

DARTMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER
OF DARTMOUTH GUILDHALL ON TUESDAY 12TH MARCH 2019

PRESENT: Cllrs: A Fyson; D Gent; R Lyon (Mayor); F Pritchard-Tagg (Chairman and Deputy Mayor); R Springett.

IN ATTENDANCE: Town Clerk: C Pritchard-Williams; Finance Officer: A McGrigor;
Dartmouth Visitor Centre: K Perrow

PART 1 - Open to the Public

61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr: Hawke

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

63. CORRESPONDENCE

The Clerk said that we had received correspondence from the Dartmouth Visitor Centre (DVC), they have applied for a grant, but it was accidentally missed off this agenda. The Chairman said that this could be discussed within correspondence and if necessary, recommend it is passed to Full Council on the 1st April.

The Chairman said the DVC have asked for a grant for £5,000 to help with the running costs, and that in previous years they have been awarded grants for this purpose.

Karen Perrow was invited to speak and said that this was a grant application and different from the funds they have been allocated within the new financial year's budget (2019-2020) for £5,000 which is for architectural drawings for the DVC extension.

Cllr Springett said that he felt the DVC is an asset to the town and the Chairman agreed. Cllr Fyson said that other towns have lost their Visitor Centres, and ours was at an advantage because it also has the Newcomen Engine.

Cllr Gent recommended to pass this grant application to the next Full Council meeting on the 1st April 2019.

64. TO DISCUSS THE GRANTS FOR FY 2019-2020

- Changes to the Dartmouth Pre-School grant - £459.36

The Finance Officer explained that they wanted to change their grant application from paying for yoga for the children to purchasing wooden toys for the children.

Proposed: Cllr Springett

Seconded: Cllr Gent

Recommended: To award this grant of £459.36 to the Dartmouth Pre-School.

All Cllrs present were in favour of approving this grant

- **1st Dartmouth Scouts - £2000**
 The Chairman said that this grant of £2,000 would be towards a total cost of £10,000 which was to enhance the toilets and add in two showers.
Proposed: Cllr Springett
Seconded: Cllr Gent
Resolved: To award the grant of £2,000 to the Dartmouth Scouts.
 All Cllrs present were in favour of approving this grant
- **Dartmouth & District Friends of Children’s Hospice South West - £200**
 The Chairman said that we had received this grant because DTC have increased the hire charges since taking ownership of Royal Avenue Gardens. Cllrs discussed this but felt that the charges for the rental of the land were reasonable and that charities should be able to pay for this without applying for a grant.
Proposed: Cllr Springett
Seconded: Cllr Gent
Resolved: To refuse the grant for £200 and send a covering letter explaining why the grant was refused.
 All Cllrs present were in favour of refusing this grant.
- **Dartmouth Music festival - £5000**
 The Mayor declared an interest in this item and did not speak.
 The Chairman explained that we had received this grant because DTC have increased the hire charges since taking ownership of Royal Avenue Gardens. Cllrs discussed this item and again felt that the charges for the rental of the land were reasonable, however they agreed to pay £2,000 within the next financial year towards the hire of the gardens and park.
Proposed: Cllr Gent
Seconded: Cllr Fyson
Resolved: To award £2,000 towards the Dartmouth Music Festival.
 There was one abstention

65. TO DISCUSS THE CREATION OF A SPONSORSHIP COST CODE

The Chairman explained that the Town Council agreed at the Finance committee meeting in January 2019 to sponsor the Regatta £5,000 for the financial year 2019-2020.

Cllrs discussed the idea of creating a sponsorship cost code for this purpose and it was agreed to create a separate sponsorship budget and move £5,000 from the grants budget into the sponsorship budget.

Cllrs said that moving forward, the Regatta would need to apply every year for money out of this sponsorship budget.

Proposed: Cllr Springett

Seconded: Cllr Pritchard-Tagg

Resolution: To create a new cost code with a budget of £5,000 for the sponsorship of the Regatta, but that the Regatta would need to apply for this every year.

All Cllrs present were in favour

66. TO DISCUSS CHANGES TO THE BANK PAYMENT AUTHORISATION - POST ELECTION PERIOD (MANDATE FOR NEW COUNCIL)

The Finance Officer explained that she had met with the Business Relationship Manager from Nat West who advised of some changes to the authorisation system so that payments in the period between the new Council becoming elected and the Finance Committee signatories being placed on the mandate.

Nat West had recommended that we create a sign off sheet for Cllrs to approve payments and once two signatories had been received then the Clerk and the Finance Officer can authorise the payments on the online bank system.

Proposed: Cllr Gent

Seconded: Cllr Springett

Resolved: To approve the creation of a sign off sheet for Cllrs to approve payments and once two signatories had been received then the Clerk and the Finance Officer can authorise the payments on the online bank system.

All Cllrs present were in favour

67. TO DISCUSS UPGRADING OUR ONLINE BANKING SYSTEM

The Finance Officer explained that our current banking system is for smaller councils that deal with a maximum of £30,000 in the bank account. Dartmouth Town Council have a larger budget than this, so we have been advised to upgrade to the correct banking system, this comes at a cost of £20 per month.

Proposed: Cllr Springett

Seconded: Cllr Gent

All Cllrs present were in favour

68. TO DISCUSS BT & NEW TARIFF

The Finance Officer explained that our contract with BT was coming to an end in September of this year 2019 and the hardware via Shire Leasing in November of next year 2020.

The Finance Officer explained that we have a quote to have internet phones via our existing IT supplier which is considerably cheaper so asked Councillors to consider moving our phones to our existing IT supplier, also it would be cheaper to end our contracts early for both line rental and hardware.

Cllrs discussed this and looked at the costings and agreed that the best option financially was to move our phones to our existing IT supplier.

Cllr Fyson asked about the reliability of internet phones, and the Financial Officer said that our fibre had been extremely reliable and that's been in place for around one year.

Proposed: Cllr Gent

Seconded: Cllr Lyon

Resolved: To move the Council's phone system to internet phones and transfer the contract to our existing IT supplier and to terminate both contracts early.

All Cllrs present were in favour

69. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Proposed: Cllr Lyon

Seconded: Cllr Gent

Resolved: That in view of the confidential nature of business about to be transacted, it was in the public interest that the press and public be excluded and that they be instructed to withdraw.

To go into confidential section

PART 2 – Confidential

70. AGED DEBTORS REPORT AS AT 28th FEBRUARY 2019

There was a discussion about a particular debt on the report and it was asked that this be referred to the Henley Trust for clarification.

The Finance Officer took the Councillors through the outstanding debts and action she was taking to recover these debts.

There was a discussion about the debt left over from the previous tenants of the music studio, the Finance Officer explained that she had spoken with our solicitor and explained the options available.

Cllrs thought the best option was to write this debt off.

71. DARTMOUTH VISITOR CENTRE – FINANCIAL UPDATE

Cllrs discussed the Dartmouth Visitor Centre projected forecasts and noted that they were currently in the quiet quarter.

Cllrs voted to come out of the confidential section.