



Chard Town Council

THE GUILDHALL, FORE STREET, CHARD, SOMERSET TA20 1PP

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Mayor: Cllr Mrs Cath Morrison Acting Town Clerk: Sarah Robson MILCM

COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the **Finance & Guildhall Committee** meeting of Chard Town Council
held on Monday 19th September 2011
in the Town Hall at 7:30 pm

Present:

Councillors:

Mrs. C Morrison – Mayor
Mrs. T Aherne
D Bulmer
A Kenton

Mrs. J Kenton
Ms. S Pittwood
A J Prior

In Attendance:

The Acting Town Clerk - Sarah Robson, there were two members of the public present

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Wale, the Deputy Chairman Councillor Kenton chaired the meeting.

67. Apologies for absence and to consider whether to approve reasons given.

Councillors Mrs. S Dowell and M Wale – away on holiday
Councillor G Shortland – Family Illness

RESOLVED: to accept the apologies and approve the reason given

68. Declarations of Interest on items on the Agenda

Councillor Mrs T Aherne declared a Personal Interest in Agenda item #74 as there is a cheque payable to her employer.

69. Exclusion of the Press and Public - To agree any items to be dealt with after the public (including the press) have been excluded.

The Acting Town Clerk requested that agenda items # 86 & 87 be heard in closed session as issues of confidence in relation to staffing matters and commercial in confidence were to be reported on.

Proposed: Councillor Bulmer
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Morrison

RESOLVED – that agenda items #86 & 87 'Staff in Confidence' and 'Commercial in Confidence' be treated as confidential and be dealt with after the Public (including the Press) have been excluded

70. Guildhall Administrator's Report –

The Acting Town Clerk responded to questions raised by Councillors. There was debate in relation to the merits of keeping the Guildhall reception open on a Saturday morning due to lack of footfall.

It was therefore agreed to refer the matter of office staff having to work on Saturday mornings back to the Staff Working Party. A report with recommendations should be given at a future meeting. It was also agreed that a full discussion in relation to Councillors' Surgeries should be held at the next Full Council meeting.

RESOLVED – to note the report.

71. Tourism Information Centre (TIC) Report

The Acting Town Clerk responded to questions raised by Councillors. Disappointment was expressed at the loss of the sales of the Cards for Good Causes – Charity Christmas Cards and it was suggested that Members offer suggestions for other options regarding charity cards.

RESOLVED – to note the report.

72. Guildhall Supervisor's Report

The Acting Town Clerk responded to questions raised by Councillors. Members thanked the Guildhall Team for their hard work and effort in redecorating the Town Hall.

RESOLVED – to note the report.

73. Finance - Town Council Year (2011/12) to Date (Y2D) Budget - to review the budget information for the year to date ([Account & Audit Regulations 2011](#))

RESOLVED – to note the 'year to date' expenditure.

74. Finance - Accounts for Payment - to review and note items of expenditure (LGA 1972 s150 (5)).

RESOLVED – to approve the accounts for payment.

75. Finance - Budget Virement

The Acting Town Clerk appraised Councillors of budget virements that have been made in accord with the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations # 3.2 under Delegated Authority and sought approval for transfers in excess of £1000.00

RESOLVED – to approve the budget virement of £1200.00 to Consumables/Street Cleaning to cover the cost of chemicals for weed spraying.

- 76. Finance** – To confirm cost of repairing criminal damage at Upper Henson Park and consider option of processing an insurance claim

Proposed: Councillor Mrs. Kenton
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Bulmer

RESOLVED – to confirm that the Restorative Justice system will deal with the issue of the criminal damage and to request that community service be considered as an alternative to financial compensation and to proceed with making a claim against the Council’s insurance policy to recover the cost of repairs.

- 77. Finance** – To confirm £1700.00 surveyor’s fee in relation to the sale of development land to the rear of Cedar Close, Chard

Members were advised of the background detail that related to this matter.

RESOLVED – to request from the Surveyor a copy of this Council’s instructions in the matter.

- 78. Finance** - To consider making a donation towards South West Home Safety Partnership’s event – The Chard Safety Christmas Cracker

8.30pm Standing Orders were suspended to allow Andrew Turpin to answer Members’ questions about the event.

Members discussed the possibility of offering financial help but were mindful that this would set a precedent for future applicants. The importance of holding such an event was recognized and it was therefore;

RESOLVED – to use the Council’s resources to promote the event, to cover the event under the Council’s Public Liability Insurance and to officially open the event.

- 79. Finance** – To approve expenditure of £1000.00 to Westford Mechanical Ltd for maintenance and repairs to Guildhall Heating System from Guildhall Property Maintenance Budget.

Members were advised that work needed to be carried out on faulty components in the Guildhall’s heating system to enable it to work more efficiently.

RESOLVED - to approve expenditure of £1000.00 to Westford Mechanical Ltd for maintenance and repairs to Guildhall Heating System from Guildhall Property Maintenance Budget.

- 80. Finance** - Review of the Annual Return for the Year ending 31st March 2011. Members to review the comments of the External Auditor.

The Acting Town Clerk requested this item be deferred as the External Auditor has not completed the Annual Return yet due to additional information being requested.

81. To review the Council's Financial Regulations (last reviewed in May 2010)

Members approved the proposed changes that are necessary now that the post of RFO and Town Clerk are to be merged. The Acting Town Clerk also advised of other minor changes that have been made due to updated legislation.

Proposed: Councillor Prior
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Kenton

RESOLVED – to approve and adopt the amended Financial Regulations

82. To review the Council's insurance provision

Members were appraised on the provision of the Council's insurance arrangements. Particular attention was drawn to the omission of Terrorism Cover but it was considered, and agreed, this was not necessary. It was noted that the policy in place provides comprehensive cover which is adequate and appropriate for the Council's operational and administrative needs.

83. Guildhall –to adopt revised protocols for the flying of flags

Members recognised the need to ensure a satisfactory policy be put in place for clarity and consistency.

Proposed: Councillor Prior
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Mrs. Kenton

RESOLVED – to adopt the Guildhall Flag Flying Protocol

9.15pm - the members adjourned for a five minute recess

9.20pm - the meeting was re-convened

84. Guildhall – To receive report from the Guildhall Cafe and Bar Franchise Working Group regarding franchise awards.

Members were advised that the panel used a scoring matrix to assess each of the tender applications and had awarded them on the basis that the application with the highest score was awarded the Contract.

RESOLVED – to receive and note the report

85. Notice of Motion received from Cllr Ms Sandra Pittwood on 5th September 2011 that 'this Committee sets up a working party to revisit its communication with its electorate: Is the current newsletter most appropriate, if so should the contents be changed, how should it be distributed and how often'.

Members questioned whether or not the Newsletter was the best vehicle for engaging with the public and if so whether delivering it door to door was the most effective method. It was agreed to defer any further newsletters for the present time pending the working party's report.

Proposed: Councillor Ms. Pittwood
Unanimous

Seconded: Councillor Bulmer

RESOLVED – to set up a Working Party to consider whether the current newsletter most appropriate, if so should the contents be changed, how should it be distributed and how often. Councillors Ms. Pittwood, Prior and Mrs. Kenton would be on the group and report back to the next Full Council meeting.

9.35pm RESOLVED – to exclude Members of the Public and Press in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.

Members agreed to bring forward Agenda Item # 87 and deal with this matter first.

87. It was resolved to exclude the press and public during consideration of this item (Item 69 above refers) **Commercial in Confidence**

Jocelyn Park Boundary Dispute

Members were appraised of the current situation in relation to the dispute. It was agreed that additional information would be sought from the Council's Solicitor to clarify the scope of the surveyor's report in particular relating to the footings.

Jocelyn Park – Yarlington Lease

Members were informed that there had been no response from Yarlington to date. Information was given in relation to the cost of the District Valuer's fees. Members confirmed that terms must be agreed in relation to costs before further negotiations can take place.

Jocelyn Park – Changing Facilities

The surveyor's report with recommendations has now been received and will be reported at next Full Council.

Chard Bowling Club

Members agreed that for clarity arrangements must be made to change the plan attached to the lease to show the boundary in line with the existing hedge.

Cresta Car Park

Members were asked to consider further questions raised by the Council's Solicitors in relation to the proposed lease to SCC for the car park. The terms were agreed to on the proviso that an agreement to pay full costs is entered into.

86. It was resolved to exclude the press and public during consideration of this item (Item 69 above refers) **Staff in Confidence**

Operations Manager

Members were advised that nine applications had been received for consideration for the vacancy.

Monthly Business Meeting

The Acting Town Clerk informed Members of the items that had been discussed at the last meeting.

10.20pm - Councillor Ms. S Pittwood declared a Personal and Prejudicial Interest, due to a personal relationship with the member of staff in the following item and left the meeting.

Administration Staff

Members were informed that a staff member is due to have major surgery and with effect from mid November is likely to be away from work for upwards of three months.

RESOLVED – to approve the following;

To recruit a part time receptionist, four hours per working day on a fixed contract for three months. The salary is to be on the lowest SCP of the Admin Range (SCP 14).

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.30 pm