

**Minutes – subject to acceptance as a correct record at the next meeting of the Finance & Strategy Committee – to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE FINANCE & STRATEGY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2011 IN THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, STONEHOUSE**

**Present:** Councillors Mrs T Watt (Convenor of Committee)  
S Lewis (Vice Chair of Town Council)  
J Callinan  
B Nelson  
Mrs P Swain (Deputy Convenor of Committee)

**In Attendance:** R A Lacey – Town Clerk

**Apologies:** Councillor C Brine (Chair of Town Council)

**H1/46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are reminded of their obligation, within the requirements of the Adopted Model Code of Conduct, to declare any personal or prejudicial interests where applicable.

**Councillor Mrs Nelson declared a possible financial interest in item H1/49(a) – Accounts for Authorisation.**

**Councillor Lewis (Vice Chair of Town Council) declared a possible financial interest through employment in Work in Progress list item H1/44.**

**H1/47 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2011**

The Minutes of the Committee meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2011 need to be considered for approval.

**Following consideration, Members present Resolved to approve the Minutes as recorded.**

**H1/48 UPDATE OF MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES**

**a) Progress Check on Previously Agreed Committee Actions**

A copy of the progress check list agreed at the last Committee meeting is attached for further consideration.

**Members present discussed the list of Committee actions and noted any amendments.**

**b) Town Council Website**

**Re: Minute No.H1/ 38 of 31.10.11.**

It was agreed at the Town Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 that this Committee should give further consideration to the formation of a Working Group to look at the Town Council website and re-examine the composition of the Editorial Group of the Stonehouse News.

## **H1/48 Update of Matters Arising (continued)**

### **b) Town Council Website (cont'd)**

Members present discussed the current website and the possible use of complimentary websites to deliver a strong product without duplication of information. Members present were advised that the Stonehouse Community Partnership was currently developing a website which could serve Stonehouse as a town and perhaps have input from the Town Council. It maybe, however, that the requirements of communications under the Quality Parish criteria may mean that the Town Council has to have a dedicated site.

After further discussion it was agreed to Recommend to full Town Council that the Working Group comprising Councillors Mrs Nelson, Mrs Swain and Mrs Lawrence (Deputy Town Clerk) be formed to look at aims and objectives and report back to Committee.

With regard to the Newsletter Members present felt that as the Editorial Group has changed following the last Issue that the revised complement should remain as at present and reviewed at a later date.

### **c) Town Council/Committee Meeting Dates 2012/13**

**Re: Minute No. H1/39 of 31.10.11.**

Councillor Lewis (Vice Chair of Town Council) has met with the Deputy Clerk to consider meeting dates for the financial year 2012/13 and a copy is enclosed for Members' consideration.

Members present examined the proposed list of meetings dates suggested by Councillor Lewis (Vice Chair of Town Council) and Mrs Lawrence (Deputy Town Clerk) and Resolved to Recommend this to the next full Town Council meeting.

One Member present enquired as to whether the Working Group dates were published and was advised that as these were not public meetings they were not advertised. On the basis that Members may wish to attend Working Group meetings a discussion was held on the possibility of having "E-rooms" or "drop boxes" to allow them to access dates and other documentation.

### **d) Trading Standards**

**Re: Minute No. H1/40 of 31.10.11.**

Following the discussions at the Town Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 it was agreed the this Committee should consider the possibility of introducing a Local By-Law to stop the sale of vehicles on roadside verges.

The Town Clerk advised Members present that he had spoken to the Authorities who could have an influence on this practice. As this was a common problem in this area the District Council were currently looking at whether suitable By-Laws could be adopted in this respect. It was suggested that the Town Clerk write to the District Council expressing support for this project.

## **H1/49 TOWN COUNCIL ACCOUNTS**

### **a) Accounts for Authorisation**

A list of accounts that require authorisation for payment is enclosed for Committee consideration.

Members present considered the list of accounts and Resolved to authorise payment.

b) **Income Receipts**

A copy of the latest income details is enclosed for Members' information.

**Members present noted the information listed.**

c) **Rolling Totals 2011/12**

Detail of up-to-date rolling totals is enclosed Members' information.

**Members present noted the information listed.**

**H1/50 TOWN COUNCIL-CAPITAL FACILITIES**

**Re: Minute Nos. H1/34 of 31.10.11; H1/27 of 5.9.11.**

Following the meeting of the Building Facilities Working Group a report will be given to the Committee on the discussions concerning placing a bid for the former Police Station building.

**Members present viewed a copy of the notes for the meeting held between Danny Sullivan (Design for Living) and the Town Clerk at the request of the Chair of Town Council to investigate options on several buildings within the town. It was noted that this report had not yet been formally considered by the relevant Committee and as such was at present for information purposes only.**

**One Member present when examining the notes relating to the former Police Station enquired what perceived need there was in the town for such a building. As there were no aims and objectives for this project it was deemed by Members present to be important to identify a need prior to formal action being taken. It was noted that Mr Sullivan had also examined the possible conversion of the existing Town Hall to accommodate a second floor and this would also be considered.**

**Members present agreed that there was now a real need to progress the sale of the Stagholt site and firm details on the options would be required.**

**H1/51 TOWN COUNCIL-"AWAY DAY"**

It was agreed at the Town Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 that the proposed "Away Day" should now take place on the evening of 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012.

**Members present noted this and instructed the Town Clerk to advise Councillors immediately so that they had time to prepare accordingly.**

**H1/52 TOWN COUNCIL TENANTS**

At the full Town Council meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 it was agreed that this Committee should consider the suggestion made that as a matter of policy annual reviews should be held with all Town Council tenants.

**Members present discussed that viability and desirability of holding annual meetings with tenants of the Town Council but decided that an inspection of their current leases should only be undertaken if such reviews were factored into the agreements.**

**H1/53 GLOUCESTERSHIRE RURAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL – MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL**

Notification has been received that the Town Council's annual membership is due for renewal at a cost of £25.00.

#### **H1/53 Grant Application (continued)**

**Members present Resolved to renew the Town Council's annual membership at a cost of £25.00.**

#### **H1/54 GRANT APPLICATIONS**

A request for grant funding has been received from Hazelwood Extra Sheltered Luncheon Club towards the purchase of lightweight folding tables.

**Members present discussed the grant request and Resolved to approve a £260.00 grant for the purchase of lightweight folding tables. It was also suggested that if Hazelwood had no further use for their heavy tables that the Town Council may be able to procure them for community useage.**

#### **H1/55 STAFFING**

Members of the Staffing Working Group may wish to brief the Committee on their latest meeting.

**Councillor Lewis (Vice Chair of Town Council / Chair of Staff Working Group) advised Members present that the main purpose of the meeting, since the last Committee meeting, had been focusing on provision of pensions for employees and also looking at wage/salary reviews together with appropriate Appraisals. Members of the Staffing Working Group had met separately, without the presence of the Town Clerk, to discuss the provision of employees pensions and were suggesting that this should commence in April 2013. This and other ongoing discussions would be reported to the Committee at the next meeting.**

#### **H1/56 STAFF OBJECTIVE SETTING**

At the last full Town Council meeting the Chair advised Members that he would place an item on each Committee Agenda for consideration to be given to setting objectives for staff for inclusion within the Appraisal Strategy.

**Members present felt that the item under consideration should be more the Appraisal process rather than Strategy with the objective that a Strategy be set up by the Town Council. It was suggested that the Appraisal process should be completed by the end of February 2012 and that the Away Day planned for 16<sup>th</sup> January would allow Members the opportunity to comment on aspirations which could be incorporated in such Appraisals.**

#### **H1/57 GLOUCESTERSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Attached for Members' information is a letter forwarded by the Gloucestershire Fire & Rescue Service relating to their consideration of its Integrated Risk Management Plan for the next 3 years. As Members will see this is the start of a formal consultation on its contents.

**Members present noted this.**

#### **H1/58 BUDGET 2012/13**

Members will need to consider final budget proposals for this Committee and then combine these with the Recommendations submitted from the two other Standing Committees to agree the Precept to be forwarded to Stroud District Council for the financial year 2012/13.

**H1/58 Budget 2012/2013 (continued)**

Following the recent presentation by GlosVAIN a request has been received by the organisation to set aside a sum of £5,000 should it be required for a legal challenge. (copy of email attached). Members may wish to consider within the budgetary process.

To assist Members with their consideration of the combined budget of the 3 Standing Committees a summary of the Regeneration & Environment and Amenities, Recreation & Tourism requested budgets is attached.

**Members present examined in detail the Standstill budget prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer for the Finance & Strategy Committee. Special emphasis was placed on the installation of a replacement website which would reflect communication, opportunities for the future and Members present Resolved to include an additional item of £2000 for the website design.**

**Members present had also received a copy of an email from GlosVAIN requesting that the Town Council consider putting aside a sum of £5000 towards possible legal costs in respect of potential action to fight the commissioning an incinerator at Javelin Park. It was felt by Members present, however, that whilst the majority of the Committee were in favour of such provision it should be placed on the Agenda for the next full Town Council as a separate item to give all Members the opportunity to decide whether this should form part of their Strategy for the year 2012/13. It was felt that such provision should be made from Reserves.**

**Having considered the Finance & Strategy Committee budget Members present then also considered the Precept requests for the two other Standing Committees and agreed that their requests were acceptable. In view of this the Precept for the year 2012/13 was Resolved to be Recommended to full Town Council as follows:**

<b>Finance &amp; Strategy Committee</b>	<b>Net Precept Required</b>	<b>£82,246</b>
<b>Regeneration &amp; Environment Committee</b>	<b>Net Precept Required</b>	<b>£11,000</b>
<b>Amenities Recreation &amp; Tourism Committee</b>	<b>Net Precept Required</b>	<b>£96,070</b>
<b>TOTAL PRECEPT REQUIRED</b>		<b>£189,316</b>

**Representing an increase of 1.06% on the budget for 2011/12.**

**There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.05pm**

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