

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee held via Zoom on Monday 17 August 2020 at 7pm.

Present: Cllr Mrs Laity (Chairman)
Cllr P Dredge
Cllr Mrs S Hladkij
Cllr A Khong
Cllr T Parsons
Cllr Mrs K Pringle
Cllr R Wilson

In attendance:
Cllr A Rea
Mrs Lesley Hughes, Town Clerk
Mrs Pauline Cleal, Senior Finance Officer

The meeting was slightly delayed and started at 7.10pm due to technical issues with remote access.

PR20/01 **APOLOGIES:** No apologies were received.

PR20/02 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** The Chairman invited the declaration of any interests. Cllr Laity declared an interest in cheque number 015002 and Cllr Khong declared an interest in item PR20/10. There were no other interests declared.

PR20/03 **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:** Members considered the accounts for payment for the period 1st June to 31st July 2020 (previously circulated). Cllr Dredge highlighted that the accounts were different due to the Covid 19 Pandemic but highlighted a few of the smaller payments and items which had to be purchased due to the Pandemic. He also highlighted the air conditioning payment regarding the Watermark as this was important work which had to be undertaken but part of the cost had been with regard to the Library. Cllr Dredge informed Members that a Memorial Bench had been purchased however the cost is offset by a donation. Cllr Wilson queried where the bench would be sited and the Senior Finance Officer informed him it would be in Filham Park.

It was **RESOLVED** that the list for payments be approved in the sum of £149,342.85

PR20/04 **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS:** Consideration was given to a report on the accounts for July 2020 (copy previously circulated). Cllr Dredge informed the Committee that there was not a lot to record due to the Pandemic but he would like to highlight the expenditure on Legal Fees of £9023 of which £3780 was due directly to legal advice and representation

regarding Media policy, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. Cllr Wilson mentioned that we have a great deal of tree works which had impacted on this year's finances and appears to be increasing, in part due to the ash dieback. When the budgets are considered for 21-22 this needs to be included. Cllr Dredge made reference to the grants which had been received from South Hams District Council £5000 to support and help retail businesses in the town and £700 which was to support the volunteering and leaflets informing residents of how to obtain help during the lockdown. Payments had been made regarding Filham Park Access Road however this will be reclaimed from 106 contributions.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the accounts for the period to 31st July 2020.

PR20/05 **DEBTORS UPDATE:** The Committee considered the aged debtors report (previously circulated). Cllr Dredge informed Members that the larger amount was due to be paid on Wednesday and requested Cllr Pringle liaise with the Finance Officer on an outstanding debt.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the debtors update.

PR20/06 **INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT:** Members considered the Internal Audit report (previously circulated). Cllr Wilson stated that the report highlighted that the reserves for the council were set at the appropriate level although this had been criticised recently. The report was good and Cllr Parsons said many Councils up and down the country would like a report such as this and congratulated all those involved. Cllr Dredge queried with the Town Clerk about a change in the ratio regarding reserves which was less but agreed with the reserves set. The Internal Auditor's recommendations were discussed and it was agreed not to undertake half yearly assessed risks as the finances were being scrutinised thoroughly due to the current circumstances with Covid 19. The £1 nominal figure would be added to the Fixed Asset Register for the playgrounds and with regard to R3 this has been discussed by the Committee on previous occasions and the benefits currently outweigh making any changes to the current banking arrangements. Currently there is no cover for monies held by councils in any banks.

It was **RESOLVED** to note and receive the report and to add the £1 value to the playgrounds on the Fixed Asset Register.

PR20/07 **FINANCIAL IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS:** The Committee considered the projected figures (prepared at end July) and email exchanges in respect of ongoing efforts to secure some additional financial support (information previously circulated). Cllr Dredge informed Members that the figures would be reviewed again in October at the half yearly point. Cllr Dredge highlighted income for the Watermark Coffee Shop has been projected to be £14k however with the Eat Out to Help scheme the income for August could be in the region of £6k as well as income taken in the Bar. Some Councillors and staff have attended the Watermark to support the business Cllr Dredge did highlight that these were difficult times and very difficult to predict or

guarantee. Cllr Wilson enquired as the money allocated for VJ Day had not been spent could this be used towards the Watermark. The Senior Finance Officer informed him that any underspend would offset the deficit and Cllr Dredge confirmed this would reduce the overall loss. The Town Clerk enquired if Cllr Pringle knew if the Fireworks display would be going ahead this year and Cllr Pringle agreed to make enquiries and let the Town Clerk know. The Town Clerk further commented that she had been in contact with South Hams District Council and Devon County Council to pursue any financial help as other Town Councils were struggling and a meeting has been arranged with South Hams District Council using Zoom. Cllr Parsons thanked the Business Manager and staff with regard to the re-opening of the Watermark.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the information and thank the Business Manager and staff.

PR20/08 **ITEMS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL RELATING TO STANDING ORDERS AND ADDITIONAL QUERIES FROM CLLR JAGO:**

Consideration was given to Items 20/70 and 20/71 which were referred to Policy and Resources Committee by full Council to agree a process for reviewing standing order 12e and extending public participation to Watermark and Policy and Resources Committee to enable Councillors to attend. Subsequent to that meeting Cllr Jago has challenged aspects of section 30 of standing orders and the Executive action of the Committees (emails and short report previously circulated, along with extracts of the standing orders from 2010). The Committee discussed this and felt Standing Orders should be reviewed and the Mayor Cllr Laity, Cllr Dredge and one other Member should form a working group to undertake the review. Cllr Wilson said he has been on the Council for 25 years and now had to keep a copy of the standing orders with him at every meeting due to the nit picking during meetings. Councillors need to understand how a Council works and that the audit process checks with regard to spending and Council procedures.

Cllr Hladkij added a smaller group was a good idea but added all Councillors should have the opportunity to bring points to the group as in their own field will have experience but this does not necessarily mean local council experience. All Councillors should be able to offer their own individual input without any party politics involved. The revised Standing Orders would then be recommended to Full Council.

Cllr Parsons welcomed the opportunity for all Councillors to feed into to the group but reiterated that Ivybridge Town Council was not a political council.

Cllr Wilson agreed to be the third Member of the group to review Standing Orders.

It was **RESOLVED** to form a working group with the Mayor Cllr Laity, Cllr Dredge and Cllr Wilson and all Councillors invited to feed into the group prior to the revised Standing Orders being recommended to Full Council.

PR20/09 **INSURANCE:** The renewal of the insurance policy from September 2020 was considered (background previously circulated). The Assistant Town Clerk and the Senior Finance Officer held a zoom meeting with Mr S Harvey from WPS to discuss the renewal of the insurance and the Senior Finance Officer advised the Committee that Mr Harvey would be renewing the policy and that any increase would be approximately 2% due to index linking. Also that there were some items to be clarified. Cllr Wilson enquired about the amount regarding the War Memorial and the Senior Finance Officer informed him that this was one of the items to be clarified.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the renewal of the insurance.

PR20/10 **GRANTS:** Consideration was given to a report regarding grants payments, the request from RBL Ivybridge Branch and Erme Valley Rangers (copy previously circulated). The Committee discussed the report and the Town Clerk enquired if Members wished groups to be contacted to see if they were in need of the grant for this year. The Members agreed that Ivybridge & District Community Transport Association and Ivybridge Caring should receive grants as per the report as during lockdown they continued to offer services albeit different to their usual ones. The Royal British Legion have requested the Town Council organise the Road Closure this year although they are not sure what service will be allowed. Councillors considered the application for a grant from the Girl Guides and unfortunately felt they were not able to offer a grant. Cllr Hladkij added that the Citizens Advice grant should be awarded as they had continued to offer advice again in a different way to the drop in sessions.

It was **RESOLVED** to

(i) award the following grants in line with the report and to arrange the Road Closure on behalf of the Royal British Legion:

- i) Ivybridge and District Community Transport Association -£1500
- ii) Ivybridge Caring - £900
- iii) Ivybridge Citizens Advice - £1110

(ii) decline to award a grant to the Erme Valley Girl Guides

PR20/11 **IVYBRIDGE YOUTH SERVICES:** Members considered the report and proposals therein regarding youth support in the town (copy previously circulated). Cllr Hladkij informed the Members she had spoken to Ian Hammond who is overseeing the Youth Services counselling which was across Devon in an online format but with no clear numbers for Ivybridge. Cllr Hladkij also informed the members that the Bridge Project was again working with young people in Ivybridge providing youth services. The Town Clerk informed the Committee that the Youth Venue building would soon be open and she would contact County Councillor Croad with regard to funding

from his Locality Fund and Members considered awarding a grant of £2500 in addition to the £800 grant previously agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

(i) Councillor Croad be contacted regarding funding and to award the grant of £800 to the Bridge Project plus an additional £2500 to The Salvation Army for setting up costs at the Youth Venue

(ii) the provision of face to face youth counselling and other services by Young Devon be reviewed to ascertain what could be provided at the Youth Venue, but this was unlikely to include the well being cafe

PR20/12 **COMMUNITY FRIDGE INITIATIVE:** The Committee considered an email from Devon County Council and to note that the Salvation Army are keen to provide a suitable location and the additional information required (previously circulated). The Committee discussed this and Cllr Hladkij informed Members this was different to the Foodbank and the Town Clerk added that Mr Hammond was keen to provide this at the Youth Venue and recommended the Town Council take part.

It was **RESOLVED** to support the initiative.

PR20/13 **HEALTH AND SAFETY:** The Committee considered the regular update from the Assistant Town Clerk (report previously circulated) and agreed to receive and note the report.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the report.

PR20/14 **UPDATE AND INFORMATION:** To receive a report concerning conferences, progress on previous decisions and other topical issues (copy attached).

CCLA Meeting

Cllr Dredge informed Members he had attended a Webinar and had queried the long term effect of the qualified valuations on the Property Fund and was advised that CCLA are well placed in this sector because of what they own and what they don't own.

Ivybridge Brewing Company

Cllr Wilson was concerned regarding the structural integrity of the Town Hall building with regarding to any expansion and felt other premises would be more suited. The Town Clerk informed Members that Ivybridge Brewing Company were looking to move out of the Town Hall around October 2020.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive and note the information and reports.

In view of the confidential business about to be transacted the press and public were requested to leave the meeting.

All Councillors and Officers were asked if they were alone in the room which all confirmed they were.

IN COMMITTEE

PR20/15 **ERME VALLEY PLAYING FIELDS:** The Committee considered recent emails from South Hams District Council in respect of the land (copy previously circulated). The Town Clerk gave a verbal update explaining that the Council had been in discussions with South Hams District Council regarding transferring the land to Ivybridge Town Council but the District Council had included the Tennis Centre in the original discussions which would have been too onerous for the future. Further discussions with the District Council, supported by Lee Rider and Ivybridge Town FC have resulted in the offer of a 25 year lease with the Town Council and a subsequent sub lease to the football club, and not a land transfer, but this will enable the club to pursue funding. Cllr Wilson was keen to ensure no costs will be incurred by the Town Council as the funding was from 106 contributions and other sources.

It was **RESOLVED** to note and welcome the information.

PR20/16 **BUTTERPARK:** The Committee considered the recent email exchange between solicitors for LiveWest and Foot Anstey and to advise of any response (copy previously circulated). The Town Clerk informed members that she would be speaking to LiveWest the next day with regard to the current position and would report back to the Committee. Members expressed the hope that the scheme would be able to be delivered to support people with learning disabilities as envisaged at the outset.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update.

The meeting closed at 8.07pm

Signed.....
Chairman

Dated.....