

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE/PROPERTY COMMITTEE MEETING held in Committee Room No. 3, St. John's Hall, Penzance on Thursday 6th December 2007 at 7.00 pm.

PRESENT

Councillor M.R. Cotton - Chairman

Councillors R. Clark
J.H. Dixon
M. Freeman
D. Nebesnuick

30. **APOLOGIES**

Councillors R.A. Mann and C.A.C. White

31. **TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest to receive.

32. **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 8TH NOVEMBER 2007**

Having been circulated, it was

RESOLVED: that they should be signed as a true and correct record.

33. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

(a) Thank You Letters

The Town Clerk reported that one 'thank you' letter had been received in respect of the donation made to Vitalise and it was

RECOMMENDED: that receipt be noted.

(b) Update re. Penzance A.F.C. Proposals

The Town Clerk advised that he had met with the Chairman of the Football Club and, as a result of discussions, the Club Chairman advised that the initial planning application would be withdrawn.

The Chairman had also met with one of the local residents who had expressed concern about the proposals and the next stage would be to bring forward options for consideration which would be discussed initially with the Town Council and then with local residents prior to a further application being made and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(c) Cornwall Pension Fund AGM

The Town Clerk advised that the AGM of the Pension Fund was being held at Kingsley Village at Fraddon on the 7th December and that an invitation had been extended to a representative of the council.

The Town Clerk went on to advise that he had not felt the need to attend this meeting as full reports of the status of the Pension Scheme were provided in great detail and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(d) Cornwall Pension Fund - Draft Strategy Statement

Again referring to the Pension Fund, the Town Clerk advised that there was now a requirement on the part of the Department for Communities and Local Government for Pension Scheme Managers to produce a Forward Strategy Statement on a three year basis which was examined by independent accountants.

This measure had been introduced to ensure that the scheme was operating in a fit state to meet the future needs of its members and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

(e) Weather Reports - Response from Penwith District Council

The District Council had written with regard to the request for the provision of surf condition reports on its website which would be of benefit to both locals and visitors, particularly during the main tourist season.

The response advised that it would not be possible to fulfil this function because of staff resources and events had been somewhat overtaken with the decision to contract the beach lifesaving services to the RNLI.

However, Penwith had indicated that it would be prepared to provide a link to a well-known website, which provides surf reports and other related information, and this would be done in due course. Members took a view that this was a missed opportunity in terms of promoting the area and, that the marketing of tourism in the area had not been improved by the decision to discontinue the specific Penwith Guide and to merge with the West Cornwall tourist guide, and it was

RECOMMENDED: that the position be noted.

34. **FINANCIAL POSITION**

The Committee considered its finances to the 31st October 2007 and it was

RESOLVED: to note the position.

35. **FINANCIAL POSITION AND BUDGET REVISIONS 2007/08 AND BUDGET FOR 2008/09**

The Town Clerk advised that the three standing committees of General Purposes, Penlee House and Park and Planning had recommended the acceptance of their budgets without further amendment.

Members then examined the Finance Committee budget in considerable detail and noted the measures which had been taken to ensure that the increase in precept remained as low as possible whilst taking account of unavoidable increases in cost in terms of energy, rates, salary increments and the annual wage settlement.

Members noted the increased rent in respect of the Town Council Offices and the Town Clerk reminded them that the final figure was set to grow by £1,000.00 p.a. over the next three years.

However, given the possible changes which may occur as a result of the move to a Unitary Authority and the unknown needs of the Town Council in terms of functions it may or may not perform, that its accommodation requirements be kept under review in the light of developments.

Members also noted the steep increase in the cost of rent in relation to the Mayor's Parlour which had been brought about by a review on the part of Penwith and was based on the total metrage of St John's Hall, which had then been divided amongst its tenants and other users in terms of rental and the payment of rates, which, hitherto, had not been charged separately.

There was some debate as to the need for a separate facility and members felt, again, that the matter should be held over until the future needs of the council were known but, in the meantime, it was

RECOMMENDED: that whilst the Mayor should have first call on the use of the Parlour, its use otherwise should be maximised to justify the current rental cost.

Members carefully examined all other income and expenditure heads and it was then

RECOMMENDED: that the budgets for the three other standing committees be supported and that the revised estimates for the Finance/Property Committee be approved and that the proposed budget for the Finance/Property Committee for 2008/09 also be approved, giving rise to the precept requirement in the sum of £421,934.00, representing a 3.418 per cent rise over the current year.

Members also noted the previously agreed contribution to the CCTV system which would be detailed as a separate line entry on the precept demand to explain the position to the parishioners of Penzance.

36. **APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT**

(a) Minor Awards

(i) Tom Bawcock's Eve

RESOLVED: to make a grant of £175.00.

(ii) Newlyn School - Promotion of Links with a Primary School near Roscoff including an Exchange Visit

RESOLVED: to make a grant in the sum of £250.00.

(b) Major Awards

(i) Mount's Bay School and Community Sports College

The Town Clerk advised that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor had written letters of support in respect of the proposed new all weather pitch at the school and the letter from the Head of Sport at the School had been copied to all members for information. It was

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk should obtain further details in respect of this proposal relating to the community use of the pitch together with details of the Business Plan and that the matter be returned to the next meeting of the Finance Committee.

37. **BUSINESS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

There were no other items under this heading.

8.50 pm

Chairman
24th January 2008