed as follows.

Mayor Making	£ 1,083.72
General Expenses & Mileage	£ 1,156.19
Thank you parties	£ 930.00
Carol Concert	£ 723.17
Formal Hire	£ 180.00
Inaugural service	£ 150.60
Christmas Cards	£ 125.75
Christmas Buffet	£ 76.50
	£ 4,425.93

Councillor Burton has raised a total of £3,401.13 to date in respect of her Mayoral Appeal. This will be distributed to her nominated charities in due course.

12. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – MAYORAL ALLOWANCE

The spend of the mayoral allowance regarding the Town Mayor, Councillor Nigel Carter during the 2017/18 financial year is as follows.

Mayor Making	£ 782.25
General Expenses & Mileage	£ 65.99
	£ 848.24

The spend year to date of £848.24 equates to £12% of the annual budget for the year of £6,821.

13. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – WILTSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCIL MEETING 3 JULY 2016

Councillor Wooldridge attended the recent meeting of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) held on the 3 July 2017. The main points of the meeting were as follows:

The response to the Trade Unions pay claim.

The committee agreed that clerks should be remunerated to a fair level in accordance with the professional work they under take.

It was recognised that the work of clerk requires relevant skills and the salary needs to be in line with this. The real living wage of £8.45 per hour was discussed and felt that salary for clerks should not start lower than that amount.

Terms of reference for Swindon area committee of W.A.L.C.

A draft terms of reference has been drawn up and the final draft will be decided at the A.G.M. in October. Further discussions took place regarding the membership of W.A.L.C. and what councillors would like to do regarding the A.G.M. on Monday 23 October 2017.

Members Deputies.

The committee were asked to approve the attendance of Council deputies at all meetings to ensure that they are briefed on issues. The Executive Committee agreed this request but advised that they will not have voting rights when the principal member attends.

14. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – TWINNING WEEKEND 2017

This year's twinning weekend between Devizes, Mayenne and Waiblingen was hosted in Devizes. In the region of 120 participants travelled from our twinned towns and included orchestra members, sportsmen and ordinary citizens.

The weekend consisted of a conference for delegates, in which agriculture and food production was the main topic. The group visited the Poulshot Farm of Mike and Nick Hughs where there was a discussion on modern farming practice, innovation, modernisation and the impact of the EU in farming.

The weekend saw the celebration of 50 years of twinning between the three towns, with an information plaque and stones from each of the towns being placed on the Small Green.

The twinning movement is supported by the EU and therefore officers were successful in gaining an EU grant, which met the weekend's expenses.

Officers have been concerned that for some time the profile of those taking part in twinning weekends has not significantly changed and they therefore believe if action is not taken, it is likely that these events will become unsustainable. Views were sought from both Mayenne and Waiblingen Town Hall and both agreed that, whilst not critical, change was needed to secure the longer term future of twinning. With this in mind, a paper will be circulated later in the year as a discussion topic next year.

Next year's twinning weekend is in Waiblingen and Devizes will host the event again in 2020.

15. REPORT FOR DECISION – GRANT FOR REPLACEMENT CCTV CAMERA

Recommendation

That the committee considers a request by the Devizes Development Partnership (DDP) for capital funding towards the replacement of old CCTV equipment.

Purpose of the Report

To decide if the Town Council will support the DDP to replace ageing equipment.

Background

Earlier in this agenda there was report informing the committee about the work currently being undertaken by the DDP. Within the report the issue of ageing equipment in the Brittox and by the Nat West Bank is highlighted.

The DDP board believe that they need to take a proactive approach to the problem and is therefore seeking to replace the cameras before they fail. The DDP are would like to request a £2000 grant from the Town Council towards the cost as well as making a request to the Area Board for a similar amount.

The DDP are also requesting that the Town Council relaxes its funding condition that requires the board to keep a £5000 reserve, which could be used to fund the removal of the system, should the system be closed down one day. The DDP board now feel that this is more than is required and if £2000 could be released, this would be used to finance the balance of the £6000 needed to replace the oldest cameras.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if it wishes to support the project to replace older cameras on the town's CCTV system by:

- Providing a £2000 grant
- Agreeing the reduction of the closure reserve by £2000

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The system is owned and operated by the Devizes Development Partnership. The Town Council provides an annual support grant towards the operation of the system, but this does not include any capital replacement costs. The grant would be taken from Council Town Centre management fund which support town centre improvements and economic regeneration initiatives.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence.

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

16. REPORT FOR DECISION – DEVIZES EISTEDDFOD GRANT REQUEST

Recommendation

That the committee decides if it wishes to provide funding through a one off grant request to support the purchase of a piano for Devizes Eisteddfod.

Purpose of the Report

To consider a grant request by Devizes Eisteddfod towards the cost of a piano purchase.

Background

A one off grant request has been received from Devizes Eisteddfod for funding towards the cost of a piano, which they would like to leave in the Cheese Hall at the Town Hall which would then be available for any group to use.

Attached to this agenda (Doc 16/1 – 16/6) is the full application.

As a principle, the Council generally deals with of grant request at one meeting in October unless there are exceptional circumstances. In the case of this request, the Eisteddfod is in November each year therefore a decision needs to be made in advance of that.

The Council has a general grant budget of £5,500 and it is customary that grant payments are valued between £50 and £300.

Each year the Council provides the Town Hall free of charge, which has a hire value of £1,472.

It should be noted that whilst the application indicates that the piano is for the use of all groups using the Cheese Hall. Historically, other than the Eisteddfod itself, there has not be any demand for a piano in that room although there is space.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if it wishes to agree to this grant application.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The financial or resource implication for the Council associated with this decision are set out in the report.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence.

Environmental Implications

Officers are unaware of any environmental implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

Officers are unaware of any risk implication for the Council associated with this decision.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

17. REPORT FOR DECISION – BENCHMARKING REPORT 2016 AND CONSULTATION

Recommendation

To consider the report of the 2016 Benchmarking exercise and to advise a direction for the Benchmarking Steering Group to consider in order to progress the monitoring of the economic health of the town.

Purpose of the Report

To note the finding of the report and to consider the direction of the exercise for 2017.

Background

The 2016 report is the result of the fifth Benchmarking exercise undertaken by a partnership of organisations in the town – Devizes Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, Devizes Community Area Partnership and, most recently, the Federation of Small Businesses.

A series of 12 Key Performance Indicators have been gathered over the last five years to give some empirical context to the economic health of the town.

The findings of the report do not highlight any significant differences compared to previous years. But there continue to be the perennial issues around parking, lack of retail offer and the condition of the town in terms of littering and dog fouling

A meeting of the Benchmarking Steering Group will be held shortly to explore the options available and to prioritise the outcomes. However, given that this is the fifth year of the exercise, officers are concerned that both the retailer survey and the town centre user survey might be a little fatigued and should be, perhaps, conducted in the prescribed format every other year.

An option to consider is to focus a town centre user survey on other issues, such as support or otherwise for the Town Council taking on certain services and assets from Wiltshire Council

The other main elements of the data collection can be undertaken without significant resource.

It is not yet known whether Wiltshire Council will fund participation in the formal scheme. If Wiltshire Council do not decide to fund, then this could fall to the partners comprising the Benchmarking Steering Group, or a scaled down scheme could be undertaken that does not require the level of analysis as the full process.

The efforts to engage with retailers and town businesses has not resulted in a coherent and driven group that is self-reliant – attendance at meetings has been patchy and there is a sense of maybe needing something different.

The Steering Group could be asked to consider some of the options of facilitation provided through People & Places to try and develop a better focus.

Options Considered

The committee can agree to advise the Benchmarking Steering Group as to whether or not the full exercise should be conducted or if a more limited exercise should be undertaken this year.

The Committee is also asked to support the Benchmarking Steering Group to undertake work to prioritise the issues and identify those in particular that the Town Council is able to take a lead on/

The Committee is also asked to suggest that the Benchmarking Steering Group consider other external support, to include People & Places, to seek options for galvanising the community to effect positive changes.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Given that there is a lack of clarity as to whether WC are likely to fund the licence to undertake the formal scheme, it would be wise to assume that there may be some financial implications, although it is understood that this is somewhere in the region of £200. There is sufficient funds within the Town Centre Management cost centre to meet this.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Council will be considering this matter under its General Power of Competence.

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware of any environmental implications associated with this decision.

Risk Assessment

If no benchmarking is undertaken, then there will be no empirical data to rely on when trying to establish solutions and there is the danger that decisions may be made on “fiction” rather than fact.

Crime and Disorder

Officers are not aware of any issues the Council should consider under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder act 1998.

18. QUESTION TIME

A short time is allowed at the discretion of the Chairman for councillors to ask questions on matters which are not on the current agenda but which are related to matters which have been previously discussed on an agenda relevant to the committee.

At least 24 hours' notice must be given to officers of the intended question. All other matters should be raised on an agenda and the request should be submitted through the Town Clerk.

TOWN CLERK