

IVYBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of The Watermark Committee meeting held at The Watermark on 29th November 2021 at 6.30 pm

Meeting commenced at 6.38pm

Present: Cllr T Munro (In the Chair)
Cllr M Cade
Cllr P Dredge
Cllr T Parsons
Cllr A Rea

In Attendance: Mr J Parsons (Town Clerk)
Mr R Bibby (Watermark Manager)
Cllr A Spencer (Deputy Mayor)
Mrs P Cleal (Senior Finance Officer)

WM21/15 **APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Cllr Bowden

WM21/16 **INTERESTS TO BE DECLARED:** No interests were declared.

WM21/17 **TRADING INFORMATION:** Members considered the income and expenditure information (report previously circulated). Cllr Dredge informed Members that looking at the figures the Information Area sales were low and due to changes in the recycling waste collection sales of caddy/bin liners was very low as these are no longer being sold. Watermark rooms although only 19% of budget much of the income is seasonal and due to the Pandemic not been operating for the full 7 months. The Cinema has been open for a short time and income increasing, Cllr Dredge highlighted that the direct and indirect costs need to be added together to give the total costs and then deducted from the income. Live Artists only really commenced with one event at the very end of September and a few in October, however due to timing regarding reconciling the paperwork for the events which means these were not currently included in the figures. Salaries are split between all centres. The Coffee Shop had a very good month and the Watermark Manager confirmed that Saturday business had increased. The Bar depends on other functions such as live events, parties or wedding receptions. The building is a cost and has been helped by the furlough grant earlier in the year. The Business Units are doing very well and Cllr Dredge complimented the previous Town Clerk for her initiative to bring these in house.

Cllr Munro thanked all Watermark staff for their hard work, the Town Clerk highlighted that opening hours are still restricted so the figures were excellent in the current circumstances. The Watermark Manager added that the first part of the year the building was not operating so the business has been in the last few months. Cllr Parsons, welcomed Mr

Bibby as the new Manager. Cllr Cade enquired about an amount in the website code and the Senior Finance Officer explained this was an error in allocation.

It was **RESOLVED** to receive the trading information and to thank the staff for their continued hard work.

WM21/18

WATERMARK MANAGER REPORT: The Committee considered the Watermark Manager's report (copy previously circulated). The Watermark Manager informed Members that the last two months there has been an increase in footfall although still some anxiety regarding socially distancing. Some of the tenants on the Business Floor have moved around and from the end of November there will be full occupancy. The Watermark Manger mentioned that the coffee machine and dishwasher have had a few repairs, however the Town Clerk highlighted that these were original pieces of equipment so 13 years old. The Lift and part of the Air Conditioning also needs attention. The Watermark Manager mentioned that a new member of staff will be starting on 1st December 2021. Cllr Rea and Cllr Munro enquired if leasing has been considered with regard to the dishwasher and coffee machine. The Watermark Manager agreed to investigate this including energy efficiency of any new equipment whether purchased or leased.

Cllr Cade enquired about repairs to the air conditioning 2-3 years earlier and the Town Clerk explained there are two air conditioning systems, the air conditioning which serves the top floor and hall was repaired but the ceiling mounted units in the Beeson Suite and the Library office needs repairing, the costs are shared across the building.

Cllr Rea mentioned that with inflation and the cost of living rising then it would be essential to hold off any price increases. Cllr Dredge replied there is very little elasticity regarding reducing costs.

Cllr Parsons enquired about the health and safety report regarding an incident in the lift and the Town Clerk informed him that this had been included in the Policy and Resources meeting held earlier in the month, but this Watermark lift is serviced quarterly and is operating safely.

It was **RESOLVED** to: note and receive the Watermark Manager's report and to thank the Watermark staff.

WM21/19

WATERMARK BUDGET: The Committee considered the Watermark Budget (copy previously circulated). The Town Clerk highlighted that this is the first committee to discuss the budget and that he, The Watermark Manager and the Senior Finance Officer had met and worked on the budget.

Cllr Munro enquired if enough had been budgeted for with regard to possible repairs as equipment is aging, the Town Clerk mentioned there is also a Watermark Reserve. Cllr Rea enquired if the committee have to approve the budget at this meeting and the Town Clerk informed him that if agreed it would be recommended to Policy and Resource meeting and then Full Council. A discussion was held with regard to ideas for

items which could be sold in the Information Area as there will be a gap now that caddy and bin liners are not being sold. The Watermark Manager would welcome any ideas.

The Watermark Manager informed Members it was very difficult to set the budget with so much uncertainty around the Pandemic. Cllr Cade enquired about COVID in general as this year's budget was set in the hope that things would be returning to normal but with the recent outbreak of a new variant how might this impact on the budget proposed. It was felt that the budget was not pessimistic but it is difficult to predict.

Cllr Parsons proposed to recommend the budget to be considered at the next Policy and Resource Committee and Cllr Rea seconded.

It was **RESOLVED** to: recommend the budget to the next Policy and Resources Committee.

The meeting closed at 7.13pm.

Signed: Dated:
Chairman