

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Extra Ordinary Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held by Virtual Zoom facility on Monday 7 September 2020 at 5.45 pm

PRESENT: Councillor A Humphries (Chairman)
Councillor AM Sinton (Vice Chairman)
Councillor RG Beale
Councillor GR Brookes
Councillor DM Craigie
Councillor RP Hopkins
Councillor WT Moy (Ex officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Mrs K Fellows, J Grady, DJ Morris, RJ Morris and CM Murray.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor E Bowden (Member of Committee) & Councillors Mrs C Bowden and G Duffy

84. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were none.

85. REVIEW OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE TO BUDGET PLAN YEAR TO DATE

To review income and expenditure to budget plan year to date for Town Council finances. This represents an interim general review for part way through the current Municipal Year and to monitor the financial impact and business interruption by the Covid 19 pandemic. *[report and full cost centres analysis inclusive of August 2020 attached to Agenda]*

Councillor RP Hopkins made a political statement described as “representative of the opinion of the Opposition”. This made reference to hardship factors attributed to Covid 19 and other matters in the West Ward including Food bank dependency, job losses and employment security, the onset of the winter months and risk of a second wave outbreak of the virus in the community. The implications of Brexit were also mentioned. Councillor Hopkins made various fiscal suggestions including down scaling of the Town Christmas Lighting and Christmas trees provision for cost savings, fitting solar panels to the roofs of the Community Hall and St Richards House to support green energy initiatives, support for CVS and the Food Bank charities, award of further New Homes Bonus funding in general and covering costs incurred by members of the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Group.

Through the Chairman the Town Clerk was invited to pass comment. The Town Clerk clarified that the Christmas Lights arrangements had contractual obligations over a five year term. The actual Switch on Event was generally cost neutral financed through revenue from the fairground operator and vendors, although it was unlikely that the event would take place in 2020 due to the pandemic restrictions. The Christmas tree provision was sourced free of charge each year from a generous benefactor. As such there is no tangible savings scope within the Christmas arrangements. Funding support remains available for outside bodies and groups through the Grants Appraisal Scheme as detailed within the cost centre summary. There is no further unallocated New Homes Bonus available following resolution of the remaining funds to projects by Council in January 2020. Councillor WT

Moy made reference that there was currently no mandate for a Neighbourhood Plan or any financial allocation of funds within the budgets set for the current Municipal Year.

The Town Clerk referred to the financial report and cost summary explaining that the agenda item was to review current performance to plan given the restrictions and business interruptions caused by the pandemic. The income stream cost centre positions for the Community Hall (Code 6) and Heritage Centre (Code17) were fully explained. Mention was made that following reopening of both Community facilities with suitable measures in place during early August the take up and resurrection of enquiries, room bookings and visitor footfall was very encouraging. A clearer picture of the revenue returns will be possible after the September invoicing. A precautionary approach is being taken due to the risk to both income streams which would be disrupted again should a second Covid 19 outbreak in the locality necessitate further lockdown situations arising. At this stage the three additional income streams for the Town Council comprising premises rentals, Community Hall and Heritage Centre are all functioning. The Chairman acknowledged the work put in by the Officers, Heritage Managers and Volunteers in achieving the resumption of business.

The Town Clerk explained that additional financial scope had been identified within the budgets for various costs which would not be incurred due to the pandemic restrictions. These included Cost Centres 69-Local Government Elections £6000, 74- Bye Elections £7000 and 44 – Band Concerts £5000. Any adjustments can be considered as part of the estimates for budget and precept setting during late November and December prior to the deadline of the end of January 2021. There were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED That the information was noted.

86. TO REVIEW THE ARRANGEMENTS AND FISCAL POSITION FOR THE MAYFLOWER 400 PROJECT

To review the arrangements and fiscal position for the Mayflower 400 Project. A status report has been provided by Mrs Caroline Davies from OPUS Events who are commissioned for delivery and planning of the Event [*report attached to Agenda*]. The original event date of 4th July 2020 was prohibited due to the pandemic lock down and work has been largely suspended on the project from April 2020 to date. Further consideration will be required through the Community & Amenities Committee and Full Council this autumn with regard to overall progress and resurrection options for this project.

In general discussion the difficulties caused by the pandemic leading to suspension of progress for the event were acknowledged. The Chairman made reference to the comprehensive status report provided by Mrs Caroline Davies from OPUS. The Town Clerk explained that the matter of organising and planning events was still very much an emerging situation and by example a forum had been arranged for later this week to help reach a consensus of agreed opinion for the forthcoming Remembrance Day and Christmas Lights arrangements. The delegation was to be representatives from the Town, District and County Councils, the local Royal British Legion and the Police. It was hoped that these protocols would help towards the resurrection of planning arrangements for Mayflower 400 options next year. In the meantime it was acknowledged that dialogue is maintained with Mrs Davies and the other stakeholders whilst the position becomes clearer. The current financial status reached for the project was noted from the report and confirmed as cost neutral going forwards until firmer commitments and planning are possible.

RESOLVED That the information was noted. That the options for Mayflower 400 be referred back to the Mayflower Event Committee for further Consideration and reporting to the parent Committee in due course (Community & Amenities Committee).

The meeting closed at 6.32 pm.

Chairman of Committee

12 October 2020

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Chairman of Council

28 September 2020

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