

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TOWN COUNCIL
COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE MEETING

25 October 2022

Present
Councillors:

Coles	Vos
Rolfe	
How	

Clerks: Administration & Communications Officer and
Town Clerk were also present

Public: No members of the public were present.

Press: No members of the press were present.

17) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Cleeve, Fradgley, Jackson, Mackenzie, Taylor and accepted for the reasons given.

18) Declarations of Interests

See Minute 25 – Initiative Applications. Cllr Rolfe disclosed an interest as a Committee Member for Stratford upon Avon Christmas Lights and indicated that she would not participate in discussion on the item.

19) To receive written requests for dispensation for disclosable pecuniary interests

None.

20) To grant any requests for dispensation

None.

21) Public Participation

There was no public participation.

22) Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Draft Open Minutes of the Community Services Committee Meeting held on 5 July, 2022 be approved as a correct record.

23) To adopt draft notes of Sub-Group Meetings

Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel Meeting held on 6 and 27 September 2022;

RESOLVED: That the notes from the Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel Meeting held on 6 and 27 September, 2022 be adopted.

24) Budget Review

Budget Review for 2022-23

Members discussed the budget information and noted things to be taken into account. There had been an overspend on items such as bus shelters, litter and dog waste bins. There is noted a shortfall in the budget for this and it that this could be covered by a budget virement from the street furniture budget.

Members noted the report and acknowledged the increasing deficit in the budget, and it was

AGREED: that a budget virement from the Street Furniture Reserve will be used to cover the budget deficit for the current financial year

There was a question on the God Save the King inscription on the Building and The Town Clerk indicated she would bring a report back to the next meeting.

Members noted the report and acknowledged the increasing deficit in the budget.

Draft Budget 2023-24

Submitted to the Committee was an initial draft of the Budget for 2023-24, which required scrutiny and amendment over the next few months. The Committee acknowledged the economic financial challenges facing the Town Council under the current economic climate and also that the Council's General Reserves had already fallen below the level required by the Reserves Policy.

In considering the budget in relation to this Committee specifically, members were generally supportive of a rise in fees for the Cemetery & Tranquility Garden Fees (using RPI rate of 12.2%) if not more, which would bring the fees into line with other Cemetery charges.

It was agreed by all Councillors that our Open Spaces Team are fantastic and maintenance of the cemetery was very high and this should be more accurately reflected in the fees.

It was

AGREED: that a breakdown of fees should be brought to the meeting in December for further consideration.

Discussion then turned to the purchase of District Council land for a cemetery extension and the budget to process the scheme. Whilst a budget was in place for the purchase of land, Cllr Coles expressed her concern at the amount of money that would be needed for to further this project.

The Town Council is the Burial Authority for the town and the current estimate of the cemetery is that there are approximately 10 years left for burial purposes. It was proposed that in light of the indication of the expense of the project funding there should be a reserves provision and the figure of £15,000 per year was suggested for this. The Town Clerk was to liaise with the Town Council's Planning Consultant to ask him to engage with the Planning Authority.

It was also noted that the purchase of a second cemetery vehicle be investigated as there has been complaints received around the road-worthiness of the current vehicle. It was discussed about increasing the vehicle expenses expenditure up to £20,000.

It was

AGREED: that quotes should be sourced, which included electric vehicle options.

25) Initiative Applications

In accordance with Minute 18 above, Councillor Rolfe did not take part in the discussion on the Christmas Light grant application. Members reviewed the Initiative application form received from Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights.

They had applied for £30,000. This included £25,000 for the current lights programme and an additional £5,000 towards new lights to celebrate 40 years of Christmas lights with payment commencing January 2024.

Although broadly in favour of the additional grant request of £5,000, the Committee was unable to commit to it until later in the budget-setting process.

It was

AGREED: That £25,000 be allocated to Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights and the Council would look again at the additional £5,000 requested as the budget setting progressed.

Members reviewed the Initiative application form received from Stratford in Bloom.

They had applied for £32,500. Their payment is split into two payments in the financial year 2023/2024.

Although broadly in favour of the additional grant of £7,500, the Committee was unable to commit to it until later in the budget-setting process.

It was

AGREED: That £25,000 be allocated to Stratford in Bloom and the Council would look again at the

additional £7,500 requested as the budget setting progressed.

Cllr How put forward details of an extra payment of £25,000 being paid to the Fred Winter Centre.

It was

AGREED: That this matter be taken to Town Council to be discussed and a representative from the Fred Winter Centre be requested to attend the Council meeting to give Councillors an update on what is happening with the Centre.

26) Ballroom Seating

Following consideration of the request, it was suggested and

AGREED: That consideration be given to the refurbishment of the chairs including a valuation. Once a valuation had been received and quotes for repair received, this should be emailed to the Community Services Committee members for consideration .

27) Talking Bench Plaque

The quote was noted. It was

AGREED: That a plaque should be ordered with the wording 'Happy to chat bench, sit here if you don't mind someone stopping to say hello' engraved on it.

28) Dog Waste Bin Requests

Two requests were noted. Councillors discussed the issue of dog waste bins and should this be a condition put on developers of new build estates. Should it be part of future planning applications, developers should be responsible for bin installation and then the District Council take on responsibility for maintenance. The Town Clerk and Councillor Rolfe undertook to liaise with the District Council on this matter.

It was

AGREED: That ward Councillors should carry out the Resident Survey for the new bin requests And the District Council be approached.

29) Website, Social Media & Newsletter Panel – Policy Document

The Town Council Publication Policy was noted.

It was

AGREED: That Lisa Campion (Administrative & Communications Officer) can share social media posts and information from Councillors. Councillors can send information to her which she will promote on the Town Council Twitter feed, Facebook, and the new newsletter. It must be non-political information only.

30) Shopmobility Update

It was reported that a meeting had taken place between Elizabeth Dixon and David Platts (SDC). A potential partner has been found to run the Shopmobility unit. It would remain in the same place and would be made self-sufficient. No rent to pay and no grants would be needed.

31) Date and Venue of the Next Meeting

The next Meeting of the Community Services Committee will take place on Tuesday 6 December, 2022, at 6:30pm to be held at the Town Hall.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 7:55pm.