

## EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, EXMOUTH ON MONDAY, 29<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2008 AT 7.30PM

**PRESENT:** Councillors: S Sutton (Chairman)  
V Duval-Steer (Deputy Chairman)  
I Stewart P Graham  
T Cope S Gazzard  
P Stott L Elson  
M Williamson D Nicholas  
S Wragg

**APOLOGY:** Cllrs. M Ackland, B Taylor, J Taylor, K Harper, D Chapman,  
J Mitchell, M Mitchell, J Humphries, E Wragg and M Hardy

#### **F20 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2008 were approved and signed as a correct record.

#### **F21 URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chairman reported on the success of Exmouth in Bloom in the RHS Britain in Bloom competition. Exmouth won a silver gilt medal and was awarded best in class for Coastal Towns with a population of 12,000+. Cllr Graham was also awarded the Shredded Wheat Community Champion award. The Committee congratulated Cllr Pat Graham, The Exmouth in Bloom Committee and East Devon Street Scene for their achievements.

Consideration was given to funding the provision of signs in recognition of the achievement and to identify that the grass was purposely not being cut on Marine Way to allow wild flowers to proliferate. Also to look at providing achievement plaques to be placed on the side of the TIC building. All to be subject to permissions being obtained as appropriate.

**RESOLVED that up to £1,500 be provided to pay for appropriate signs on the main entrances to the town and for the purposes described above.**

#### **F22 ACCOUNTS CURRENT STATUS**

The Committee received and noted the summary of expenditure and income for the year to date.

## **F23 QUALITY COUNCIL RENEWAL**

**RESOLVED that the fee of £235 for renewal of the Quality Council designation be confirmed.**

## **F24 EXMOUTH FESTIVAL**

The Committee had before it the financial outturn for the Exmouth Festival 2008. Comments were made about the expenditure of earmarked reserves and the increasing scale of the festival in 2008. Favourable comments about the success of the festival were also made and lessons learned about events in wards were discussed. It was recognised that a number of new items had been added which included the Children's Marquee which had been very successful and had been welcomed by families. The need to ensure that the festival was managed within budget was emphasised by some members bearing in mind that the reserve within earmarked reserves would not be available next year. The guarantee against loss of £2,500 was not used except for a small amount of £98.

## **F25 EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL AND IT AND TELECOMS**

The Committee had before it a report from the Town Clerk and a quotation from David Matthews to upgrade IT equipment, and the telephone system used by the Town Council. The Committee was concerned about the labour costs involved at £25 per hour and considered much of this work could be carried out in house referring to experience of individual councillors.

It was suggested that the report should be looked at in more detail with a view to other advice being sought from other suppliers on the basis that costs could be reduced.

**RESOLVED that the matter be referred to a working group comprising Councillors Lynn Elson, Trevor Cope and Richard Turner along with the Town Clerk.**

## **F26 GORFIN HALL**

The Town Clerk reported on the tenders received for the work at Gorfin Hall earlier in the day. These had not been reviewed in detail and would need to be referred to the Council's advisors Drew Pearse to look at whether the terms of the specification had been fully met.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**(a) Drew Pearse be requested to examine the tenders and authority be given to accept the best value tender but only if the Town Clerk with**

**the Chairman is satisfied that best value is being achieved after taking advice;**

- (b) The cost be met from the capital receipt for the sale of Clarement Lane;**
- (c) In the event of the previously agreed contribution towards purchase of the Rolle College Site being required that this be met from Balances as a Supplementary Estimate.**

**F27 CATENARY WIRES – BANNERS AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

The Town Clerk reported a safety check of the catenary wires in the town was necessary at a cost of £1,100, and the Town Council had been requested to cover the costs.

**RESOLVED that the safety checks are authorised at a cost of £1,100.**

**F28 ENERGY MANAGEMENT**

The Committee considered a letter from a private company ‘Currentsun’ offering an energy survey of the Town Hall. The Committee felt that it was the responsibility of the District Council but considered that without commitment to any particular company it would be useful to find out the District Council’s policy on improving energy efficiency in its buildings.

**RESOLVED that a formal letter be sent to the District Council to seek to enquire about their current policy on energy efficiency in public buildings it owns and whether it would carry out an energy survey of the Town Hall using an accredited company.**

**F29 WATER DISPENSERS**

Councillor S Wragg had requested that two water dispensers be installed for the office/committee room or Council Chamber at this Council’s cost. The Town Clerk reported 2 options: -

- Option 1: A water dispenser from bottled water;
- Option2: A plumbed in water filter system that would be installed in the kitchen on the ground floor at a cost of £440.00.

It was considered that there would be benefit in providing a plumbed in system in the ground floor kitchen with costs shared between four users.

**RESOLVED that a plumbed in water filter system be purchased subject to costs being shared by users.**

### **F30 NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECTS FUND 2008**

The Town Clerk reported that he had received some applications and was anticipating a total of 9 or 10 applications by the closing date.

### **F31 TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE**

The Chairman of the Management Committee reported on the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008. The following papers were previously circulated:-

- Notes of the Tourist Information Centre – Management Committee dated 17<sup>th</sup> September;
- Exmouth TIC Management Committee Business Plan 2008;
- Service Level Agreement – Draft to provide annual grant funding of £10,000pa for the three years commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and ending on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

The chairman of the working party presented the notes and the recommendations contained therein. Councillor S Wragg on a point of order put forward that the recommendation could not be adopted under the 6 month rule in Standing Orders. The Town Clerk explained that minute F6 of the Finance Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> June had authorised release of £5,000 of the £10,000 budget available but had asked the Management Committee to develop the business plan further and to report back to the Committee in the Autumn. The Committee had not been prepared to release the full £10,000 as it had not been satisfied that the Business Plan had contained sufficient financial information or projections of future performance upon which to base a decision.

A clear majority of the Committee members were satisfied that sufficient information had now been provided upon which to base a decision.

#### **RESOLVED That**

- (a) that it be recognized that although the Town Council previously sought a tapering grant over 3 years to enable the TIC to be self funding, the reality of the situation is that this is unachievable particularly with current weather patterns and the economic down turn;**
- (b) that the thorough work of this committee be accepted by the Town Council in looking at all possible alternatives to new funding and in examining the efficiency of the operation;**
- (c) that it be accepted that the operation of the TIC is lean and efficient and that all possible cost saving measures have been taken into account and continuously looked for;**
- (d) that comparisons with other TICs demonstrate that costs are significantly less than in other places which are mostly subsidized by Local Authority financial support;**

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- (e) that it be noted that East Devon District Council is prepared to continue to provide the accommodation rent free;
- (f) a further £5,000 be released to support the TIC for the remainder of the year 2008/9;
- (g) the SLA for the forthcoming three years be entered into to secure the short term future and opening hours of the TIC ;
- (h) the work of University of Plymouth students be used to investigate new opportunities for the TIC.

**Notes:**

- (a) There were no public and press present for this item in respect of which a resolution to exclude the public and press had been considered and the papers had been circulated not for publication in view of sensitive commercial information contained within the Business Plan figures.
- (b) Councillor S Wragg asked that his vote against the decision be recorded.

The meeting closed at 9.00pm.

**SIGNED**.....

**DATED**.....