

WELLS CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held in the council chamber at Wells Town Hall on Thursday 19th November 2009 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor T Robins – Chairman

Councillors D Anderson, C Borastero, M Brandon, N Kennedy, J North and C Price

IN ATTENDANCE: J Swift (Town Clerk), Steve Luck (RFO) and Councillor T Butt Philip

09/056 F PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was one member of the public who spoke about three concerns:

- Appropriate care of the grounds and barn has deteriorated whilst endless discussions have taken place regarding the transfer back of the Trust from MDC. It was asked if a firm decision on this matter would be made and will this be ratified and conveyed to the public and MDC?
- When will the minutes of the last Finance and General Purpose committee be made available to the public?
- More information should be made readily available to the public i.e. reports and Working Party groups regarding Council properties, finance and polices.

Understanding was expressed regarding the present difficulties the Council are working under.

The Chairman responded and said that the recreation ground and barn would be discussed later as it was an item on the Agenda. All Minutes of all meetings are available for the public along with reports. All information is readily available and can be requested at anytime other than those of a confidential nature.

09/057F APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor H Siggs

09/058F DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any Declarations of Interest under the Local Authority (Model Code of Conduct) Order 2007, issued under SI No. 11/59 including paragraph 12 (2).

Councillor M Brandon declared an interest in item 13 and said she would leave the room at this point.

09/059F FINANCIAL REPORT

The Committee received the financial reports for October which had been scrutinised and approved. The following items were raised:

1. Will the Wells in Bloom Festival account be shown as a separate account and as 'festival' account? Yes this is how it will be shown for now on.
2. Council Properties – it was agreed to put this on as an agenda item at the next meeting as this needs to be looked into in more detail.
3. BT – the problem with the outstanding bill still remains unresolved. It was decided that a letter to be written to BT to try and get this finally resolved.

09/060F. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM WORKING GROUPS

Nothing to report.

09/061F FRIENDSHIP AGREEMENT PROPOSAL

To create a friendship agreement between us and Kluczbork (Poland), Bad Burka (East Germany) and Kempton. Report previously circulated.

It was proposed to go forward with the friendship agreement. The vote in favour was 6 with 1 abstention.

RECOMMENDED

To go forward with the friendship agreement.

09/062F THE CROWN HOTEL

It was reported that The Crown are having problems with their drains. The contract has been looked at and as it is a full repairing contract, they are responsible for them. The Crown have been asked if they can re route the drains and join to the one in the Town Hall car park. They will do all the necessary surveys and provide reports at their own cost.

RECOMMENDED

That Wells City Council give permission for The Crown to do this in principle, on the understanding that when the reports/surveys are completed, the Council have the opportunity to seek expert advice on them first and that maybe an indemnity clause is put in place to avoid any responsibility if a future problem then arises from the re routing in the Town Hall car park.

09/063F LAND REGISTRY

None of the City Councils properties are registered with land registry and this could potentially cause problems in the future. All leases, maps etc need to be looked at so using a solicitor to do the work could save time and money. Land Registry are able to come to Wells City Council to advise on what is needed and from there the size of the project can be judged as to the best way forward.

It was agreed in principle if solicitors were needed then they would become involved. The vote in favour was unanimous.

RECOMMENDED:

To move forward and to find out from Land Registry what is required.

09/064F ITEMS FOR URGENT REPORT

Franking machine – lease does not run out until November 2011

The office is presently open to the public 10am to 2pm due to the shortage of staff. A temp is now in place and therefore the situation will be reviewed regularly.

A discussion began regarding a drop down screen for the main hall. This will be put on the next agenda.

The boiler has broken down and has to be replaced immediately therefore an engineer has been instructed to carry out repairs.

Allotment fencing has to be replaced immediately as people from the allotments are going into a resident's garden and there are H&S implications so Cllr Brandon is going ahead with the purchase.

09/065F EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That pursuant to the provision of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public is excluded from the meeting for the following items of business by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

09/066F COUNCIL PROPERTY LEASE

It was agreed to put this item back on the agenda in January 2010. In the meantime a condition report for works needed and a valuation would be obtained in time for this meeting.

09/067F REPLACEMENT RADIATOR IN TOWN CLERK OFFICE

Replacement radiators had been requested sometime ago by the previous Town Clerk due to the age and inefficiencies of the present radiator. It was agreed unanimously to proceed with the quote for the replacement radiator.

09/068F WELLS RECREATION GROUND TRUST

Councillor Brandon left the meeting at this point.

There was a lengthy discussion and it was unanimously agreed that now is not the time to take this on.

RECOMMENDED

That a letter be sent to Mendip District Council stating that Wells City Council are not presently in a position to take on the Recreation Ground and Barn and that the City Council don't want to manage it anymore.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm. There was one member of the public present.

