



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 21st April 2020

To: All Members of the Finance & General Purposes Committee:
Councillors Murdoch (Chair), Marshall (Vice Chair), Bartlett, Davies, Marsh,
Norman, Rumsey, Sutcliffe, Thomas and Williams.
(Copies to other Councillors for information)

NOTICE OF MEETING

You are hereby summoned to attend an online meeting of the **Finance & General Purposes Committee** to be held on **Monday 27th April 2020** commencing at **19:00 hours** via 'Zoom' on the following dedicated link:

Meeting ID: 757 4342 9239

Press and public are cordially invited to attend. Those wishing to join the meeting should contact the clerk on j.debbage@leominstertowncouncil.gov.uk in advance for the meeting password.

Julie Debbage

Julie Debbage
TOWN CLERK

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a record be kept of the members present and that this record form part of the minutes of the meeting. Members who cannot attend a meeting should tender apologies to the Town Clerk as it is usual for the grounds upon which apologies are tendered also to be recorded. Under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, members present must decide whether the reason(s) for a member's absence are acceptable.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Under the Localism Act 2011 (sections 26-37 and Schedule 4) and in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, members are required to declare any interests which are not currently entered in the member's register of interests or if he/she has not notified the Monitoring Officer of it.

3. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

To consider requests for dispensations (must be notified in writing).

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC (maximum 15 minutes)

To receive questions and statements from members of the public as provided for in Standing Orders. The public can request the password from the clerk to allow participation.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

To receive and approve as a correct record the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 24th February 2020.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

To receive the Clerk's Report on matters outstanding that may not appear on the agenda.

7. FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

(a) Income and Expenditure Report – To consider the report attached up to the end of March 2020 (Month 12).

(b) Accounts Paid and Outstanding Accounts for Payment – A list of accounts paid relating to the months of February and March and April 2020 as attached.

(c) Committee Report – Please see the attached Committee update report.

(d) Internal Auditor Appointment – To confirm the appointment of Iain Selkirk FCA to carry out the mandatory internal audits required annually. There will be two visits necessary.

8. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Certain items are expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance Committee is, therefore, recommended to resolve "That, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information".

(a) Grants Report – To consider the attached grant applications.

(b) Staff Report – To receive a verbal report at the meeting regarding staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic and to consider online staff training currently available.

(c) Impact of COVID-19 – To receive a verbal report on Town Council activities during the pandemic.

(d) Project and Funding Update – To receive the attached report.

(e) Youth Budget Report – To receive the attached report.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be held on Monday 29th June 2020 at 19:00 at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 24th February 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours in the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Murdoch (Chair), Bartlett, Davies, Marsh, Norman, Sutcliffe, Thomas and Williams.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Town Clerk and Town Clerk Designate.

FG39/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Marshall and Rumsey.

FG40/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Cllr Bartlett: Member of the Timebank
- Cllr Norman: Member of the Timebank
- Cllr Norman: Trustee of Leominster in Bloom.

FG41/19 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations received.

FG42/19 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present. No issues were raised

FG4319 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16th December 2019 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

Committee noted that discussions were on-going with regard to Wi-Fi in the flat and Corn Square. Final options would be placed before Committee for consideration.

FG44/19 CLERK'S REPORT

Committee noted the following items:

- (a) **Complaints, Grange Open Space** – Committee noted that two complainants had indicated that they did not agree with the response to the complaint made in October 2019 and had requested that the matter be referred back to the Committee. Both complainants had been requested to identify the areas of the response they did not agree with prior to the Panel appointed being convened.

MINUTES (Agenda Item 5)

- (b) **Flooding Issues** – The Committee wished to record its thanks to the Council's Caretaker for all the work he had undertaken during the recent flooding.
- (c) **Museum Grant** – Committee noted that the Leominster Museum had underspent its grant awarded in 2019 by £407.22. This was due to the contractor waiving his costs. Following consideration, Committee **RESOLVED** to grant Leominster Museum permission to use the unspent grant funding to help towards the purchase of the Ivington Hoard.
- (d) **Payroll** – Committee noted that it was likely that the payroll contractor would discontinue its service in 2020. It was noted that investigations were on-going into a suitable alternative, including the option to purchase software and undertake payroll in-house.
- (e) **Reduction in the Ambulance Service** – Committee noted the response received from the West Midlands Ambulance Service regarding cost savings and the reallocation of its resources.

FG45/19 FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

- (a) **Financial Report** – Committee considered the Financial Report and Balance Sheet up to the end of January 2020 (Month 10). Following discussion, it was agreed that the report be ratified.
- (b) **Outstanding Accounts for Payment** – Following consideration of the accounts for payment, Committee **RESOLVED** to ratify the payments relating to the months of January 2020 amounting to £6,674.09, inclusive of VAT, and February 2020 to date amounting to £43,282.57, inclusive of VAT.
- (c) **Risk Register** – Following consideration of the Council's Risk Register, Committee **RESOLVED** to recommending adoption by Full Council subject to the following amendments:
 - RR3 – Under controls and actions to add information regarding the Town Council's communications to inform residents;
 - RR10 – To note that this had been updated.
- (d) **Committee Report** – Committee considered the Committee Update Report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED**:
 - To note the report;
 - To recommend that Council renews its subscription to HALC and NALC at a cost of £2,413.99 + VAT for 2020/21 subject to the requested ethical standard for Financial Regulations being addressed and the reason why the recruitment of the post of Town Clerk had not been actioned;
 - To monitor the value for money provided by the HALC/NALC subscription and review it in February 2021;

MINUTES (agenda Item 5)

- To seek clarification on storage restrictions in the proposed Depot prior to signing the lease. It was noted that although the building had suffered an ingress of water during the flooding it had not been serious;
- To ratify the removal of the lights in the trees in West Street;
- To support the provision of an additional CCTV camera in the Central car park following a request from Team Leominster;
- To ratify the Legionella training at a cost of £450 + VAT and to establish whether any other organisation wished to take advantage of the training;
- To provide a rent reduction to allotment holders that had been affected by the flooding over the past year as part of their 2020/21 allotment rent;
- To ratify the sponsorship of £500 to Leominster in Bloom for planting of the bee hive planter in Corn Square;
- To carry out the services to the two mowers by TH White Group at a cost of £825.66 for the Ransomes HR300 and £799.25 for the Ferris Zero Turn mower;
- To note the update regarding initial discussions with the National Trust regarding the Secret Garden.

FG46/19 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

As certain items were expected to include the consideration of exempt information and the Finance & General Purposes Committee **RESOLVED** that, in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the discussion of the matters referred to in the items listed below, on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in the respective paragraph of Part 1 of, Schedule 12A of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

- (a) **Grants** – Following consideration of the grant report presented, Committee **RESOLVED**:
- To note and confirm the formal grant application from the LDCA for 2020/21. It was agreed to thank the Community Centre Manager for a very comprehensive application and update;
 - To award a grant of £907 to ECHO to fund the Timebank project subject to the application being amended, fully completed and signed. The award would be subject to the receipt of this information and ratification by Full Council
- (b) **Youth Report** – – Following consideration of the Youth Report presented, Committee **RESOLVED**:
- To allocate £995.67 from the 2019/20 Youth budget to support Dynamis Adventures to run weekly activities at Barons Cross from Easter to August 2020;

MINUTES (Agenda Item 5)

- To allocate £750 from the 2019/20 Youth budget to fund three Wildplay Sessions on the Grange. These will be provided by Herefordshire Wildlife Trust;
- To allocate £1,000 from the 2019/20 Youth budget to support the Kids Kitchen Collective CIC to run six family cooking sessions at Leominster Children's Centre;
- To review the allocation of the remaining £6,041.33 from the 2019/20 Youth budget at the Full Council meeting to be held on 30th March 2020.

- (c) **Banking Report** – Following consideration of the banking report presented, Committee **RESOLVED** to delegate the consideration of the Town Council's banking arrangements to the Budget Task & Finish Group to review all the options and make a recommendation to Full Council in due course. Cllrs Bartlett, Davies and Murdoch had been appointed to the Task & Finish Group.
- (d) **CAB Report** – Following consideration of the CAB report presented, Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report subject to clarification as to whether the income gain achieved was on-going or one off payments.
- (e) **Mayor Making 2020** – Committee noted the update on the preparations for Mayor Making and its associated costs. It was agreed to continue to negotiate with the appointed caterer on requirements.
- (f) **Staff Report** – Following consideration of the Staffing Report presented, Committee **RESOLVED** to agree a date for the Personnel Sub-Committee to meet to discuss appraisals, job descriptions and Ellis Whittam, HR consultant to Leominster Town Council.

Committee further **RESOLVED** to increase the Financial Assistant's hours from 12 to 18 per week commencing from 1st March 2020.

- (g) **Hep B vaccinations for staff** – Following consideration this matter Committee **RESOLVED** to investigate accessibility to vaccinations further and would seek advice from Herefordshire Council and Balfour Beatty.

FG47/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Monday 27th April 2020 at 19:00 at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 21:12pm.

CHAIR:

DATE:



Finance Committee

Date:	20th April 2020
Title:	Committee Report
Purpose of the Report:	To provide Members with a full report relating to all current Committee matters.
Contact Officers:	Julie Debbage

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the report be noted;
- 1.2 To ratify the decision to delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Finance Officer to use internet banking, until further notice, to pay outstanding accounts, grants and staff wages.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report updates members on Committee matters and identifies items that require a decision.
- 2.2 The responsibilities of the Finance & General Purposes Committee are contained within the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation. These include monitoring the Council's finances, recommending the annual budget and overseeing project development.

3. COMMITTEE REPORT

3.1 *Internet Banking*

Social distancing restrictions imposed by Central Government in response to the COVID-19 crisis have meant that it is no longer practical for the Council to pay invoices, wages and grants using the existing payment system, which requires cheques to be signed in triplicate. On 2nd April 2020 the Town Clerk requested permission by email for delegated authority to use BACS payments to pay invoices received for services and to pay wages. This measure will allow the town council to remain productive and proactive in a time of uncertainty and to ensure that the many small businesses that we deal with

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remain in business. Invoices and payment details will be presented to councillors in advance of payments being made.

Delegated authority was granted to the Town Clerk and Finance Officer by email and it is requested that members now formally ratify that decision.

3.2 *Janice & Peter McCaull Trust*

The Trust will need to set up the next meeting either by Zoom or after the restrictions on social distancing are lifted.

3.3 *Bank Mandate*

To note that following a discussion with the bank, two former staff members and three former councillors will be removed as signatories.

3.4 *Ethical Standards*

Another request has been submitted to NALC to develop an ethical standard to be included in the Council's Financial Regulations. The request was submitted via HALC, the County Association. Again, to date no further information or update has been received.

3.5 *Depot Update*

The details requiring clarification have now been addressed and the lease is ready to be signed and witnessed as soon as social distancing restrictions are lifted.