

# Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the Meeting of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at the Community Hall on Monday 13 June 2022 at 6.46pm

PRESENT: Councillor EJ Bowden  
Councillor GR Brookes  
Councillor Mrs J Chaudry  
Councillor RP Hopkins  
Councillor GA Duffy (Ex officio)

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors, Mrs C Bowden, CM Murray & AM Sinton.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors RG Beale, DM Craigie, Mrs K Fellows, J Grady, NR Griffiths, A Humphries, AH Laird & WT Moy.

## 28. Chairman for the Meeting

The Town Clerk explained that due to apologies of absence having been received from the Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman it was necessary to nominate an Acting Chairman for this meeting. Councillor E Bowden proposed Councillor GR Brookes to undertake the position of Chairman for the meeting which was seconded by Councillor Mrs J Chaudry.

RESOLVED That the nominated Chairman for the meeting is Councillor GR Brookes.

## 29. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor GR Brookes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Remittances, Cheque Number 12087 for the Henry Coventry Almshouse Charity – Queens Platinum Jubilee Grant Funding, as a Trustee of the Charity. Councillor GA Duffy declared a non-pecuniary interest in Remittances, Cheque Number 12107 for the Westlands Residents Association-Queens Platinum Jubilee Grant Funding, as a member of the Association.

## 30. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 APRIL 2022.

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held on 11 April at the Community Hall be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31. To note the Membership and Chairmanship of the Committee, as determined at the Annual Council meeting on 9 May 2022 (details at end of Agenda)

32. To note that the Emergency Committee membership, as laid down in the Internal Control Policy, comprises the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Resources Committee, the Mayor, the Leader of the Majority Party and the relevant Committee Chairman (the Town Clerk also being a member of this Committee).

## 33. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS YEAR END 31 MARCH 2022

To receive the Town Council Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2022 and recommend their approval to Council [*copy attached with Agenda*].

Councillor RP Hopkins raised that interest rates were set to increase this year and options for investment returns should therefore now be considered further.  
There were no questions arising from the accounts presented.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and to recommend the Annual Accounts to Full Council for approval on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

34. ANNUAL RETURN & STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

To receive the statement of assurance on the Annual Return for the year ending 31 March 2022 and recommend its approval to Council [*copy attached with Agenda*]

There were no questions arising from the statement of assurance presented.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and to recommend the Statement of Assurance to Full Council for approval on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

35. ANNUAL RETURN – STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS.

To receive the statement of accounts on the Annual Return for the Year ending 31 March 2022 and recommend its approval to Council [*copy attached with Agenda*]

There were no questions arising from the statement of accounts.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and to recommend the Statement of Accounts to Full Council for approval on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

36. BANK RECONCILIATION AS AT 31 MARCH 2022 (YEAR END)

To receive and note the Bank Reconciliation statement for the year ending 31 March 2022 [*copy attached with Agenda*]

There were no questions arising from the Bank Reconciliation.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and the Year End 2021/2022 Bank Reconciliation be approved.

37. ANNUAL REPORT FROM INTERNAL AUDITOR 2021/2022.

To receive the Annual report dated 28th April 2022 of the Internal Auditor [*copy attached with Agenda*]. The Interim report dated 10 November 2021 has been presented previously.

There were no questions arising from the Internal Auditors Annual report 2021/2022.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and the Annual Internal Auditors Report 2021/2022 be approved.

38. SPECIAL GRANTS

Special Grants Annual Approval - To approve payment of the Special Grants as per the budget estimates agreed by Council in January 2021, as follows.

- \* Citizens Advice Bureau £4000.00
- \* Droitwich Spa Council for Voluntary Services £3000.00
- \* St Mary de Witton (churchyard maintenance) £1300.00

Councillor E Bowden mentioned that the DCVS grant award had been the same value for many years and that he had been asked to enquire whether the amount could be increased in line with inflation. The Town Clerk explained that the grants were budgeted as part of the

precept setting in December and January each year. The precept had a direct impact and due to consideration for an overall zero rise on preceptual value this year, no changes had been built in. Consideration can be made for the future, subject to scope and a similar approach will need to be made for the other two Special Grants.

- RESOLVED To approve payment of the following three special grants.
- \* Citizens Advice Bureau £4000.00
  - \* Droitwich Spa Council for Voluntary Services £3000.00
  - \* St Mary de Witton (churchyard maintenance) £1300.00

#### 39. BRITISH GAS/CENTRICA CENTRAL HEATING BOILER CAREPLAN ARRANGEMENTS

The Town Clerk updated that British Gas notified on 7 April 2022 that all Business Care arrangements will cease with effect from 19 April [see attached]. This does impact on the care plans in place for the Community Hall & St Richards House. An instruction was raised to complete an annual service ahead of the final date and this was achieved in early April for both premises.

To consider a replacement care plan arrangement through a suitable alternative Service Provider. The Officers recommendation is to take forward an enquiry with the local provider engaged in autumn 2021 for the emergency replacement of the Boiler main feed pump for St Richards House. This work was completed very efficiently and economically, without any business disruption. Initial enquiries have confirmed that the same Company do offer a competitive business premises care plan arrangement, subject to verifying full details. The Town Clerk confirmed that cost details from an alternative service provider would be verified and updated before proceeding with contractual arrangements.

RESOLVED – That the information was noted.

#### 40. EON HERITAGE ELECTRICITY ACCOUNT – Communications

The Town Clerk updated about the attached copy correspondence (with Agenda), first notified and received from EON on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022, together with the acknowledgement response issued. A further response has been requested and is currently awaited from EON. Manual meter reading were taken and submitted to EON again on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and it was further noted that EON fitted Smart Meters for the premises in August 2021, from which time they have ceased taking any manual readings. A further update will be provided once a full response and explanation has been received from EON. Copy Quarterly statements have been obtained from EON at the end of May and determine the following,

- (a) The best available fixed business plan (2 year) is currently applied rather than standard variable.
- (b) The statements show a marked increase in charging accumulation as follows,  
**11<sup>th</sup> October-£1697.76**  
**7<sup>th</sup> January -£3429.77**  
**6<sup>th</sup> April £4786.51**  
**31<sup>st</sup> May -£5904.33**
- (c) The statements all confirm that the direct debit arrangement is correctly aligned and payments do not need to be adjusted. This assurance contradicts with the accumulated outstanding balance position.
- (d) The accumulation is not in line with any previous year's consumption or charging trends.
- (e) The statements were not originally posted or emailed to the Town Council. This has now been corrected and both the online and registered postal addresses have been reaffirmed to EON.

*[email correspondence & copy statements attached with Agenda for information].*

Possible lines of enquiry to help ascertain an explanation for the increased consumption readings and charging include the following. The Town Clerk explained that these options will take time to investigate further and an update will be provided in due course.

- (a) Verification of the smart meter through EON/ EON Next.
- (b) Verification with one of the tenants at St Richards House as to installations and power use for a series of IT Server units in place inside their offices which support remote working from the building and are operational 24 hours. This requires further analysis to gauge the originating date of the installations, power consumption and whether any impact is within the long standing agreed service charge arrangements connected to the tenancy.

RESOLVED – That the information was noted

41. To consider the exclusion of the Public and Press by passing the following motion:

*That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.*

RESOLVED – That the press and public be now excluded from the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 by virtue of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted which involves financial and legal matters.

#### 42. STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Confidential report attached with Agenda *[for information]*. The Town Clerk referred to the report and gave an update on all 4 items. There were no questions arising.

RESOLVED – That the information was noted

#### 43. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT.

Creditor accounts in the sum of £44,720.36 were considered for payment. Total expenditure presented £44,720.36 *[lists attached with Agenda]*.

Councillor RP Hopkins questioned the purpose of Remittance Cheque Number 12100 (Peter Hamilton NHP Scoping Note £318.75) and expressed critical opinion towards the work of the Consultant for the NHP project in 2018.

The Town Clerk clarified that Peter had been engaged as the Professional Consultant for the NHP project which had had to be suspended in 2018 for various reasons (all previously reported). The contract severance arrangements at that time were on good terms and amicably agreed. The remittance in question relates to a completely separate matter. This is for the Town Council commitment to maintain progress with issues and options for a resurrected NHP project. To this effect there will be a further update from Councillor GR Brookes as the designated Elected Representative for NHP project matters at Full Council on 20 June 2022. The payment relates to a scoping paper for which Peter and two other Professional Consultants have been engaged separately this year. Budget provision had been previously authorised & allocated as part of the overall precept setting arrangements in January 2022.

Payments to all three consultants had been presented and authorised in April and May

2022. This payment is the second and final payment for Peter's contribution to this work. There were no further questions arising.

RESOLVED-. That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £44,720.36 be authorised and duly passed for payment. Total expenditure authorised = £44,720.36.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Chairman of Committee

25 July 2022

Chairman of Council

26 September 2022