



Devizes Town Council

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RECREATION AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

You are summonsed to attend a meeting of the Recreation & Properties Committee at the following, place and date.

Date: 14 November 2017

Time: Immediately following Planning Committee

Venue: Council Chamber, Town Hall, Devizes

Enquiries: 01380 722160

The Town Mayor: (Councillor Carter)

Councillors:	Burton	S Evans	Gay
	Geddes	Giraud-Saunders	Greenwood
	Johnson	Parsons	Rowland
	Shaw	Wooldridge	

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record and authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2017 and which have been circulated alongside the agenda.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. DISCLOSURES 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. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES INCOME FIGURES

Documents will be issued under separate cover.

6. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – VENUES - CUSTOMER SATISFACTION FEEDBACK, VENUES OCCUPANCY FIGURES & MARKETING INFORMATION

The Resolution Marketing Retainer has come to an end after a fruitful six months. Officers and the Town Council account manager agreed that the initial aims of the collaboration had been achieved and, if any further services are required in the future, these could be undertaken on a project-by-project basis.

The final Resolution Design projects included:

- Creation on an online brochure for Celebrations and Functions.
- Updated Conference and Wedding Brochures for 2018/19.
- New images for all Venues social media sites.
- New stock images for future campaigns.
- New 'press ready' adverts for weddings, conference and meetings.

Officers have created Venues Twitter and Instagram accounts and have updated the existing Facebook pages with the new images.

Resolution Design and officers have worked together to produce the first conference offer and this has been shared with all companies and individuals who have booked with the Town Council, as an email newsletter. These type of email marketing campaigns have not been used before and officers will be carefully monitoring its success.

A similar offer will be produced and emailed to all those who attended a recent wedding fair held at the Corn Exchange.

7. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – BUSINESS CHRISTMAS TREE SCHEME

The Business Christmas Tree scheme is underway for this year and officers are confident that a similar number will participate in the scheme as last year.

8. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – KPI EXPLANATION

Following attendance at the last Recreation and Properties meeting, where officers discussed the types of information members would like to see around the performance of the venues, new KPI reports have been created.

Monthly Booking Capacity

To create this report, the total number of hours each room could be booked has been calculated, multiplied by the number of days in the month. The green block shows the capacity achieved.

Room Income Sales

This shows the possible room income for each venue against the amount taken for the month for room sales only.

Monthly Booking Capacity Achieved for Town Hall & Corn Exchange

This report shows the booking capacity achieved over the financial year.

The Conversion Rate

This shows, as a percentage, the enquiries converted to bookings for the month.

Conversion Rate by Booking Type

This shows the conversions by types of booking.

Conversion Rate by Booking Channel

This shows the conversion rates filtered by how the initial enquiry was made.

Conversion Rate by Booking Source

This provides another breakdown and shows the conversion rates in relation to how the customer heard about the venues.

The pie charts on the final page show a pictorial image of the above information.

9. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – LOO OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Superloos, situated in the West Central Car Park, have been recognised as Platinum standard following judging for the Loo of the Year Awards.

The toilets were inspected in August and were confirmed as outstanding in all areas with judges stating that they were a “well presented traditional facility, providing toilets and washrooms for the town. They are clean and maintained to a good standard.”

10. REPORT FOR INFORMATION – CEMETERY LODGE, ROTHERSTONE, DEVIZES

The Cemetery Lodge has been subject to a Short Term Tenancy agreement since June 2015.

At the time of the departure of the previous tenants, the Town Council undertook a redecoration of the inside of the premises including new carpets.

It was identified at this time that the fascia, barge boards and guttering would need attention within a year or two. These items are now at the end of their lifespan and if not dealt with at this point will cause damage to the fabric of the building itself. The replacement will be in PVCu making this area of the property virtually maintenance free.

A purchase order in the value of £3,503 has been issued to Corsham Building Plastics Ltd with a start date of 11 December 2017.

Officers have additionally arranged an un-clip of the electricity supply from the end bargeboard and a re-clip once the required works are complete.

11. REPORT FOR DECISION – FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2018/19 IN RESPECT OF DEVIZES CEMETERY

Recommendation

That the committee agrees the fees and charges for financial year 2018/2019.

Purpose of the Report

To set the fees and charges in respect of Devizes Cemetery for the financial year 2018/2019.

Background

The setting of fees and charges in respect of Devizes Cemetery now sit with this committee.

Attached to the agenda is a copy of the fees and charges for the financial year 2017/18. Historically previous committees have considered the charges and applied an increase of between 2 and 3%.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide the percentage increase they wish to apply to charges and fees relating to Devizes Cemetery from the following suggestions.

A nil increase in the fees and charges,

A 2.2% increase in line with the Retail prices Index,

A 2.8% increase in line with inflation, or;

A larger increase to be determined by the committee (an increase in the region of 20% would be required should members wish the Cemetery cost centre to be closer to cost neutral at the current level of business).

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The income generating potential for the cemetery has an impact on the amount the authority has to pay towards the running of the cemetery.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

The Open Spaces Act 1906 ss9 and 10 gives Devizes Town Council the power to provide and maintain cemeteries

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware on any environmental implications associated with the decision

Risk Assessment

Officers are not aware on any risk implications associated with the recommendation as set out. Should the committee decide to significantly alter the fees and charges, this could result in a shortfall in income.

Crime and Disorder

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

12. REPORT FOR DECISION – PRICE INCREASE IN VENUES CHARGES FOR 2018/2019

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee agree an increase in the price it sets for chargeable services based on inflation values.

Purpose of the Report

To agree the Council's annual percentage price increase for 2018/2019.

Background

Each year the committee are asked if they wish to increase the level of prices that are set for those services for which the Council make a charge. Venues are reporting an increase in the number of enquiries for 2019 and beyond. Therefore, it is imperative that the appropriate charging structure is in place.

Some room charges, such as the Council Chamber, are out of alignment with other room charges and therefore as part of this updating of prices a review of these anomalies are required.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if they want to agree an increase in its prices for 2018/2019 based on the current inflation rate and authorise officers to amend any pricing anomalies.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Officers are conscious that in these difficult trading times it is not possible to say with any certainty what the financial implications may be, but reference has been made to current government figures and forecasts in this recommendation.

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.

Risk Assessment

There are no risks.

Crime and Disorder

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

13. REPORT FOR DECISION – VENUES MARKETING OFFICER

This item has been placed on the agenda by Councillor Corbett.

Recommendation

That the committee recommends budget provision be made in the Estimates for a part time Sale/Marketing officer for the venues team.

Purpose of the Report

To make funding provision for a part time Venues Marketing Officer to seek new business for the venues.

Background

At a meeting of the last Recreations and Properties Committee on the 3 October, officers provided an overview of the current marketing strategy for the venues and were very clear that whilst they have developed a lot of initiatives alongside a local marketing company the ongoing delivery of these initiatives are at risk through the lack of suitable resources.

The subsequent discussion did suggest that a part time Sales and Marketing officer would provide the Council with the necessary skill and resources to:

- Monitor the effectiveness of various marketing strategies
- Develop contact with local businesses assessing their service requirements
- Develop relationships with local services companies to broaden the services we can offer our customers as well as develop a mutually beneficial marketing arrangement
- Develop offers and promotions
- Maintain Key Performance Indicators

Officers have, as a result of that meeting, started to develop a job description and assess the cost implication and these have been circulated alongside the agenda.

In deciding if this new post should be created, it would be prudent to take on any new member of staff on a temporary contact which could be confirmed after 12 month should the post provide tangible benefits to the venues department.

There would also be an expectation that during the initial period there would be some revenue growth and a broadening of the Council's customer base for the venue.

Attached to this agenda is a draft copy of a suitable job description and it has been assessed that the salary anchor point would be £19,500 pa (pro-rata)

If the Committee are minded to agree to the creation of this new post, a more detail analysis of its role would need to be undertaken and agreed.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if they agree to the principle of recruiting a sales/marketing officer and therefore wish to make budget provision within the 2018/19 budget for this position.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

An outline budget for this post is included within 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.

14. REPORT FOR DECISION – POLICY DOCUMENT ON DISCOUNTING COMMERCIAL PROPERTY RENTS

Recommendation

That the committee agrees the policy on discounting commercial property rents.

Purpose of the Report

To provide a copy of the policy document with a view to enabling members to make appropriate adjustments prior to adoption of the policy document.

Background

The committee has, on an ad hoc basis, received requests from commercial property tenants for requests for discounts or a rent free period in respect of their commercial property leases.

Officers are mindful that the absence of a policy document has the potential for inconsistencies in decision making.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide from the following courses of action.

- Approve the policy document as presented
- Approve the policy document incorporating amendments approved by members
- Consider applications for a rental discount on an individual basis without reference to a policy document.

Implications & Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

The adoption of a policy document in this area strengthens the financial procedures of the Town Council. This approach also puts the onus on the tenant rather than officers of the Town Council.

Legal Implications and Legislative Powers

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

Environmental Implications

Officers are not aware on any environmental implications associated with the decision.

Risk Assessment

An inconsistent approach puts a pressure on the budget of the Town Council.

Crime and Disorder

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

15. REPORT FOR DECISION – REVIEW OF ATTENDANCE FIGURES FOR THE CERES HALL

This item has been placed on the agenda by Councillor Hopkins

Recommendation

That the committee authorises officers to renegotiate the maximum attendance figures for the Corn Exchange Ceres Hall.

Purpose of the Report

To have the Ceres Hall capacity re-examined for live music events for standing only and very limited seating.

Background

No reappraisal of maximum attendance levels has taken place since in the building was refurbished in 1995. At the time the capacity for standing only at 450 and 400 partial seating as quite limiting in the potential for the building to put on larger scale live music concerts.

If you compare the Cheese and Grain in Frome their fire limit is twice that of the Ceres Hall with around the same number of fire exits.

Advice should be sought on the limit, for standing only events, could be increased by up to 150 and if any safety issues arise from that.

Councillor Hopkins also asked if advice to be sought on the capacity limit for seating around the edge of the hall with tables, so a comparison could be made.

Councillor Hopkins has received a number of approaches from promoters who have said if the capacity was to be increased, the commercial viability of the venue would be markedly increased for them.

As the Council is looking at ways of increasing income from hall hire, Councillor Hopkins feels that a re-examination of the capacities by Licencing officers is overdue.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if the wishes officers explore this request further.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Officers are unaware of any financial or resource implication for the Council associated with this decision.

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 – ROUNDWAY WARD NOTICE BOARDS

This report has been prepared by Councillor Wooldridge.

Recommendation

Set out any recommendation the Committee needs to consider

Purpose of the Report

To provide an opportunity for the Town Council to decide if or how it wishes to use the notice boards in Roundway ward.

Background

When Roundway Parish Council was joined with Devizes Town Council, the notice boards that were in the parish transferred to the Town Council. Most of those Councillors who held key for the noticeboards have agreed to continue to put information in them.

When the Councils merged, it was agreed that the notice boards would still be used to inform the Roundway ward residents what was going on, also a list of councillors that they could contact.

Officers' addition to the report.

List of Notice boards in the Parish

- North Ward
 - Avon Road - Looked after by Cllr Rose
 - The Chequers – Looked after by Venues Staff
 - Outside the Old Post Old post office – Looked after by Venues Staff
- Roundway Ward
 - Roundway Village -- Looked after by Cllr Mays
 - Outside Nursteed School -- Looked after by Cllr VonBrg
 - Newman Road – Looked after by Cllr Stevens

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- Roundway Park – formally looked after by Cllr Steel (Now Cllr (Woodridge has the key)
- South Ward
 - None
- East Ward
 - None

The North Ward Notice boards only carry information about events in the town. Officers believe that the Roundway Ward notice boards are still branded as Roundway Parish Council.

Options Considered

The committee needs to decide if or how they wish to use the notice boards in Roundway ward.

Implications and Risks

Financial and Resource Implications

Officers are unaware of any financial or resource implication for the Council associated with this decision

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.

20. 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.

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DEPUTY TOWN CLERK