

Highworth



Town Council

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G79.

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL PURPOSE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE 7 FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT

Councillor A Bishop (In the Chair)

Councillor: R Acres
(Mrs) J H Bishop
(Mrs) J Clark
(Mrs) A Durrant
N Gardiner
(Mrs) M R Penny
K Smith
(Mrs) L Vardy
(Mrs) P M Webster

IN ATTENDANCE

(Mrs) C Acres (Westrop School), (Mrs) H Simpson & (Mrs) K Preston (Highworth Pre-School), Messrs. G Laken & S Peacey (Wrdeup Festival) Committee and 7 Members of the Public

APOLOGIES

70. Councillors P Adams, C Adams (Out of Town), G Edwards (Unwell), (Mrs) A H Livall (Out of Town), S Weisinger (SBC Business)



Highworth is a Fair Trade Town



Twinned with Wassenberg



Twinned with Pontorson

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QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC ON AGENDA ITEMS

71. None

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

72. Councillor N Gardiner – Westrop School
Councillor P Webster – Westrop School
Councillor R Acres – Westrop School
Councillor L Vardy – Westrop School

WESTROP SCHOOL – AGE EXTENSIONS

73. a. Mrs C Acres the Deputy Head for Westrop Primary School attended the meeting and gave a report from the perspective of Westrop Primary School. Any questions to be directed to Gareth Shield at SBC.
- b. (Mrs) K Preston and (Mrs) H Simpson from Highworth Pre-School attended and circulated a report. Councillor (Mrs) M Penny advised for them to contact their Borough Councillors to intercede on their behalf at SBC, Borough Councillors are Councillor (Mrs) M Penny, Councillor A Bishop and Councillor S Weisinger.

HIGHWORTH MARKET

74. a. Correspondence. None.
- b. Market Manager's Report. It was agreed that the Market Manager could have a budget of up to £500.00 for the first year. This can be reviewed at the end of that period.
- c. Market Accounts. The accounts listed on pages G83 and G84 were agreed.

WRDEUP FESTIVAL 2017 – REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

75. The WrdeUp Committee have submitted the following:

Letter requesting financial support
2016 Accounts
Festival Memorandum of Association and Certificate of Incorporation

These have been made available to be read in Council Offices prior to the meeting.

Councillors agreed a sum of £1000.00 to be given to help support the upcoming Wrdeup festival.

HIGHWORTH LIBRARY (HL) NEGOTIATION REPORT

76. Negotiation was carried out with Swindon Borough Council, within the parameters set by Councillors. The agreement brought back for consideration is as follows:
- The library hours to be extended beyond 15 hours per week to a maximum of 30 hours per week through the purchase of hours of two Library and Information Assistants. Number of hours purchase

will be subject to the funding available. The two Library and Information assistants are to be employed, trained and managed by SBC to man the library during the hours outside of the 15 hours supplied by SBC. Opening hours etc to be decided if and when the agreement has been accepted.

- The financial agreement is that SBC will invoice HTC for the hours that the two HTC dedicated staff actually attend on HTC's behalf. While there is no doubt at this stage that this will be agreed to be closely monitored by SBC to ensure that we do not pay for times when they are not there, there must be some mechanism that allows HTC to keep check. Preferably invoicing would be quarterly but SBC will confirm if this is acceptable.
- SBC is aware that HTC Councillors have put a cap of £16,000.00 per annum on this. It is apparent that based on the hourly rate figures plus On Cost that the cap will be exceeded. Councillors will then have to either reduce the hours purchased or increase the cap.
- The Employment, Management and Training will all be the responsibility of SBC, as well as the monitoring of their on the job performance and level of Customer Service. Disciplinary and effectiveness will be the responsibility of SBC. However the Service Level Agreement (SLA) will need to allow HTC some mechanism to monitor this.
- Library Services at SBC are to run a campaign to try to recruit Volunteers to support the HL staff. The SBC Rep seemed to be very confident that she will get some success.
- The question of staff sickness and holidays was considered. The SBC Rep was confident that SBC would be able to handle short periods, such as holidays, days off and sickness, but SBC may need to come back to HTC in the event of long term illness, this might have to be handled through the support of volunteers until a solution can be found or the individual comes back to work.
- It was clearly stated that SBC can offer and sustain this agreement for three years.
- It was made quite clear at the start of the negotiations that whatever was agreed would be brought back to the HTC General Purposes and Finance Committee (GP&F) meeting on 7 February 2017. Councillors will be asked to either accept or reject the proposal. If agreed, it will be ratified at the Full Council Meeting. SBC needs to know our decision as soon as possible after these meetings, but well before the end of February.
- Calculations were based on 50 weeks per year to compensate for Bank Holidays and other closure days. Rates used were those reported to us on the SBC spread sheet, although On-Costs were enhanced by 30% due, to changes in NHI and Pension contributions. Three calculations were offered to Councillors as follows:

£14.13 per hour x 15 hours x 2 Assistants x 50 weeks = £21,195.00

£14.13 per hour x 12 hours x 2 Assistants x 50 weeks = £16,956.00

£14.13 per hour x 11 hours x 2 Assistants x 50 weeks = £15,543.00

77. Resolved by Councillor K Smith and seconded by Councillor (Mrs) A Durrant to accept the negotiated arrangement with Swindon Borough Council to keep the Highworth Library open for an additional 15 hours per week, over and above the 15 hours on offer from Swindon Borough Council, and not cap this figure. Voting was 3 for and 7 against. The resolution was not carried.
78. Resolved by Councillor R Acres and seconded by Councillor (Mrs) J Clark to accept the negotiated arrangement with Swindon Borough Council to keep the Highworth Library open for additional hours per week, over and above the 15 hours on offer from Swindon Borough Council, but to cap the funding available from Highworth Town Council to £16,000 and keep the number of hours available to within what is possible under this figure. Voting was 7 for and 3 against. The resolution was duly carried.

79. The Councillors directed that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) now be negotiated with Swindon Borough Library Service to arrange for the Highworth Library to be kept open for whatever additional hours can be achieved within this cap. It was also agreed that Councillors (Mrs) M Penny and K Smith be present at the SLA meetings to assist the Clerk.

SBC SERVICES – REPORT ON MEETING OF PARISHES

80. A meeting was held in the HTC Council Chamber with the Rural Parish Chairs and Clerks which was attended by Ourselves, Wanborough, Blunsdon, Haydon Wick, Hannington, Castle Eaton, Stanton Fitzwarren, Inglesham, Liddington and Wroughton Councils. The purpose of the meeting was to decide on a strategy to oppose the indiscriminate devolving of services to Town and Parish Councils by SBC. In particular, those attending agreed that the devolving of Fly Tipping, Dead Animal Removal, Graffiti Removal and the side arm maintenance of roadside hedges should be the current focus. It adds significantly to the budgets of a Town Council such as ours, but has a horrendous effect on the smaller Parishes who suffer most from general Fly-Tipping, much of which comes from Swindon Residents and businesses. Fly Tipping is quite clearly the responsibility of a Borough Council and is not the responsibility of Parish/Town Councils. Furthermore, there was strong objection to the way SBC carries out this exercise, picking off one Council at a time. The meeting agreed that the negotiations should be conducted with all Councils simultaneously. It was agreed that the Clerk of Haydon Wick, who is currently taking over as the new Secretary of the Swindon Area Committee of NALC, is to arrange an emergency meeting of the Committee to discuss this with SBC. In addition, a meeting has been arranged with Borough Councillor Keith Williams, the Cabinet Member responsible for Street Smart, to be held in the Highworth Council Offices on Friday 24 February 2017 at 10.00 am.

CIVIC SERVICE

81. Councillors agreed a letter would be written to Reverend Geoff Sowden of St Michaels & All angels church to arrange a meeting to discuss the forthcoming Civic Service.

ACCOUNTS

82. The accounts as listed on page G85 to G89 were passed and payment of bills authorised.

CORRESPONDENCE

83. None

MEMBERS' BUSINESS

84. a. Councillor (Mrs) A Durrant. It was agreed that when the new Public Conveniences are opened, flowers may be put in them by members of the public, by arrangement with the Council Officers.

Meeting Closed at 9.07 pm