

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31ST. MARCH 2025

Present: Cllr. K Williams (Chair)

Cllrs. R Mills (Mayor), G Etheridge (Deputy Mayor) & C Erasmus

Also Present Cllrs. J Griffiths & K Etheridge

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies had been received

2. Declarations of Interest

No Declarations of Interest made at this point

3. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held 29 January 2025

It was ***unanimously agreed*** that the minutes be received

4. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Working Party Group Meeting held 19 March 2025

It was ***unanimously agreed*** the Minutes be received

During discussion on the Minutes, the Clerk updated members on the Interviews and that unfortunately for differing reasons two of the candidates had withdrawn leaving just one for interview on Wednesday evening.

The Clerk took the opportunity of sharing the proposed questions and after some discussion it was ***agreed*** he would forward the agreed questions to members of the Working Group who would be interviewing.

The Clerk proposed that this Committee consider recommending to Town Council that this Working Group become the Staffing Sub – Committee, and after some discussion this was ***agreed***

It was also ***agreed*** by Committee that Cllr. Janet Griffiths take the place of Cllr. D Davies on the Working Party Group until the AGM

The Deputy Mayor raised the Interim Arrangements that had been discussed and highlighted the fact that the Clerk had kindly intimated he was willing to keep matters ticking over in terms of administering & attending meetings, paying of accounts etc. and preparing End of Year Accounts/ Annual return and requirements of Audit. The Clerk had initially requested payment of parking fees since January amounting to in excess of £100, seeking no recompense for the additional hours worked over and above his contracted 16 hours. Having discussed same with Mayor he had emailed members seeking their approval to payment of said parking fees plus a payment in respect of accrued overtime, with all those who replied being in favour.

After some discussion it was ***unanimously agreed*** to retrospectively recommend to Town Council to formalise a payment of £110.50 in respect of Parking Fees plus £1,022.32 (based on 4 additional hours per week since January)

Furthermore in recognition of his ongoing commitment to Town Council as identified above it was ***unanimously agreed*** to recommend to Town Council he be paid his current salary for the month of April

5. Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk reported he had received letters of application from Teenage Cancer Trust & SSAFA – Armed Forces Charity. He had written requesting information on the number of families in the Blackwood area that each were/ had supported recently, but was still awaiting a response. It was agreed they be deferred until the next meeting.

The Clerk reported that over the years it had become custom and practice for Town Council to support the Mayor's Charity.

At this point Cllr R Mills declared an interest and took no part in any discussion or decision making. It was **unanimously agreed** to recommend to Town Council that a donation of £250 be made to the Mayor's Charity Appeal (

6. To Consider Adoption of Model Financial Regulations

The Clerk reported he had been through the Model Regulations in some detail and should shortly be in a position to customise same for Town Council's use. There are certain elements that are statutory and cannot therefore be excluded or amended, whilst others are recommended practice and can therefore be customised. They are likely to be significantly different to our existing Financial Regulations and working /reporting practices will need to adapt accordingly, whilst trying to ensure they do not become too onerous on staff/ members.

After some discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk prepare same for a Policy & Finance Committee in two/three weeks time with a view to that Committee recommending adoption of same at the AGM.

7. To Consider Adoption of Model Standing Orders

Similarly the Clerk reported on the Standing Orders, and reported again that certain elements are statutory and others recommended practice and can be customised. He felt the Standing Orders were likely to be easier to adopt as much was regarding meetings procedures/ protocols and possibly less onerous.

Again after some discussion it was **agreed** the Clerk prepare same for Policy & Finance Committee to consider recommending adoption of same at the AGM.

8. To Consider Adoption of Press Policy (possibly part of updated Social Media Policy)

The Clerk reported that he felt Town Council should consider adopting a Press Policy, which should identify how members interact with the Press, ensuring that any letters to the press are not seen as necessarily representing the views of Town Council and are personal views.

His proposals below were discussed

Meetings

In line with the Community Council's Standing Order , the public/press will be excluded from all or part of a meeting if their presence is prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the

confidential nature of the business to be transacted or for other special reasons. The public's exclusion from part or all of a meeting shall be by a resolution which shall give reasons for the public's exclusion.

Oral or Written comments/statements

Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its councillors or staff shall be considered and processed only by the Clerk, Mayor, Deputy Mayor & Chair of Policy & Finance Committee and with the prior agreement of Councillors.

In respect of dealings with press and/or media, councillors shall not, in their official capacity as Town Councillors provide oral or written statements or written articles to the press or other media.

After some discussion it was ***agreed*** that these might be considered as part of an updated Social Media Policy and be considered at the next Policy & Finance Committee Meeting with a view to recommending to the AGM.

The Deputy Mayor reported that he had prepared a number of Policy documents that would benefit Town Council and had in consultation with the Clerk planned to present these to this Committee but unfortunately other matters had had to take preference. It was ***agreed*** that these Policies be discussed on a regular basis at future meetings with a view to recommending same to Town Council for adoption

The Clerk raised the issue of the security shutters for the front door and side windows.

The Deputy Mayor reported that despite having made contact with other firms no one as yet had attended the Office to measure up and quote for the works. At the last Town Council meeting some members who had had dealings with similar types of shutters for doors/windows had remarked that the quotation from BGS for electric Roller shutters to Main entrance door & side panels in the sum of £6,607.72 + VAT did not seem unreasonable.

After some further discussion the general consensus of opinion was that this Committee should ***recommend*** to Town Council that Standing Orders/ Financial Regulations be suspended and the quotation be accepted in order to ensure the security of the building and safety of staff & members as a matter of urgency