

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Finance and Management Committee held in Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn on Wednesday 8th July 2009 at 7.00pm – 9.45pm

PRESENT

Councillors: J. Morris (Chairman), P. Duffy, M. German, I. German, P. Newell, G. Jones, L Muraca, G. Green, A. Horobin, A. Pennington, G. Frobisher, S. Frobisher, G. Percival, A. Sampson, J. Davies (arrived 7.15pm), J. Thompson-Hill (arrived 7.15pm).

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N. Acott –Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Mrs L. Hewitt - Committee Support Assistant, Mr T. Brown – Internal Auditor.

APOLOGIES

Councillors: M. Eckersley, P. Curtis.

44 CHAIRMAN'S APPOINTMENT 2009/10

Nominations were invited for position of Chairman for ensuing Municipal Year. Cllr S. Frobisher proposed and Cllr G. Green seconded nomination of Cllr J. Morris. No other nominations were received.

RESOLVED That Cllr J. Morris be appointed Chairman of Finance and Management Committee for 2009/10.

45 VICE CHAIRMAN'S APPOINTMENT 2009/10

Nominations were invited for position of Vice Chairman for ensuing Municipal Year. Cllr P. Duffy proposed and Cllr A. Horobin seconded nomination of Cllr A. Pennington.

RESOLVED That Cllr A. Pennington be appointed Vice Chairman of Finance and Management Committee 2009/10.

46 PAID ACCOUNTS

Details of paid accounts and financial statements 2008/9 had been circulated with agenda. Committee queried reason for electrical works at Meliden Community Centre and was informed this related to works necessary for electrical certificate for the building that was owned by Council. The work was organised by Meliden Community association who arranged for quotations. Reference was made to poor environmental condition of skatepark, and Town Clerk/Financial Officer confirmed annual engineers report had been forwarded to contractors to enable minor remedied works to be undertaken.

The issue of health and safety risk assessments in respect of new community artwork was raised and Committee informed this item would be considered later tonight. Discussion then ensued on current banking arrangements (no charges with current bankers) and reasons for unpresented cheques at 31st March 2009 at financial year end. During consideration of financial statements 2008/9 reference was made to level of external grant aided work and of need for further report at next meeting.

RESOLVED That Schedule of Paid Accounts for April 2009 and Financial Statements 2008/9 be accepted.

(Cllr J. Davies and Cllr J. Thompson-Hill arrived during this item).

47 INTERNAL AUDIT – EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECTS

Mr T. Brown, Internal Auditor referred to new audit guidance that required Council to identify future workplan for his service as reported at last meeting. Following discussion with Chair and Vice Chairman of Committee and in line with previous Committee direction it was agreed that externally funded projects should be reviewed.

Mr T. Brown presented his report confirming that he had reviewed potential and actual grant aided income, monies received, invoice recharges and claims etc. He answered Members questions about his findings, Prestatyn Artwork Project, and implications of grant work on future expenditure. With reference to potential grants the Town Clerk/Financial Officer explained that during budget preparation work it was sometimes necessary to consider projects suitable for grant aid although this could not be guaranteed. Similarly if Denbighshire County Council or any grant giving body withdrew a service e.g. youth support for holiday activities this would clearly impact upon service although on occasions this could be overcome by Town Council changing level of service to meet new circumstance.

RESOLVED That Mr T. Brown be thanked for his excellent report.

48 NOTICE OF AUDIT 2008/9

Details of external audit had been received from Hacker Young Chartered Accountants and 1st September 2009 given as appointed date of audit.

RESOLVED That notice be received.

49 ACCOUNT AND AUDIT (WALES) REGULATIONS 2005

Welsh Assembly Government consultation paper had been circulated with agenda. The papers highlighted various proposals including a change from 30th September to 30th June for submission of external audit papers.

RESOLVED That Consultation paper be received.

50 RISK ASSESSMENT PM 212

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer had circulated a paper with agenda detailing two items requiring further attention arising from earlier work. Office accommodation required various maintenance work including window repairs.

RESOLVED

1) That quotations be sought for repair to existing windows and decoration.

2) Management Capacity and Effectiveness to be considered later in tonight's proceedings.

51 INSURANCE RENEWAL 2009/10

Discussion took place on Council's insurance arrangements, levels of cover, long term agreements and discounts, public and employers liability, fidelity cover and reasons for engineers inspection at skatepark. Councillors commented on specialised nature of insurance and limited competition.

RESOLVED

1) That actions of Chairman, Vice Chairman and Town Clerk/Financial Officer in renewing present insurance with Zurich Insurance be approved. Financial Implications : £9,200 as contained in budget provision 2009/10.

2) That copy of insurance cover be forwarded to Cllrs P. Duffy and P. Newell.

52 TOWN EVENTS

Committee considered applications together with balance sheets as appropriate for following events :-

1) Prestatyn Flower Show

RESOLVED

a) That Prestatyn Flower Show be awarded £750.

Legal/Financial Implications : S137 Local Government Act 1972. Costs contained in budget provisions 2009/10.

b) That enquiries be made about community marquee formerly purchased as part of North Hoyle Community funding.

c) That Denbighshire County Councillors be congratulated on limited reinstatement of weed spraying at prime locations following earlier withdrawal of this service.

d) That actions of Chairman in arranging supply of ten planting troughs (8 Prestatyn/2 Meliden) following confirmation of watering arrangements at Prestatyn Parish Church by flower show committee be approved. Financial Implications : £350 contained in budget provisions 2009/10.

2) Denbighshire County Council – Prestatyn Coastal Events

Details of email dated 3rd June 2009 received from Sian Davies, Events Officer, Denbighshire County Council had been circulated with agenda. The County Council were seeking matched funding to enable a series of open air events and activities e.g. live bands, Punch and Judy to be arranged throughout summer months.

Committee discussed the merits of hosting such events in a tourism town and the proposed locations that were linked to Central Beach regeneration area.

RESOLVED That Committee award £1,500 towards Denbighshire County Council's summer events programme.

a) Legal/Financial Implications : Local Government Act 1974 S.144/5. Costs contained in budget provisions 2009/10.

b) That Events Officer be urged to liaise with Public Realm Team to ensure removal of litter, local police and neighbours to help avoid possible complaints.

(Cllr A. Horobin left meeting).

3) Rhyl Cycling Club – Central/Barkby Beach, Prestatyn

Committee was reminded of last year's charity bike race along promenade/Beach Road East and of organisers wish to establish this as annual event. Members were reminded of Council's cycling programme led by Debbie Hughes and regular reports to General Purposes Committee.

RESOLVED

a) That Committee award Rhyl Cycling Club £330.

Legal/Financial Implications : S 137 Local Government Act 1972. Costs contained within budget provisions 2009/10.

b) That Mr J. Harland, Rhyl Cycling Club be invited to attend future meeting.

(Cllr G. Frobisher left meeting)

53 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED That Public and Press be excluded in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Parts 12, 14, 15,16 and that following urgent items be considered : Public Benches/Central Beach Artwork/Staff Management/Freedom of Information Requests.

54 PUBLIC BENCHES

The Chairman reported that he had arranged for purchase of two replacement benches at Lower High Street, Prestatyn.

RESOLVED

1) That actions of the Chairman and Vice Chairman be approved.

Legal/Financial Implications: Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953. £720 contained in budget provisions 2009/10.

2) That further enquiries be made with contractors regarding incident.

55 STAFF SICKNESS RECORD 2008/9

Details of Staff sickness record 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009 had been circulated with agenda. Clarification was sought on number of occasions for part-time staff absence and current position.

RESOLVED That staff sickness record 2008/9 be received and update on latest records be reported to next meeting.

56 STANDING ORDERS

RESOLVED That Standing Order No 1 be waived and meeting extended by forty five minutes.

57 STAFFING (This item not for reproduction to public and press)

The Chairman referred to letters sent by four employees to all Councillors and to discussions held with Staff in which he had agreed to arrange a meeting between Council and Staff. He referred to a telephone call received last week confirming that Denbighshire County Council, occupational health support services had quoted from earlier signed agreement for services. The Town Clerk/Financial Officer also confirmed that he had approached Occupational Health on occasions in past and received advice about referrals system and necessary referral forms etc. when requested. A new service level agreement had recently been signed and arrangements for presentation to staff on occupational health support was being organised.

Councillors referred to recent correspondences and sought clarification about Arbitration and Conciliation Advice Service and National Joint Council's terms and conditions of service under which all staff had been employed. The Chairman confirmed that he had agreed to Staff meeting Council and several Members enquired about Chairmanship and servicing arrangements for such a meeting. The Town Clerk/Financial Officer advised that Council had no collective grievance/disciplinary procedures in place and only individual processes were covered by contracts. He also enquired whether the proposed meeting was part of Council's attempt at informal resolution at which he would be present if required and Member's concurred.

In response to enquiry the Town Clerk/Financial Officer confirmed that Denbighshire County Council had previously advised they could not provide human resource support but it was felt a further request should be submitted.

Reference was made to annual appraisal systems and opportunity provided for staff to raise matters with manager. Committee was also reminded that individual staff issues could be raised either with manager or Chairman of Finance and Management Committee. Following Town Clerk/Financial Officer's recent discussion with staff the removal of Staff Sub Committee had been a significant source of contention and it was felt introduction of occasional staff liaison forums would be of benefit.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Denbighshire County Council would be approached to see if they can provide support for human resource services.
- 2) That Finance and Management Committee arrange for a meeting with all staff as requested in correspondence and agreed by Chairman and Vice Chairman.

A recorded vote was requested.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Cllrs J. Thompson-Hill, G. Green, P. Newell, I. German, M. German, A. Pennington, L. Muraca, S. Frobisher, G. Jones, J. Davies, A. Sampson.	Cllr G. Percival	Cllr P. Duffy
(11)	(1)	(1)

58 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported on large volume of multiple enquiries from single individual.

RESOLVED Defer until next meeting.

59 CENTRAL BEACH ARTWORK

Committee was informed of recent accident and of actions taken by County/Town Council to prevent further public access pending investigations.

60 COUNCIL MANAGEMENT

In light of the staff shortages the Town Clerk/Financial Officer circulated his report outlining current situation and actions being taken. He referred to recent difficulties with payroll system caused by computer software conflict and lack of in depth training for Sage system. He had recommended outsourcing as an immediate cost effective and time saving solution.

At this late hour several Councillors felt it was not possible to conclude this item of business and Chairman declared meeting closed.

Chairman_____

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of extraordinary Finance and Management committee meeting held in the Stewart Jones Room, Municipal Offices, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn on Wednesday 5th July at 18.15pm – 21.45pm

PRESENT

Cllr G. Frobisher, Cllr G. Green, Cllr P. Duffy (PD part- **18.33pm**), Cllr M. German (MG Part- **18.34pm**), Cllr A. Pennington, Cllr P. Newell, Cllr G. Jones, Cllr J. Morris (Chairman), Cllr J. Davies, Cllr. P. Curtis, Cllr A. Sampson, Cllr L. Muraca, Cllr S. Frobisher, Cllr G. Percival.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N. Acott – Town Clerk/ Financial Officer (part), Mr D. Sheridan LLB – Witness and Committee Support Assistant, Ms K. Evans – Unison Representative, Ms A. Ottaway – Occupational Health Representative.

APOLOGIES

Cllr M. Eckersley, Cllr A. Horobin, Cllr I. German, Cllr J Thompson-Hill.

PREAMBLE

Town Council Staff and Mr N. Acott present:

1. The Chairman introduced the meeting as an extraordinary committee meeting to address the general nature of grievances raised by the Town Council's staff in relation to their work environment. The Chairman opined that the meeting was approved by the last Finance and Management Committee Meeting as a result of written requests submitted to the Town Council by the Town Council's Staff.
2. Contrary representations were made by Mrs K. Evans that this should be treated as a formal Grievance Procedure and averred that the staff had submitted a formal written grievance letter on 22nd June 2009.
3. Cllr M. German, Cllr G. Percival and Cllr P. Duffy expressed concerns that the meeting may be treated as a formal procedure owing to a lack of expertise from within the Town Council's representative body. Discussion ensued and the Committee and Ms K. Evans queried the nature of the meeting and considerable reference was made to the benefit of using this as an opportunity to open a dialogue to identify the general nature of the grievance raised by the Town Council's staff.
4. Further it was agreed that because Mr N. Acott was the subject of the Town Council staffs' complaint he would withdraw from the meeting until the Town Council's staff had expressed their views to the open forum. Mr N. Acott was allotted a separate audience with the Committee at the end of the meeting.

RESOLVED

- a) That the meeting should be treated as an informal grievance meeting.
- b) That Mr N. Acott and the Town Council Staff be given independent opportunities to express their views freely to the Committee.

AUDIO RECORD OF MEETING

Town Council Staff and Mr N. Acott present:

5. A recorded vote was requested. Cllr M. German, Cllr G. Percival and Cllr P. Duffy registered formal objections. Cllr M. German and Cllr P. Duffy formally withdrew from the meeting (**18.34pm and 18.33pm respectively**), registering their concerns that there may be legal ramifications for the Council in absence of a legal representative(s) to safeguard the Town Council's interests. Cllr G. Percival was of the view that no record of the meeting should be kept at all, and Mr D. Sheridan interjected and reminded the Committee, that in compliance with the spirit of the ACAS guidelines, minutes must be kept throughout the meeting. The remaining Committee members present expressed their support for this measure on this individual occasion. The Town Council staff agreed with this proposition.

RESOLVED That a digital audio record would be made of the informal grievance meeting.

TOWN COUNCIL STAFF RECOURSE - FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT AGENDA

Town Council Staff only:

6. The Chairman and Cllr G. Green referred to the need to analyse the deep rooted grievance which has evolved over a considerable period of time. Cllr G. Green submitted that he sympathised with the difficulties which were being experienced by the Town Council staff and asserted the need to look forward to resolve any disagreements as between the Town Council staff and Mr N. Acott. Cllr P. Newell referred to the need to look at particular problems which had occurred in the past in order to facilitate any progress.

7. Cllr A. Sampson, speaking on behalf of the Committee, stated that it had not been clear that there were any deep rooted staff problems at the Town Council. He sought to allay concerns that the Town Council was indifferent to their grievances, advising that it was not until Ms G. Fletcher's resignation letter was submitted that it became apparent there may be a more serious problem.

8. Mrs J. Taylor made reference to the employment of a modern apprentice, and cited this as one of the operative causes of Ms G. Fletcher's departure because there was insufficient work to complete for additional members of staff. Mrs J. Taylor and Mrs J. Seaman had regard to a letter dated 19 Aug 2008 in which Mr N. Acott had approved funds for educational training for the said apprentice, prior to seeking a sanction from the Finance and Management Committee meeting in September 2008. Cllr G. A. Jones expressed that Mr N. Acott is not able to take such action with reference to the Local Government Act 1972.

9. Cllr A. Sampson queried whether the Town Council Staffs' concerns had been conveyed to the Town Council in their totality. The Town Council staff reflected on whether Mr N. Acott had accurately conveyed their ongoing concerns to the Town Council. The Town Council Staff were of the collective opinion that Mr N. Acott had failed to represent their views fairly and accurately to the Town Council, hence the need for this meeting.

10. Discussion ensued and reference was made to a previous structure, the Staff Liaison Committee, which used to provide the Town Council Staff with a direct means of access to their employer, the Town Council. The Town Council staff submitted that the removal of this structure effectively broke down their channel of communication to their employer.

11. It was agreed by the Chairman that any future staff concerns could be added on to the Finance and Management Committee meeting agenda. It was accepted that this would provide a direct means of presenting issues to the Town Council as and when they arose, although the Town Council Staff expressed concern that direct means of redress should be available through their line manager, Mr N. Acott. Cllr G. Green asked whether it would be possible to allay the Town Council staffs' concerns in this regard by undertaking to support Mr N. Acott in his role, on the condition that Mr N. Acott would, subject to his approval, undertake to amend and improve his management style. The Town Council staff agreed with this proposition.

RESOLVED

- (a) That Town Council staff may seek and addendum to the Finance and Management Committee agenda to raise any concerns and/ or queries directly with the Town Council.
- (b) That Town Council staff would support Mr N. Acott in his role, subject to his agreeing to amend his management style, and representing their interests fairly to the Town Council as their line manager.

Mr N. Acott only:

12. The above resolutions were put to Mr N. Acott by the Chairman and he agreed to both resolutions in principle, save that he did not accept that the grievance issues raised in relation to his management style were the only presenting problems. Cllr P. Newell intimated that Mr N. Acott's management style and communication problems were the operative cause of this informal grievance procedure.

13. Cllr G. Green enquired whether there were any courses that Mr N. Acott felt would help him to review his management style and Mr N. Acott agreed that he would be more than willing to undertake any necessary training. Mr N. Acott intimated that he had spoken to occupational health and advised that they had suggested some possible training courses.

14. Mr D. Sheridan reminded the Committee of Ms A. Ottaway's comments when she introduced the role of occupational health to the Committee. Ms A. Ottaway was clear that occupational health provides a counselling facility and does not entail any form of staff training or make any such recommendations. Mr N. Acott restated that Ms A. Ottaway had provided training recommendations. Mr G. Percival clarified what training had been made available to Mr N. Acott in his role and Mr N. Acott confirmed that he had been offered ample opportunity to avail of training.

15. Mr N. Acott expressed that he would like the Chairman to have a more active role in the management of the Town Council and the Chairman made reference to their present weekly meetings at the Town Council with the Mayor in attendance. This was viewed as a move towards a more active involvement in the daily interests of the Town Council offices.

COUNCIL MINUTES AND DOCUMENTATION-EDITING

Town Council Staff only:

16. Details of the current minute taking practice were disclosed to the Committee. Mrs J. Taylor, speaking on behalf of the Town Council staff, made reference to the fact that minutes were presently taken by Mrs L. Hewitt, although they are then subject to editing undertaken by the Town Clerk, Mr N. Acott. Cllr G. Jones interjected and confirmed that Ms L. Hewitt was an independent contractor. Cllr G. Green expressed that the result of this system may be selective minute taking by a party other than their author.

17. On this subject Ms S. Edwards made reference to the fact that her last report submitted to the Council had been edited by Mr N. Acott, who incorporated an incorrect statement of fact. Cllr G. Percival tested this notion and asked what reason Mr N. Acott would have for altering her report. In response Ms S. Edwards opined that she could not provide a reason why Mr N. Acott would amend it. It was accepted that this could be a mistake. The Town Council staff stated that this is the sort of incident, which occurs with some regularity, which has damaged their trust in Mr N. Acott.

18. Discussion ensued between the staff and the Committee and although it was accepted that for practicability minutes must be edited to some extent the Town Council minutes should be typed by Ms L. Hewitt. It was agreed that the typed draft minutes should then be approved by the Chairman of the concerned meeting, with reference to the original transcript.

RESOLVED

- (a) That Town Council minutes should be typed by Ms L. Hewitt.
- (b) That the Town Council minutes would be subject to approval of the Chairman of any relevant meeting, with reference to the original transcript.

Mr N. Acott only:

19. The above resolutions were put to Mr N. Acott by the Chairman without reference to the examples of editing submitted by staff. Mr N. Acott agreed in principle, and it was submitted by the Committee that this was preferable to formal meetings with members of the Council when there may not always be cause to hold such a meeting.

STAFF- OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

Town Council Staff only:

20. Ms A. Ottaway introduced the role of occupational health in the work place. Ms A. Ottaway advised that her involvement is advisory only and she clarified that her presence was not intended to intimidate or threaten anyone present at the meeting.

21. There was discussion of the benefits of group and individual counselling sessions to the Town Council staff in helping to move on from the negative feelings caused by this ongoing grievance. Ms A. Ottaway recommended that group counselling sessions, subject to the Town Council staffs' approval would be the most beneficial starting point, progressing on to individual counselling sessions. Ms A. Ottaway has supplied Mr N. Acott with a stress management policy which contains information on stress management in the work place.

22. Subsequent to the presentation made by Ms A. Ottaway the Chairman and Cllr A. Sampson made formal apologies on behalf of the Town Council for inappropriate comments and behaviour directed at Ms A. Ottaway outside the grievance meeting by Cllr P. Duffy. Ms A. Ottaway accepted the apology. It was confirmed that it would be preferable to involve Mr N. Acott in the group counselling sessions, subject to the Town Council staffs' agreement, and it was accepted that this would be an ongoing process.

RESOLVED

- (a) That occupational health would provide a counselling service to improve Town Council staff relations.
- (b) That counselling sessions would involve both group and individual sessions.
- (c) That Mr N. Acott, as the Town Council staffs' line manager, would benefit from being involved in group counselling sessions.

Mr N. Acott only:

23. The above resolutions were put to Mr N. Acott and he agreed that he would be willing to participate in counselling sessions in those premises. Cllr A. Pennington intimated that there was a need to tackle the causes of any problems within the workplace and questioned how Mr N. Acott would construct a better working environment.

24. Mr N. Acott felt that more active involvement from the Chairman working closer with him would help him to undertake his duties with greater efficacy. The Committee acknowledged that Mr N. Acott did appear to need more support from the Town Council. It was agreed that there would be a more active involvement of the Town Council members in the Town Council's functions. Reference was made to Cllr. A. Sampson's comment to the staff that Councillors would like to informally visit the Town Council at appropriate junctures throughout working hours.

INDIRECT STAFF COMMUNICATION –APPROPRIATE USE

Town Council Staff only:

25. Consideration was given to the way that Mr N. Acott passes work and messages to staff. The Town Council staff intimated that the most inappropriate means of communication by Mr N. Acott were email and post-its in circumstances where Mr N. Acott is in an adjacent room. The staff submitted that this lack of interaction was damaging to staff moral and team spirit.

26. Cllr P. Newell suggested that staff have left the Town Council as a direct result of Mr N. Acott's lack of communication and management style. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that Mr N. Acott should use make more appropriate use of email and other indirect communication. The Town Council staff agreed that implementing such a change would help to develop a better channel of communication.

RESOLVED That Mr N. Acott, subject to his approval, should communicate instructions and messages directly to staff where appropriate.

Mr N. Acott only:

27. The above resolution was put to Mr N. Acott and he responded that he only uses emails to seek confirmation or to keep a record of communicated items. Mr N. Acott stated that his use of email was necessary because the staff, with the exception of Mrs J. Taylor, are part time. The Committee emphasised that emails should be used with common sense. Mr N. Acott agreed with this proposition.

28. Mr N. Acott stated that there were other issues which had arisen as between individual members of Town Council staff which made communication difficult. Mr N. Acott specified that there was a lot of unhappiness between one person and another, although he would not identify those persons.

29. Mr N. Acott stated that identifying those persons brought about a conflict within himself because a staff member had approached him in confidence. Mr N. Acott submitted that the nature of the problem was to do with attitudes, and expressed that what one person deems acceptable is not always acceptable to another.

30. Testing this point Cllr G. Pennington commented on the apparent unity and team ethos conveyed by the members of staff throughout the entirety of the meeting. Cllr G. Green stated that one positive outcome at this stage was that the staff had given a considerable undertaking to support Mr N. Acott in his role to move things forward.

STAFF MEETINGS- MINUTES

Town Council Staff only:

RESOLVED That the Town Council staff may keep minutes of weekly staff meetings.

Mr N. Acott only:

31. The above resolution was put to Mr N. Acott and he agreed with this proposition. Cllr G. Percival underlined that staff must be selected to do so in a tactful way.

COMPLETION OF DAILY TASKS – EMPOWERMENT OF TOWN COUNCIL STAFF

Town Council Staff only:

32. Cllr G. Green intimated that staff should be empowered to request that Mr N. Acott addresses and/or provides instruction on how to complete tasks before the end of the working day. Town Council staff agreed with this proposition citing that they have previously had to seek direct authorisation from the Town Council on occasion because Mr N. Acott had not authorised necessary tasks before taking annual leave.

RESOLVED

- (1) That daily tasks be finalised before the end of the working day; or
- (2) In the alternative prior instruction must be left with the Town Council staff on how to address any outstanding issues.

Mr N. Acott only:

33. The above resolutions were put to Mr N. Acott and the Chairman advised that as far as is practicable items should not be left outstanding at the end of the working day. When matters are left outstanding prior instruction must be left with the Town Council staff advising how to deal with any potential matters.

34. Cllr G. Percival opined that simple office management changes will resolve most of these issues and Mr N. Acott stated that he would make any necessary changes in this regard.

STAFF- TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Town Council Staff only:

35. Reference was made to the unacceptable administration of requests made by Town Council staff to seek a re-grade and to seek amendment to their terms of employment. The Committee agreed that any outstanding matters with regard to re-grading or confirmation of terms of employment ought to be addressed as soon as practicable. The Town Council staff expressed that it had taken three years to process Mrs J. Seaman's request for a re-grade.

36. The staff expressed their concern that it was Mr N. Acott's failure to convey their requests to the Town Council which had resulted in any significant delay.

RESOLVED That any outstanding or future requests relating to re-grades or confirmation of Town Council staff terms of employment be actioned more efficiently.

Mr N. Acott only: The above resolution was put to Mr N. Acott and he took the view that any delay caused with regard to processing the above requests was the fault of the Town Council as a collective body.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**Town Council Staff only:**

RESOLVED That a system of staff development and appraisal be adopted subject to Mr N. Acott and the Town Council staffs' approval.

Mr N. Acott only:

37. The above resolution was put to Mr N. Acott and he agreed to undertake and implement any necessary programme of staff development and training to redress issues that have arisen as a result of the Town Council staffs' grievances.

57 STAFFING

The Chairman referred to recent discussions and correspondence from staff.

RESOLVED

1) That Denbighshire County Council would be approached to see if they can provide support for human resource services.

2) That Finance and Management Committee arrange for a meeting with all staff as requested in correspondence and agreed by Chairman and Vice Chairman.

A recorded vote was requested.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Cllrs J. Thompson-Hill, G. Green, P. Newell, I. German, M. German, A. Pennington, L. Muraca, S. Frobisher, G. Jones, J. Davies, A. Sampson.	Cllr G. Percival	Cllr P. Duffy

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FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Finance and Management Committee held in Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn on Wednesday 16th September 2009 at 6.15pm -8.25pm

PRESENT

Councillors: J. Morris (Chairman), M. Eckersley, P. Duffy, M. German, I. German, P. Newell, G. Jones, L Muraca, A. Pennington, G. Frobisher, G. Percival, A. Sampson, J. Davies, J. Thompson-Hill.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N. Acott –Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Mr T. Brown – Internal Auditor.

APOLOGIES

Councillors: P. Curtis, A. Horobin, G. Green, S. Frobisher.
Mrs L. Hewitt – Committee Support Assistant.

85 PAID ACCOUNTS

Details of paid accounts and quarterly financial statement circulated with agenda. Committee enquired about payments to Sherratt Landscapes Ltd in respect of clearing surface water drains at Council offices, repairs to Deputy Mayor's chain, British Cycling (insurance), Bikes Direct repairs to cycles, Saffle consultancy fees for art project, payments for new public benches at Bastion Road, Rhyl Cycling Club (grant for Prestatyn event), Café Cymru refreshments for launch of artwork, Reed employment agency costs, and Cod Steaks Ltd.

Committee was reminded that expenditure in respect of Prestatyn Artworks Project had been externally funded primarily by Arts Council for Wales and Denbighshire County Council. Reed Employment Agency costs for 1st April – 18th August amounted to one thousand, one hundred pounds and it was confirmed that other service providers would be considered when required in future. Reference was also made to Council's treasury deposit and interest rates.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Schedule of Paid Accounts for April, May, June and July 2009 and Quarterly Financial Statement be accepted.
- 2) That Community led cycle programme, and operating costs/income from Ty Pendre Community Building be agendered for future meeting.

86 COUNCIL OFFICES RATING REVIEW

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported that following a revaluation exercise Council rates had been reduced by two hundred and thirty five pounds.

87 EXTERNAL GRANTS PM 47

Details of external grants received by Council from 2003 to 2009 totalling £568,033 has been circulated with agenda. A programme of current grant aided work had also been circulated. Reference was made to completion of both internal and external audits with exception of 2008/9 that was being undertaken at present.

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer responded to Members questions about grant aid sources, application procedures, identification of projects, administration of programmes that involve daily activity, and opportunities for inspection of records.

RESOLVED

- 1) That information be received.
- 2) That all Members be invited to review records held in Town Clerk's office.

(Cllr P. Newell requested further copy of Town Clerk/Financial Officer's job description).

88 NORTH WEST COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION/JUBILEE CENTRE, SEABANK DRIVE, PRESTATYN

A letter from the Community Association had been circulated with agenda seeking funds for new boiler due to high running costs. Cllr A. Pennington informed Committee that following instruction a heating engineer report had been sought on efficiency of the present heating system and completion of this survey was expected very shortly. The works would also include checking accuracy of gas meter.

Committee also referred to the accounts submitted by Association that showed an operating loss for 2008/9, and it was recommended that the Association be urged to review its charging policy.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Chairman, Mayor, Town Clerk/Financial Officer and Cllr A. Pennington be authorised to progress tenders following submission of two heating engineers reports.

Financial Implications : Costs to be contained within budget provisions.

Legal Implications : Property owned by Town Council but leased to North West Management Association.

- 2) That Community Association be urged to review its hire charging policy to ensure they cover day to day operating costs.

(Cllr M. German declared interest and retired from Council Chambers. Cllr A. Pennington declared interest, remained in Chamber but did not partake in voting on this item).

89 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

That Public and Press be excluded in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Parts 12, 14, 15, 16 during the following items : Freedom of Information, Ty Caradoc Community Centre, Staff Sickness, Finance and Management Committee, Management Capacity.

90 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer referred to the large volume of requests from a single individual and impact upon council services. He also reported that he had sought guidance from County Clerk and Freedom of Information Officer regarding handling of such multiple requests and various actions that can be taken.

With regard to queries received direct by Councillors from constituents the Town Clerk/Financial Officer advised that discretion lay with individual Councillor whether to respond or not.

In respect of Accounts for Audit public inspection period a large number of queries had also been raised by same individual, several meetings had taken place with enquirer and copies of documents had been provided and charged when appropriate.

RESOLVED That information be received and situation noted and Town Clerk/Financial Officer continue liaisons with County Clerk, Denbighshire County Council.

91 TY CARADOC COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Chairman referred to a letter received earlier in the day confirming that the Community Association wished to enter negotiations for renewal of twenty one year lease arrangement and three yearly peppercorn rental agreement.

Committee referred to the good work undertaken by the Association in managing the property, and community benefits arising from provision of such a facility.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Committee approve renewal of twenty one year lease with Ty Caradoc Community Association.
- 2) That three yearly peppercorn rental be £156 per annum.

Financial/Legal Implications: Property owned by Town Council and leased to a voluntary Management Association. Terms and Conditions contained within lease.

92 STAFF SICKNESS PM 55

Details of Staff sickness records including updated presentation showing number of occasions for period 1st April–31st August 2009 had been circulated.

RESOLVED That all Staff be thanked for commitment shown.

93 EXTRAORDINARY FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - 5th August 2009

Minutes of meeting had been previously circulated by Mr D. Sheridan, Independent Notetaker together with guidance notes on handling confidential papers. The Chairman had subsequently written to all Staff detailing actions required from meeting and copy circulated to all Councillors.

Chairman also reported upon regular on-going dialogue with Staff and work being progressed in respect of appraisal systems.

RESOLVED That Chairman's report be received.

94 OFFICE MANAGEMENT

Committee was reminded that this item had been deferred from July meeting and several items raised in an earlier report (copy circulated) had been superceded by events e.g. holiday playscheme, free swim, holiday cover arrangements.

The Chairman referred to discussions with staff, and correspondence received this afternoon from employee requesting adjustments to job description.

RESOLVED

- 1) That report be received.
- 2) That Sue and Debbie, Community Health Initiatives Staff be thanked for continued efforts and support
- 3) That Jane and Janice, Financial/Administrative Support Staff be thanked for continued efforts and support.
- 4) That vacant post of Senior Administrative/Civic Officer be reviewed in January 2010.
- 5) That Town Clerk/Financial Officer expressed appreciation for Chair, Vice Chair, Mayor and Deputy for attending weekly briefing.

Chairman_____

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Finance and Management Committee held in Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn on Wednesday 20th January 2010 at 6.15pm - 8.30pm

PRESENT

Councillors: J. Morris (Chairman), M. Eckersley, P. Duffy, M. German, I. German, P. Newell, S. Frobisher, L Muraca, A. Pennington, G. Frobisher, G. Percival, A. Sampson, J. Davies, J. Thompson-Hill, P. Curtis, A. Horobin, G. Green, G. Jones.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N. Acott –Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Mrs L. Hewitt – Committee Support Assistant, Mr T. Brown – Internal Auditor.

153 PAID ACCOUNTS

Details of paid accounts and quarterly financial statements had been circulated with agenda. Committee queried costs relating to employment agency and were reminded of earlier reports concerning this item, purchase of walk badges that walk leaders had reported were a very popular incentive for volunteers walk programme, computer maintenance and service arrangements, grant payments relating to Prestatyn Art Project, nationally agreed mileage rates for local government staff, and publications e.g. legislation, newspapers.

Reference was made to recent installation of new boiler system at Seabank Drive Community Centre and it was hoped this would result in lower gas bills. It was also noted that a small amount of income had been received following Freedom of Information requests and copies of Council records etc.

RESOLVED That Schedule of Paid Accounts for August, September, October, November 2009 and Quarterly Financial Statement be accepted.

154 FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2010/11

Details of financial estimates and commentary had been circulated with agenda. Discussion took place upon proposals and various service options were considered. The Town Clerk/Financial Officer explained reasons for poor returns on investment following collapse of interest rates. He also reported he had used an underlying inflation rate of 3% during budget preparation work. A number of service costs were debated by Committee including proposals on Staff, Mayoral expenditure, and web site developments.

Committee was reminded of the long term financing of the Scala Cinema and Arts Facility service agreement that was being subsidised from Council reserves, although planned support from reserves would eventually be phased out over next few years. The level of reserves and balances was also considered.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) That Financial Estimates 2010/11 be accepted.
- 2) That Committee unanimously recommend Council Tax Precept of £348,300 (Band D equivalent of £46.84 – no change)

155 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Committee agreed to a Member request for a change in agenda programme.

RESOLVED That Public and Press be excluded in accordance with Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A during the following items :

Central Beach Artwork/Staff Training/Unforeseen Absence/Civic Officer Post/Collective Grievance Procedure/Work Life Balance/Stress Policy.

156 CENTRAL BEACH ARTWORK PM 135

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer updated Committee upon ongoing insurance claim and actions being progressed by its insurers.

RESOLVED That the information be received.

157 TRAINING

Details of various courses attended by Staff had been circulated with agenda.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Staff be congratulated on their achievements.
- 2) That Denbighshire County Council be thanked for local provision of training events.

158 RISK ASSESSMENT – TOWN CLERK/FINANCIAL OFFICER – UNFORESEEN ABSENCE PM 60/94

Committee was reminded of earlier risk assessment and need to consider its management arrangements in event of unforeseen absence. A discussion paper had been circulated with agenda referring to lack of designated Deputy and/or regional Town Clerk's locum service. The important role of Chairman/Vice Chairman in such unfortunate situation was highlighted by Councillors.

RESOLVED That Chairman raise this item at the forthcoming North Wales Association of Town Council meeting.

159 CIVIC OFFICER/SNR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER VACANCY PM 94/4

The Chairman reported upon current satisfactory working arrangements and recent changes to accommodate work associated with this post. There were no immediate plans to fill the vacancy although it was important to monitor the situation and underlying workloads.

RESOLVED The Chairman's report be received.

160 COLLECTIVE GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer referred to a lack of procedure and discussion with ACAS that highlighted role of a recognised Staff representative in such situations.

Council had approved individual grievance and disciplinary procedures in place and it was felt these could form the basis of further consideration for collective matters.

161 WORK LIFE BALANCE

The Town Clerk/ Financial Officer referred to personal circumstance that required no change in contracted hours but a slight change to his current work pattern.

RESOLVED That Committee support request for revised flexible work arrangements as per discussion.

(Cllr P. Newell left meeting).

162 STRESS POLICY

Details of Health and Safety Executive Stress Policy example had been circulated with agenda.

RESOLVED That document be used as basis of further discussion with Staff.

(Cllr J. Morris, Chairman left meeting and Cllr A. Pennington, Vice Chairman took over Chair for rest of meeting. Cllr G. Green also left meeting).

163 Y MORFA GREEN GYM EXERCISE TRAIL COMMUNITY CAPITAL PROJECT PM 75

Committee was reminded of previous discussion regarding this proposal and it was reported that a grant offer of ten thousand pounds had been received from Denbighshire County Council Community Capital Projects Fund.

Community Health Initiative Officers had also reported positive feedback from local activity groups e.g. football club, running club and environmental association for such a development. A number of actions and work was still required to be undertaken by Council including seeking guidance from contaminated land officer, preparation of plans for further consultations and clarification of future maintenance requirements. All proposed equipment would need to be vandal resistant and this would form part of design brief.

Other projects currently being researched included redevelopment of gardens by Aldi, Gronant Road, Prestatyn and provision of new High Street banners.

RESOLVED That Committee supports Y Morfa development in principle.

Financial Implications : Denbighshire County Council £10,000, Prestatyn Town Council £10,000.

Legal Implications : Land owned by Denbighshire County Council. Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 S. 19.

164 PRESTATYN YOUH ARTS FESTIVAL – SCALA HISTORY QUEUE PROJECT AND FILM PRODUCTION

Details of grant application, balance sheets and breakdown of funding partners had been circulated with agenda. The project involved young people working in partnership with professional artists to establish a range of activities e.g. workshops, history queue project, film production. The total project cost was twenty one thousand eight hundred pounds and secured grants totalled eighteen thousand pounds.

The Festival organisers would be working closely with Scala Cinema and Arts Centre to deliver the project. It was suggested that Friends of the Scala should also be approached to participate in this venture.

RESOLVED That Committee award grant of £2,500 towards project.

Financial Implications : 2009/10 Prestatyn Youth Arts Festival/other events £2,500 per budget provision.

Legal Implications : Local Government Act 1972 S. 137.

165 CORONATION GARDENS FREE CAR PARK 2010

Committee was informed that Denbighshire County Council and Network Rail would be commencing work in February on replacement of pedestrian bridge, upgrading of railway station, and refurbishment of road bridge in a £2.5 million pound scheme.

Denbighshire County Council had recently sought use of the Coronation Gardens free car park for compound and storage purposes associated with this work. Members were informed the car park was owned by County but was serviced by Town Council.

Several Members expressed deep concerns about impact of works on vitality of local business.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Denbighshire County Council be informed of Council's permission for use of car park between February and September 2010.
- 2) That local businesses be informed of proposed works and timescale.
- 3) That Denbighshire County Council be requested to consider provision of alternative free car parking e.g. Lower High Street and/or Fern Avenue car parks.

Financial Implications : Small saving on maintenance costs.

Legal Implications : Site owned by Denbighshire County Council/Network Rail. Road Traffic Act 1984.

166 COUNCIL OFFICES, 7 NANT HALL ROAD, PRESTATYN

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported upon recent discussions with Conservation Officer, Denbighshire County Council and instruction that replacement sash windows need to be in traditional wood.

RESOLVED That two replacement windows be approved.

Financial Implications : Provisional costing £2,000 contained in budget provisions.

Legal Implications : Town Council owns property.

167 SOCIAL FORUM PM 126(a) and 147

Committee was informed that Cllr J. Morris, Chairman and Ms Sue Edwards, Community Health Improvements Officer had requested this item be removed from agenda pending further investigations.

168 CHOICES PM 126(b)

Committee was requested to consider removal of current £15.00 services charge as it was felt this prevented some people from accessing the health improvement programme. Background papers had been circulated with agenda.

RESOLVED That Choices service charge 2009/10 be reduced to £10.00.

Financial Implications : As reported.

Chairman_____

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Finance and Management Committee held in Council Chamber, Municipal Offices, Nant Hall Road, Prestatyn on Wednesday 24th March 2010 at 6.15pm -8.05pm

PRESENT

Councillors: A. Pennington (Vice Chairman), S Frobisher, M. German, I. German, G. Green, P. Newell, L Muraca, G. Percival, A. Sampson, J. Davies.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N. Acott –Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Mrs L. Hewitt – Committee Support assistant
Mr T. Brown – Internal Auditor.

APOLOGIES

Councillors: P. Curtis, A. Horobin, G. Frobisher, M. Eckersley, G. Jones, J. Morris, J. Thompson-Hill.

207 PAID ACCOUNTS

Details of paid accounts and quarterly financial statements had been circulated with agenda. Reference was made to cost of daily litter picks introduced recently in response to local concerns and Town Clerk/Financial Officer confirmed this service would need further detailed consideration at next Town Development Committee. Other queries related to frequency and cost of artwork inspections, repair to vandalised lamp at Seabank Drive Community Centre, cost of replacement light bulbs and frequency of electrical inspection work at Council Offices.

With regard to IT computer maintenance costs the Committee was informed that due to ageing 2002 systems a paper would be prepared for next meeting on future service requirements.

Committee also discussed Council's support of successful volunteer walking schemes and level of operational costs in managing volunteer walking programme.

RESOLVED That Schedule of Paid Accounts for December 2009, January 2010, February 2010 and Quarterly Financial Statements be accepted.

208 ONE VOICE WALES

A letter had been received from Simon White, Chief Executive inviting Council to join this organisation. The Town Clerk/Financial Officer explained the organisation had been formed several years ago and replaced the former National Association of Local Councils (Wales). and Wales Association of Local Councils. It was heavily supported and promoted by Welsh Assembly Government.

Committee discussed merits of membership, services provided, relationship with North Wales Association of Town Councils, level of membership across Wales and associated costs.

RESOLVED That no further action be taken.

(Cll J Davies arrived 6.55pm)

209 COUNCIL CHAMBERS – MAYORAL ROLL

Committee was informed that it was necessary to provide new panels for recording of Mayoral names. It was recognised that the Council Chamber records were a significant and integral part of town's history.

RESOLVED That Committee accept quotation for work in Council Chambers, Prestatyn.

Financial Implications : HR Owen £695 contained in budget provisions.

Legal Implications : Property owned by Denbighshire County Council and Town Council hold established user rights for use of Chamber.

210 SEABANK DRIVE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Cllr M. German, Chairman of Management Association reported that they had received enquiries about establishment of a new community radio station willing to operate from the centre. The Management Association had recently agreed to proposals but would require Council's permission and financial support for provision of broadband internet access. The fragile nature of centre finances had been reported at earlier meeting and prevented Association from incurring such costs.

Additionally a new community group would be commencing work at centre shortly to provide small secured allotments and wildlife garden. It was hoped this activity would feature as part of a community radio programme.

Committee referred to desirability of all community centres being provided with broadband internet access.

RESOLVED

1) That Committee approve development of community radio station at Seabank Drive Community Centre.

Financial Implications : None

Legal Implications : Property owned by Council but on long term lease to Management Association. Radio Station/Management Association to provide confirmation of insurance arrangements.

2) That cost of broadband internet access for all Town Council owned community centres be investigated.

(Cllr M. German declared interest and took no part in voting on both items).

211 PRESTATYN TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB – CENTENARY

Details of correspondence from Football Club had been circulated with agenda. The Club were seeking permission to reproduce town crest on teams football kit for next season to mark its centenary.

RESOLVED That permission be granted for reproduction of town crest by Prestatyn Town Football Club.

Financial Implications : None.

Legal Implications : Armorial Bearings/Coat of Arms

212 PRESTATYN FAIRTRADES

A letter had been received from Prestatyn Fairtrade Steering Group seeking permission to reproduce town logo on its letterheads and stationery.

RESOLVED That permission be granted for reproduction of town logo by Prestatyn Fairtrade Steering Group.

Financial/Legal Implications : None.

213 PRESTATYN WEBSITES

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer circulated a paper detailing history of independent web sites that contained basic information about town council services etc. He explained that whilst Council had supported development of other organisations web sites e.g. Prestatyn and District Business Association, Denbighshire County Council Visitor Guide the authority had not produced its own dedicated site.

Recent work by Staff on updating town council page of www.visitprestatyn.com had been undertaken following resolution of longstanding administrator access and resource issues. Committee was invited to provide a steer on future website development.

RESOLVED

1) That efforts to update town council web pages on visitprestatyn website should continue and include bi-lingual text.

Financial/Other Provisions : Limited staff time in development work. Cost of domain name registrations as reported and contained in budget provisions.

2) That Town Clerk/Financial Officer research costs of providing a dedicated town council web site.

214 GRANT AID APPLICATIONS PM 184

a) Grant Aid Review

Committee discussed present arrangements for directing grants to new community ventures and town events. Reference was made to recent inclusion of grant condition stating 'any organisation making regular profit for award donation to other bodies will receive only limited support'. In addition any donations made above two thousand pounds required feedback to Council and confirmation of spend.

The Town Clerk/Financial Officer also reminded Committee that grant money had been significantly reduced since introduction of North Hoyle Community Funds (Prestatyn) that currently provides thirty thousand pounds per annum funding for community groups each year.

RESOLVED That existing grant aid application process be maintained.

b) Palliative Care Services

Details of a proposal submitted by Cllr M. German and P. Newell had been circulated with agenda. The proposal sought the making of regular annual donations (circa £10,000) payments to St Kentigern Hospice and all other facilities providing palliative care and support.

Committee discussed the overwhelming need for such services and requirement for extra government support of specialised palliative care organisations. The role of Council and individuals was explored and discussion took place on difficult lifestyle choices, provision of national health service/private health service, and extent of voluntary support available for such worthy causes.

During deliberations the role of the Mayor in nominating official charity for year was examined and it was felt that this offered scope for further consideration. Cllr J. Davies referred to the responsibility of managing ratepayers' money and the dilemma of redirecting such funds to other not for profit organisations rather than provision of traditionally recognised statutory/non statutory public services.

RESOLVED That all Councillors be invited to reflect upon debate and submit ideas and suggestions for further consideration.

Chairman _____