

MINUTES

At a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee on MS TEAMS on Tuesday 2nd March 2021

Present: Councillors: Bates, Brice (Vice-Chair), Bridges, Cavill, Drewett, Fuller, Hoar, Palmen (Chair), Piazza (substitute for Halik) & Whiffen.

In attendance: Cllr Kirk, Cllr Oldrieve, Wiltshire Cllr Trigg.

Officers: Mr L Allan (Town Clerk/RFO), Ms H Bell (Head of Leisure & Information Services), Mrs A Quick (Minutes), Mrs J Weimar (Head of Resources & Venues).

Public: 2

Press: 2

3218 APOLOGIES

RESOLVED to approve apologies from Cllr Halik (substituted by Cllr Piazza).

3219 MINUTES

a. **RESOLVED to approve** as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2021.

b. **There were no questions.**

c. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Civic Board meeting held on 2nd February 2021.

d. **RECEIVED** the minutes of the Risk & Audit Panel held on 2nd February 2021.

3220 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest not already included on the Register.

3221 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Cllr Palmen thanked all the Council Officers for coping so well with the Covid Pandemic and highlighted that vaccines are now being rolled out. Sincere thanks were given to Cllr Brice on behalf of the Council for his commitment over 30 years.

3222 OPEN FORUM

The committee considered questions from the public.

Mr Mitchell expressed his thanks to Cllr Brice. Feedback was requested regarding the state of the streets in Trowbridge, in particular regarding contamination from taxis and buses outside the Town Hall. Cllr Palmen suggested the only solution would be TTC undertaking sweeping/cleaning ourselves. Moving forward the FHSF needs to look at pedestrianisation of some areas and drop off points for the buses. TTC had asked for this to be included but WC Highways were not supportive.

It was asked why the Armed Forces Weekend is not on this agenda? Cllr Palmen stated there hasn't been a concrete proposal to put this forward. Until this has a Chair and is driven from the community it is difficult to push this forward. TTC shouldn't have to do all the work for this. An example is the work by the community to achieve the Weavers Market. Cllr Palmen suggested a meeting in June for plans in the coming year.

Mr Jubbie stated that Doric Park is premature as there is no planning and no guarantee of outcome following the Covid pandemic. He claims that consultation has not been conducted correctly. He will call for a town meeting and Poll if consultation is not undertaken.

Initial

3223 **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Cllr Palmen ran through the P&R Report and in particular.

1.1 Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) enforcement – A question was asked why the PSPO hadn't been enforced? It is suggested that WC doesn't think there has been a problem with this. This will be discussed at Full Council with a Police Officer in attendance. Cllr Oldrieve stated this is an issue between two public bodies and we should take a strong view on this to get it sorted. Town Clerk asked if the Committee would be happy for him to write to John Carter (WC) and Leighton Williams (Police) to get a view on this before Full Council?

RESOLVED: to write to John Carter and Leighton Williams for a coordinated response regarding the failure to implement the PSPO.

1.2 CCTV - Town Clerk has written to the PCC election candidates and has so far received responses from the Independent and Labour Candidates.

2.1.5 CIL – Cllr Kirk asked for more clarification on double payments in 2018; Town Clerk advised that it is difficult to calculate whether we were paid the correct amount despite communication, therefore, we held the payment in General Reserves. Other Councils experienced the same issue. He explained it is not a normal accounting transaction, with no invoice therefore difficult to pick up due to lack of paper-trail. Cllr Kirk asked if we can continue with the current level of reserves? Cllr Palmen responded that the incoming Council will discuss and advise this. Town Clerk advised that General Reserves should be 3 months revenue expenditure which it isn't so will be increased to this over the next 3 years.

2.1.7 Council Tax – Cllr Piazza asked if Dorset & Wiltshire Fire Service precept is capped? Cllr Palmen replied yes it is. Cllr Kirk stated many towns have taken on services therefore have increased precept. Cllr Palmen suggested we could add this service uptake as an extra column on the chart which the Town Clerk immediately added, confirming that only Salisbury, Devizes, Chippenham and now Bradford on Avon had approved asset transfers from Wiltshire Council. Cllr Hoar suggests it is difficult to make direct comparisons between towns due to different factors e.g. inherited offices and other buildings. Cllr Oldrieve suggests that no change to this table are needed as people can make their own decision based on these figures.

2.2.1 Furlough - Cllr Kirk asked about the Furlough claim for HOS for 1 month, was this justified? If we have to repay any furlough money we could be short of reserves. Cllr Palmen advised we will wait for the auditor to respond on this.

3.1.1 Museum – It was advised that the museum opening date is proposed as 22nd May 2021.

4.2.4 Elm Grove – Cllr Piazza asked if we have a date when the developer will build the new recreation ground? Town Clerk advised it is subject to planning condition.

5.1.2 Remote vs In-Person Meetings - Legislation for remote meetings has not been extended beyond May. Annual Council Meeting on 18th May will be held in Lansdown Hall with new councillors. It is appropriate for the council to vote whether it should allow remote meetings going forward but we need to wait for Government advice.

6.1 FHSF - The Town Council has requested the pedestrianisation of Market Street but it seems WC has not put this forward as a proposal. Cllr Kirk asked how much The Town Hall needs from the FHSF? Cllr Cavill advised it is approx. £15 million in total. Cllr Palmen suggested re-development of the market and Market Place are also in the FHSF. Cllr Piazza advised that WC will need to add additional funds to the amount to implement major change.

7.1.1 Wiltshire College –Iain Hatt is the new principal at Wiltshire College.

8.1.3 SDAT – details exactly what TTC has taken over in previous years and what other transfers could be made in future years. It is only Salisbury, Devizes and Chippenham which have completed an asset transfer package. Cllr Kirk asked for some costs in terms of precept. Town Clerk confirmed a Band D charge would remain under £200 in 3-years.

8.2 Health Services –The new Integrated Care Centre will be considered at the next TD Meeting.

Dorset Wiltshire Fire & Rescue – Undertaking a consultation process to be promoted on our social media.

WALC - Town Clerk issued newsletter to Cllrs today.

SLCC - Town Clerk has been appointed as Vice Chair therefore is a declaration of interest.

3224 MOTION: 2101072219 CIVIC CENTRE TOILET FACILITIES

The Committee considered the following MOTION which was referred by Full Council, as proposed by Cllr Kirk, seconded by Cllr Cooper;

MOTION: That when the Civic Centre is permitted to reopen and the staff return to their Offices, included within the flexible working arrangement is the requirement to do a few hours of their work in the Civic Centre foyer on the weekend to enable the toilet facilities to be accessible to the public.

Cllr Bates suggests that HR would need to check employment contracts regarding working at weekends. Head Of Resources confirmed there are different contracts for different staff; Civic Staff are on a rolling rota, Admin staff are contracted Mon-Fri, Museum staff are contracted on Saturdays because the museum has previously been open on a Saturday and Active staff are working on a flexible working rota.

Recorded Vote was taken (Shown in Appendices).

MOTION LOST.

3225 MOTION: 2101072252a ARMED FORCES EVENT

The Committee considered the following MOTION which was referred by Full Council, as proposed by Cllr Piazza, seconded by Cllr Kirk.

MOTION: That Trowbridge Town Council uses the £3,000 funding originally budgeted for the Mayor's Dinner in March 2021 and allocates it to our new version of Wiltshire Armed Forces, bringing the total closer to the £7,000 original grant. If the event does not go ahead in 2021 due to the pandemic, we will rollover the amount to the following year. The Mayor's Dinner will instead be sponsored or simply not go ahead.

Cllr Piazza agrees that the event needs leadership requiring development with volunteers so it can then run independently with the assistance of a grant. Cllr Piazza is happy to put himself forward along with others on Facebook. TTC would need to assist with this. Cllr Palmen stated TTC will look at this after the election. Cllr Bates highlighted that without the Mayors dinner the 2 charities will suffer (RUH Cancer support and Dorothy House) therefore suggests the money should be split between these charities. Town Clerk can add this to the Agenda to consider where any end of year balances can be allocated. Cllr Whiffen suggested arranging a meeting for all volunteers to discuss the money allocated for the Armed Forces Event. Town Clerk highlighted this will be covered in Item 10.

MOTION REFERRED to future meetings when end of year balances are considered.

3226 LITTER BIN SERVICES

The Committee considered the following RECOMMENDATION, moved by Cllr Brice, seconded by Cllr Piazza:

Cllr Fuller highlighted the problem of dog waste which is left around the town, regarding which we have received a letter of complaint. This suggests we need to supplement this service. Cllr Drewett suggested we need to include the cost of waste disposal. Town Clerk anticipates that it will be a contractor supplying the waste disposal services, the cost of which will be included.

RESOLVED: That Trowbridge Town Council considers, as part of the development of the Council Strategy 2021-2025 that the litter bin service should be priority for transfer from Wiltshire Council. This will include; replacement of life expired and additional bins, surveys, sponsorship etc. This will be factored in to consideration of the re-tendered grounds maintenance contract and which services can be retained by Wiltshire Council and which can be retained in house by the town council. Trowbridge Town Council will use the £40,000 amount, set aside this year for WC transfers, to fund these services over the next two years.

3227 END OF YEAR BALANCES (Report Item 2.1.4)

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report;

Trowbridge Town Council has incurred worse than budget financial results on a number of departments this financial year and has also achieved better than budget results on a number of other departments, mainly due to events and other activities being cancelled due to the pandemic. The committee needs to consider if it will allocate any of the better than budget balances to earmarked reserves, potentially to boost potential events which may be arranged during the latter part of 2021/22 or to bolster the budget for those activities which may need additional financial support in 2021/22. This may have an impact on General Reserves.

RESOLVED: That the committee delegates to the Town Clerk to prepare a schedule of proposed end of year allocations to earmarked reserves from 2020/21 to 2021/22 to be considered at the June meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee prior to completion of the end of year accounts.

Cllr Fuller reminded the committee that it was suggested that we could carry over money to next year for Armed Forces therefore providing a reasonable sum for consideration by the new Council. Remaining money collected over the last year should go back to Council Tax Payers.

3228 OPTICIANS REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

RESOLVED: To approve the new Opticians Reimbursement Policy,

This is in line with The Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations 1992.

3229 DORIC PARK 3GATP (Report Item 4.2.2)

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report and:

Cllr Piazza claims that; the consultation wasn't thorough; he doesn't have full knowledge of this project; the planned usage hasn't been released to the public; and the full effects of Covid are not yet known: He suggests the new council in May should have their say on this. Cllr Palmen stated that a more detailed survey was previously rejected at Full Council. Cllr Fuller stated that a complaint appeal regarding the consultation undertaken is to be considered by Full Council in May. Cllr Palmen suggests that lodging a complaint shouldn't be allowed to stop the Council progressing decisions. Cllr Cavill states that we have a lot of information on this project and the town has a need for which we have support from a number of organisations. Cllr Kirk claims that very few people would use this facility and he is not content with the business plan. If it doesn't cost the council any money long-term then he is happy with that. Cllr Piazza should be thanking Hayley for her fantastic work on this project and for thoroughly answering all his questions. Cllr Bates responded to Cllr Kirk's statement that only 3% will use it as it is a wonderful facility with far reaching opportunities.

AMENDMENT: TO ADD: 'and following the conclusion of the outstanding complaint appeal.'

AMENDMENT LOST.

Recorded Vote was taken on the original recommendation (shown in Appendices).

RESOLVED: That the committee recommends to Council: That further to the resolution of the Council on 21st July 2020 the consultation has been completed and Trowbridge Rugby Football Club has approved the deal; we still await planning permission and tenders and therefore if planning permission and tenders are received before the 6th May the borrowing approval application will be submitted and if not then the Council will consider the project approval including borrowing approval application following the election.

3230 WILTSHIRE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW (Report Item 6.4.5)

The Committee considered the Town Clerk's report and:

Town Clerk offered to explain details to anyone requesting them.

RESOLVED: That Trowbridge Town Council delegates to the Town Clerk to respond to the consultation based upon its concerns about the unsoundness of the current proposals as indicated above and in particular continues to seek a greater acknowledgement from Wiltshire Council of the sustainability of alternative options and the failure of the proposals to be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

3231 CODE OF CONDUCT (Report Item 1.3)

The Committee considered proposals for the revision of the Code of Conduct to recommend to Council so that the revised code is approved in advance of the Election, to come into effect immediately following the election.

Cllr Piazza agrees with taking action against harassment, abuse and we must respect each other. He is concerned about 'Publish information which could bring the council into disrepute' as at the last full council meeting some comments were made about Wiltshire Council which could be considered to be bringing it into disrepute. Questions of interpretation of this protocol would be decided by the Town Clerk and he believes this should be done by the Monitoring Officer. Cllr Palmen states this policy is not stopping Cllrs criticising policy or the council. He will criticise WC where he believes they have acted incorrectly but the Code of Conduct is designed to ensure this is done politely, honestly and appropriately.

Mr Jubbie highlighted that members of the public should be treated respectfully during meetings and he believes this Code of Conduct should be put forward to the new council at Full Council in May for approval.

Town Clerk responded that P8.6 states that if a member wants to see personal information they need to justify their right to do that. If it isn't included in the Code Of Conduct then it cannot be considered.

Cllr Kirk agreed it is good to tighten up the Code of Conduct but asked where he would stand making questioning statements to the Town Clerk as he has done previously. Town Clerk is unable to answer specific questions until they arise in practice. Cllr Hoar welcomes this Code Of Conduct and highlighted that any problems with an Officer should be addressed through the appropriate route, not during a committee meeting. Town Clerk stated that all new Councillors will be required to sign this Code of Conduct once approved at Full Council.

Recorded Vote was taken (Shown in Appendices).

RESOLVED: That the Policy & Resources Committee recommends the new Code of Conduct to the Council meeting on 16th March 2021, to be adopted and to come into effect on 7th May 2021 immediately following the election and prior to any members making their declaration of acceptance of office. And that it is readopted at the Annual meeting of Council on 18th May 2021.

3232 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

RESOLVED to approve the payments and receipts since the last meeting:

	<u>Payments</u>	<u>Receipts</u>
December	121,902.81	118,155.63
January	181,054.63	72,326.44

3233 MEDIA RELEASES

Litter Bins

Events Funding carried forward for 2022

Recorded Votes

3234 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 1st June 2021 on Microsoft MS TEAMS (TBC).

The Meeting closed at 22.15

Signature.....Dated.....

APPENDICES

RECORDED VOTES

	Toilets	Doric Amendment	Doric Motion	Code Of Conduct
Palmen	X	X	✓	✓
Brice	X	X	✓	✓
Hoar	X	X	✓	✓
Bridges	X	X	✓	✓
Bates	X	X	✓	✓
Whiffen	X	X	✓	✓
Drewett	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cavill	X	X	✓	✓
Fuller	A	✓	A	✓
Piazza	✓	✓	X	X

Initial