

EXMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, EXMOUTH ON MONDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2011 AT 7.00PM

PRESENT:	Councillors:	R Turner	(Chairman)
		D Chapman	J Mitchell
		B Cole	M Mitchell
		T Cope	M Mitchell
		T Dumper	I Stewart
		V Duval-Steer	P Stott
		L Elson	S Sutton
		P Graham	B Taylor
		A Greenhalgh	E Wragg
		J Humphreys	S Wragg
		B Nash	M Williamson

There being no Apologies the meeting was adjourned to allow for Public Speaking in accordance with the decision of the Committee held on 10th October 2011.

Public Speaking

Mr Ron Roberts asked the following:-

‘My question relates to the press announcement that the Town Council has over paid its grant to the Chamber of Commerce (TIC support) last year (by £5k)?

This overpayment that has been made by the Town Council and the public would like to know the following information

(1)How will this money be recovered?

(2) how was it possible for the Town Council to have made this payment and to have bypassed the checks and balances that are in place to prevent such happenings?

(3)Why has it taken so long to identify and report this overpayment?

(4) Is there any reason to suspect that any malpractice took place by either a council employee or an elected member which should be considered for disciplinary action?’

The question related to an item on the agenda to be considered at the meeting. The meeting was then reconvened.

F31 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10th October 2011

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th October 2011 were approved and signed as a correct record.

F32 EXMOUTH IN BLOOM

(1)Signs

Consideration was given to erecting signs to reflect this year’s Britain in Bloom Gold award to replace the existing signs reflecting on a previous year’s success. The cost would be £58 per sign. There were 3 signs currently in place on Exeter Road, Salterton Road and Hulham Road.

RESOLVED that a supplementary estimate to cover the cost of new signs and installation be approved and funded from balances.

(2) Service Level Agreement

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk explaining that Exmouth in Bloom costs this year exceeded the amount of £3,222 in the current Service Level Agreement. It showed how expenditure had varied year on year sometimes exceeding and sometimes below the amount allowed for. Overall the costs had been well within budget.

RESOLVED that

(a) authority be given to pay for the £800 overspend this year provided Exmouth in Bloom seeks to reduce its costs next year;

(b) that other matters raised at the meeting appreciating the work of Exmouth in Bloom be referred to the next meeting of the Chairmen's Group.

Note:

Councillor Pat Graham declared a prejudicial interest as Chairman of Exmouth in Bloom and left the room during consideration of the item.

Councillors Malcolm & Jean Mitchell and Brian Cole declared a personal interest as friends of Exmouth in Bloom

F33 BUDGETS 2012/13

The Committee had before it the draft budget report to which was attached the Detailed Budget for last year, the current year and next year. This outlined the proposed budget for 2012/13 and the major differences from the current year were shown. The detailed budget was considered page by page.

Arising Thereon:-

Page 4 Christmas Lights – On a question it was explained that the current budget would provide for the Christmas Tree and lights in the Strand but with no contributions from business this year no cost would be incurred on Christmas lights in the rest of the town.

Page 5 Ice Rink – It was noted that the ice rink had been provided during the Festival it having not arrived for last year's Christmas Cracker owing to snow;

Business Improvement District – It was considered prudent to leave a sum within the budget pending clarity on the way forward.

Page 6 – Insurance – It was noted that internal audit had suggested an increase in the Fidelity Cover and the Town Clerk confirmed that this was being followed up and the impact on premium was not expected to be great.

Page 9 Audit Charges – It was noted that the anomalous minus figure would be resolved when Audit Charges were balanced out for the correct years.

Page 11 Car Park Income was noted as relating to Langerwehe Permits income.

The Town Clerk was requested to obtain from Devon County Council details of the up-to-date usage of the subsidised night bus.

The Committee also asked that a copy of the earmarked reserves be attached to the budget for the next Finance meeting

RESOLVED that the estimates be accepted and put forward for adoption as the final budget report at the next meeting on 9th January 2012 for adoption by the Council on 23rd January 2012.

Note: Councillors Cope and Elson declared a personal interest in respect of the budget line for Ring and Ride.

F34 PAYMENTS

It was reported that Councillor Ian Stewart had requested that consideration be given to the extra payment to the Tourist Information Centre and it was **AGREED** to refer this for consideration to the Accounts Sub-Committee.

It was noted that a cheque signatory should not be included in the membership of the sub-committee and therefore Councillor Lynne Elson was substituted for the Chairman of the Finance Committee. The questions raised by Mr Roberts in the public session would be referred to the sub-committee to consider. Also it was requested that a separate item should be added to the agenda to consider Financial Regulations to see if any adjustments were required.

F35 INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

The Committee had before it a copy of the interim Internal Audit Report which it **NOTED**. Only one issue was raised suggesting increase of Fidelity Guarantee insurance to £390k instead of £350k in line with Audit Commission guidance.

F36 AUDIT COMMISSION – ANNUAL RETURN

The Committee received a copy of the External Audit final return for 2010/11 which stated that ‘on the basis of the review, in our opinion the information contained in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met’. Two matters not affecting the opinion were noted.

F37 COMMUNITY PLAN PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk on tenders received for professional support to start the Community Planning process for Exmouth. Details of all tenders received were reported and it was confirmed that the two representatives which COLP had appointed had expressed themselves satisfied that the lowest tender was acceptable. The Committee also had before it a copy of the specification for the work.

RESOLVED the lowest tender submitted by Devon Renaissance in the sum of £3,875 be accepted with a view to work starting as soon as possible.

F38 GRANT APPLICATION – SECOND TRANCHE

The Committee considered the second tranche of grants for which £1,700 remained in the budget. The Committee determined the grants as follows:-

Organisation	Amount Sought	Purpose	Decision
TS Exmouth Sea Cadets Corps	£650	To purchase an arms chest to securely store training weapons.	£300
Exmouth and Budleigh Salterton Scout Active Support Unit	£3,250 or as much as Council can afford – any contribution would be of benefit.	To support a weekend camp in June 2012 based around the Jubilee and Olympics.	£450
Rotary Club of Exmouth and District	£500	To help with Exmouth Rotary Kite Festival organising costs.	£250
Headway Devon	£200	To purchase materials for woodwork project.	£200
Littleham Leisure Centre	£1,000	To improve heating and ladies toilets.	£500

F39 Grants - Thank You Letters

It was reported that thank you letters had been received from the following organisations in respect of grants paid this year:-

- Exmouth Swimming and Life Saving Society
- Exmouth Museum
- Centre Stage
- Open Door Centre
- Age Concern
- Exmouth Carnival
- Littleham Family Activity Centre
- Exmouth Beach Rescue
- Exmouth Musical Theatre Company
- East Devon Citizens Advice Bureau

The meeting closed at 8.33pm

SIGNED.....
Chairman

DATED.....