



LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Tuesday 23rd June 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 29th June 2020** commencing at **19:00 hours** via 'Zoom' on the following dedicated link:

Meeting ID: 848 7511 3585

Press and public are cordially invited to attend. Those wishing to join the meeting should contact the clerk on townclerk@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 27th April 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 final income and expenditure report up to the end of March 2020 (Month 12).
- To consider the income and expenditure report from Month 2 of the 2020/21 financial year.

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

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

(d) Risk Register – To consider the attached updated Risk Register.

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

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 regarding staffing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

(c) Quotes for the upgrade of the heating system – To consider the attached quotes.

(d) Ginhall Green Easement – To receive a verbal update from the clerk.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee will be held on Monday 7th September 2020 at 19:00 either remotely via Zoom or at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP subject to social distancing regulations being lifted by central government.

LEOMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 27th April 2020 commencing at 19:00 hours remotely via 'Zoom'.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors Murdoch (Chair), Marshall (Vice-Chair), Bartlett, Davies, Marsh (19.08), Norman, Rumsey (19.16), Thomas and Williams.

OFFICER PRESENT: Town Clerk

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Parris.

FG01/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

FG02/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

- Cllr Bartlett: Member of the Timebank
- Cllr Norman: Member of the Timebank

FG03/20 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There had been no requests for dispensations received.

FG04/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

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

FG05/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 24th February 2020 be agreed and signed as a correct record when social distancing restrictions are lifted.

FG06/20 CLERK'S REPORT

Committee noted the following items:

- (a) Internal Audit** – the internal audit is currently being carried out by post.
 - (b) External Audit** – the clerk has received the external auditor's instructions by email.
 - (c) ILCA** – the clerk made the recommendation that two staff should undertake the Introduction to Local Council Administration training at a cost of £99+VAT each. It was **RESOLVED** to purchase the training.
 - (d) Personnel Sub- Committee meeting date** – it was **RESOLVED** to arrange a meeting for Wednesday 6th May at 2pm remotely via Zoom.
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- (e) **CAB report** – the report was noted.

FG07/20 FINANCIAL AND COMMITTEE MATTERS

- (a) **Income and Expenditure Report** – Committee considered the Report up to 31st March 2020 (Month 12) and it was agreed that the report be ratified.
- (b) **Accounts Paid and Outstanding Accounts for Payment** – Following consideration of the accounts paid and outstanding accounts for payment, Committee **RESOLVED** to ratify the payments relating to the months of February, March and April 2020.
- (c) **Committee Report** – Committee considered the Committee Update Report and, following discussion, **RESOLVED**:
- To note the report;
 - To ratify the decision to delegate authority to the Town Clerk and Finance Officer to use internet banking by making payment by BACS for invoices received, grants awarded and to pay wages.
 - That the clerk would arrange the next meeting of the Janice and Peter McCaull Trust.
 - To submit a further request to NALC, through HALC, to develop an ethical standard to be included in the Town Council Financial Regulations.
 - To sign the lease for the Depot.

FG08/20 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, the Committee **RESOLVED**:
- To note the report;
 - Proposed by Cllr. Marshall and seconded by Cllr. Bartlett, the committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to give the clerk delegated authority to award a grant of £767.40, should the 151 Squadron ATC not be successful with a Hereford Community Foundation Grant.
 - To ratify the decision at the meeting on 24th February 2020 to award a grant of £907 to ECHO to fund the Timebank project as the supporting documents had been received.
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MINUTES (Agenda Item 5)

- Proposed by Cllr. Thomas and seconded by Cllr. Marshall to award the grant of £1000 to Leominster NILS. It was proposed by Cllr. Bartlett and Seconded by Cllr. Norman to award in £250 weekly increments in response to local need.
- (b) **Staff Report** – To note the verbal report given by the town clerk regarding staff activities and alternative ways of working to comply with all government regulations in response to the COVID-19 and only carrying out essential works away from the home.
- (c) **Impact of COVID-19** – To note the verbal report given by the town clerk in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on the services and income of the town council.
- (d) **Project and Funding Update** – The committee received the report and following discussion, **RESOLVED:**
- To note the report on both projects and funding and the impact of coronavirus has had on them.
- (e) **Youth Budget Report** – The committee received the report, and following discussion **RESOLVED:**
- To note the report;
 - To transfer £1050 from the 2019/20 youth budget to reserves and ring-fence for use in developing an accessible Duke of Edinburgh program for Leominster.
 - To transfer £4400 from the 2019/20 youth budget to reserves and ring-fence for funding community engagement events at Barons Cross.
 - To transfer the underspend of £591.33 from 2019/20 youth budget into reserves and ring-fence for investing in community youth projects in 2020/21 financial year.

FG09/20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Committee noted that the next meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee would be held on Monday 29th June 2020 at 19:00 which, subject to social distancing restrictions, would either be held remotely via Zoom or at the Council Offices, 11 Corn Square, Leominster HR6 8YP.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 19.40pm.

CHAIR:

DATE:



Finance Committee

Date: 23rd June 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 payment of invoices outstanding.

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 made cheque payment impossible. Internet banking was authorised by the Council and delegated to the clerk to arrange payment of invoices. It is now the time to set up online authorisation by signatories and the clerk will be discussing options with the bank shortly.
 - 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.
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3.3 *Ethical Standards*

HALC have now responded to this request and have agreed to develop an ethical standard to be included in the Council's Financial Regulations.

3.4 *Depot Update*

With the lease finalised, the foreman should be able to gain access in the next week. He will begin making the initial repairs to enable the grounds team to occupy the building.

3.5 *The Secret Garden*

The toilet block is progressing with the kitchen area nearly complete and electricity now connected.

3.6 *Tourist Information Centre and Town Council Offices*

As from Wednesday 1st July the TIC will be open 10am – 2pm Monday to Saturday, operating on one member of staff from the front window initially. This will be reviewed on a weekly basis with the Manager, adjusting access and timings accordingly with a view that we will eventually re-open the inside with reduced floor carousels and units to allow for social distancing and a screen will be installed on the main desk. The re-introduction of our volunteers will be assessed when further guidance is received from central government.

At present, signage guides Town Council visitors to the front (green) door. Queries are dealt with from the door and this will continue until the building is fully operational again. A number of essential maintenance tasks are being carried out while there are limited staff in the building. The building receives sanitation every morning before staff arrive for work and our checks for a partially occupied building have now ceased. Hand sanitiser is freely available at various parts of the building, face masks are available and handwashing signage is on display in the toilets, kitchens and on entry. Social distancing signage will be installed around the building as a reminder to staff.

3.7 *Public Conveniences*

Public toilets remain closed for the time being as user/staff safety will be difficult to maintain at this time. Signage is in place to inform people about alternative self-contained facilities in the Bus Station/Broad Street Car Park. Central toilets are too restrictive and do not allow for current social distancing guidelines to be followed. The Grange Toilets will require a full COVID-19 risk assessment, possible disconnection of the hand dryers and installation of paper towel and hand sanitiser dispensers, increased cleaning of at least 3 times daily and social distancing markings.

3.8 *COVID-19 Volunteer Support*

Town Council staff continue to support the COVID-19 phone line from 3-6pm, 7 days a week. Call numbers rose for a while after issuing the Covid-19 response book marks but are now beginning to drop again as social distancing measures imposed by central government are relaxed. A weekly meeting is attended by Town Council staff, ward members and Herefordshire Council's Talk Community Staff.

3.9 *Staff Training*

Office staff are about to undertake allotment software training so that all existing records can be transferred and invoices for the 20/21 season can be generated.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT RISK REGISTER UPDATED 2020

Ref	Strategic Risks	Potential Impact	Probability	Severity	Control Actions	Officer
RR1	Lack of forward planning and budgetary controls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of direction • Lack of prioritisation • Poor service delivery • Poor service development • Poor financial planning • Poor financial controls • Inefficient spending • Budgetary overspends 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Council's corporate strategy; • Continue regular financial reports; • Quarterly budgetary reviews to be undertaken; • Regular quarterly financial health checks by external consultant. 	Clerk (RFO)
RR2	Insufficient resources to meet obligations due to shortfall in the annual budget, in balances and any loan options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to meet Council's objectives • Inability to deliver services • Inability to invest in Council infrastructure • Major project slippage • Key projects not delivered 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate budgeting and precept setting process in place • High level of budgetary controls and frequent monitoring in place • Forward planning in place • Estimates obtained regarding potential costs of projects and service delivery • Build contingency into projects 	Clerk (RFO)
RR3	Sustained poor performance or perceived/actual operational failures causes loss of confidence in Town Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor service delivery • Loss of staff morale • Loss of residents' confidence • Loss of Councillor confidence • Loss of key personnel • Community governance review • Breakdown of working relationship with community groups 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular staff performance reviews • Regular service area reviews and reporting • Clear roles and responsibilities of both staff and councillors • Regular reports submitted to Council and Committees • Complaints procedure • Regular updates on Council projects and services made available to the public via the Council website, social media accounts, notice boards and local news publications. 	Clerk (RFO)

Ref	Strategic Risks	Potential Impact	Probability	Severity	Control Actions	Officer
RR4	Failure to deliver improvements throughout the Town Council owned and managed estate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in level of service delivery • Poorly maintained buildings and equipment • Health & Safety concerns • Inability to carry out management, repairs and maintenance of estate 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of realistic achievable projects • Continuous investment programme into equipment and buildings • Continuous training for staff and councillors • Develop office procedures • Develop budgetary procedures • Ensure clear policies adopted • Ensure decisions made and recorded 	Clerk (RFO)
RR5	Staff and/or Councillor issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of key personnel • Loss of Councillors • Fraud • Poor performance • Staff and Councillor ill health • Misconduct • Lack of training • Lack of knowledge • Conflicts of interest • Poor communication between staff, councillors and residents 	M	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robust training and support for staff and councillors • Robust internal audit system in place • Regular staff reviews • Update job descriptions • Succession planning in place • Proactive staff and councillors prepared to accept challenges • Operate open and transparent governance • Avenues for feedback from service users and residents 	Clerk (RFO)
RR6	Emergency cover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement to identify cover for key positions in case of absence • Loss of key personnel through illness, accident or other reasons 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure membership of SLCC/HALC is in place • Develop documentation to record progress of any ongoing projects or funding applications so that it can be picked up by other staff. • Share knowledge through regular update meetings. • Ensure that multiple staff are trained in the use of key software and equipment. 	Senior Management Clerk (RFO)

Ref	Strategic Risks	Potential Impact	Probability	Severity	Control Actions	Officer
RR7	Changes in operational environment, financial cutbacks and legislation catches the Town Council unaware.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council operates illegally • Council unable to react to changes in circumstances resulting in loss or reduction in service delivery • Health and safety issues • Litigation • Additional devolved services leading to being under resourced • Asset transfers • Allotment lease not extended • Significant local service reduction due to austerity • Unintended consequences of policy decisions from Central Government, Herefordshire Council or the Town Council 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular training undertaken by staff and Councillors • Regular review of legislative changes through SLCC and NALC • Regular policy reviews • Up to date Standing Orders • Up to date Financial Regulations • Proactive budgeting and financial management • Build up reserves • Encourage flexible working practices • Continued membership of NALC and SLCC • Regular reviews of current leases/agreements 	Senior Management Clerk (RFO)
RR8	Major operational interruption prevents Town Council from delivering services (Business continuity).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council becomes non-operational through fire, damage etc • Back-up files and records lost, stolen or damaged • Equipment suffers damage • Severe weather conditions • Property damaged or stolen 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate insurance cover in place • Emergency Plan in place with emergency response protocols • Fitted fire alarms • Contingency funding in budget/reserves for replacement and repairs • Robust back-up system of storage of important files and records 	Clerk (RFO)
RR9	Town Council organisational culture results in low productivity, poor performance and lack of innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor staff morale • Poor councillor morale • Poor processes in place • Poor direction and focus • Poor management of operations • Poor administrative operations, processes and protocols 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Corporate Plan with clear focused corporate objectives • Clear service delivery targets • Clear staff targets and staff monitoring/review process in place 	Clerk (RFO)

Ref	Strategic Risks	Potential Impact	Probability	Severity	Control Actions	Officer
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of residents trust and confidence • Breakdown of working relationship with community groups and organisations 				
RR10	Catastrophic failure of Council's IT systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of computer records • Loss of important data • Loss of important financial information • Loss of service delivery 	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-site back-up facility in place • Adequate insurance in place • Business continuity plan in place • Continued investment in IT infrastructure. 	Clerk (RFO)
RR11	Unable to meet the new requirements relating to the General Data Protection Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake Data Audit • Adopt Data Protection Policy • Adopt Data Breach procedure • Adopt Subject Access Request policy and protocol 	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data audit in place • Policies required have been adopted by Council • Subject Access Request policy in place. 	Clerk (RFO)

Project and Funding Update

Date: 22/06/2020

Compiled by: Liz Womack, Projects & Grants Officer

Funding

COVID-19 Support

A payment of £105.22 has been received from the Fastershire 'Keep Connected' Fund, following the successful submission of a completed grant report. The funds have been used to cover the cost of a telephone forwarding application for the LTC Office phone line and an extended Zoom licence for use in LTC Council and Committee meetings.

High St Heritage Action Zone Fund

Herefordshire Council have been in discussions with Historic England in regards to the impact of COVID-19 on delivery plans for the proposed Leominster HSHAZ Scheme. We hope to receive a more detailed update in the near future.

Projects

Team Leominster

Operational and Tactical Group meetings are now being reconvened via Zoom. Tactical Group meetings are being held monthly, with the Operational Group meetings taking place on a bi-weekly basis from 25/06/2020.

Barons Cross

The LTC Projects and Grants Officer will be meeting with Team Leominster representatives on 24/06/2020 to discuss options for enabling residents to access Barons Cross Surgery support virtually, during the time that social distancing measures prevent us from holding events in the Barons Cross Community Centre. The meeting will also consider whether steps can be taken to continue the process of establishing a Residents' Association, while we wait for restrictions on group gatherings to be lifted.

COVID-19 Community Response

The COVID-19 Community Response Scheme continues to provide support to vulnerable and self-isolating residents, although demand has slowly decreased as lockdown measures have been reduced. Most requests are currently for prescription pick-ups, with many referrals being made via local pharmacies. The central telephone contact point for incoming enquiries continues to be managed by staff from HVOSS Community Wheels and Leominster Town Council, with support from Herefordshire Council's Talk Community team. Telephone lines remain open 8am-6pm on weekdays and 3pm-6pm on weekends.

The Community Response Scheme currently has 88 active volunteers, with a further 6 volunteers that have stepped down due to work commitments. Town Council staff have been in contact with volunteers by phone and email, to gain feedback on their experiences and to offer support. Many volunteers are continuing to provide support despite having returned to work. Others will need to reduce their volunteering commitments once they return to work, so it is likely that volunteering numbers will decrease as the Government's furlough scheme draws to an end.

AGENDA ITEM 7 (e)

LEADER Signage Project

The Enhancing Leominster's Heritage signage project is currently working towards a completion deadline of 31st July 2020.

Welcome Signs

All 6 welcome signs have now been delivered. Installation will be carried out by two separate contractors, both of whom have been briefed. The signs will be installed as soon as STAT plans for all 6 sites have been received from Balfour Beatty. Payment for the plans was made on 27/05/2020. Julie Debbage has contacted Balfour Beatty's Stakeholder Manager, who is investigating the situation.

Pedestrian Signage

The pedestrian signage is currently in production. Manufacturing schedules have been delayed due to staff on furlough and social distancing measures at the production company. The completed signs are currently expected to be delivered in mid-July. New signs that are located on highways land will be installed by an external contractor. New fingerposts for existing signs will be installed by the LTC Foreman, who will also be repainting the columns that are being retained.

Visitor Information Signage

A draft of the typeset sign design has been sent to all stakeholders, for review. Once final edits have been made in response to stakeholder feedback, then the signs will be sent to press. Production time is currently estimated at 2 weeks.

Heritage Interpretation Boards

All boards are currently with the design company, for typesetting. There have been some delays in the typesetting process due to staff furlough within the design team, however we are expecting to receive proofs of all boards by 26/06/2020. The signage manufacturers have been briefed on the specifications for board frames and lecterns, with production due to begin shortly.