**Finance and Asset Management Committee**

**Tuesday 20th February 2024**

**Council Chamber**

**Coleford Town Council Offices**

**6.30 pm - 8.30 pm**

**Minutes**

**Present: Cllrs: N Penny, M Cox, M Beard, P Kay, C Elsmore**

1. **Apologies were received by Cllr P Kyne**
2. **To declare interests re: items on the agenda**

Cllr M Cox and P Kay declared a personal interest item 14. Twinning.

Cllr N Penny declared a pecuniary interest in item 14. Twinning.

1. **To allow dispensations requests**

No new dispensation requests received.

1. **To approve the minutes of 16 January 2024**

Cllr M Beard moved that minutes of the 16th of January were a true and accurate account.

Cllr P Kay seconded. Cllr N Penny signed a copy of the minutes.

1. **To raise matters arising from the Minutes of 16 January 2024**

Page 4: Tree works on Old Station Way, complete.

1. **To take comments from the Public Forum**

There were no public present.

1. **To receive update on the office move, and make recommendations as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated Members that progress had been made re. the lease.

However, there are still some minor points that need ironing out.

The internal works are currently in progress. The external works have not yet started but will be completed in time for the move.

All Architect drawings have now gone to Contractors, some quotes have already been submitted.

Hope to be able to sign the lease and present the chosen contractors at Full Council.

Need to formally decide at Full Council whether to tender the break clause on the TIC.

1. **To make recommendation re: support adverts in local press**

After some discussion it was proposed:

**Recommendation: To only have newspaper adverts for town centre events, such as the Faddle Fair, Coleford Music Festival and Coleford Carnival of Transport, and for significant events such as Remembrance Day and Christmas.**

All Members agreed.

1. **To consider Angel Vale tree planting and maintenance, and make recommendations as necessary, including contractor’s email**

The Town Clerk provided Members with an update around the newly planted GCC trees, that had been requested by a resident of the Angel Vale estate.

It was noted that a site meeting was due to be held between the resident actioning the request, CTC’s contractor and Members of CTC Environment Committee. However, the contractor was not able to attend the visit and the meeting was not rescheduled.

The planting of the trees went ahead.

Based on the planting position of the trees, the contractor has since quoted an additional £1000.00 per year, for cutting around the trees. This is a charge that CTC was not expecting and is also a change to the contractors’ contract, which had not been foreseen by CTC. The contractor is therefore within their right to charge more.

The original request from the resident wanting to plant the trees, was that they were to be planted in line with the original plans of the Estate. However, Cllrs have since had sight of the original plans, and the position of the trees, was around the outside of the grass area, not across the middle of the open space, stopping children from playing ball games etc.

**Recommendation: Part 1:** **to remove the trees from the middle of the grass area and re-plant them in line with the original planning application.**

The Town Clerk additionally suggested the planting of Hornbeam hedging, as this bushes out well, creating a natural barrier to protect cars and houses from ball games. Also taking the cost of mowing around each tree to one additional hedge cut.

**Recommendation: Part 2:** **with the addition of Hornbeam hedging, in between the trees.**

Cllr P Kay proposed, Cllr M Beard seconded. Unanimously agreed.

**Note: To gain clarity from the contractor on any effects these new proposals will have.**

**Note: For the current temporary chicken wire to be removed as soon as possible, on a health and safety basis.**

1. **To make recommendations re: office Health and Safety management, including:**
   1. **First Aid at Work Training**
   2. **Fire Safety Training**
   3. **COSHH Training**
   4. **Worknest quotation**

Cllr N Penny thanked the Town Clerk on all the work that had been carried out around health and safety (H&S) within CTC.

It was noted that there are current H&S checks already in place, i.e. weekly tests of the fire and Carbon Monoxide alarms and legionella tests.

After some discussion, it was agreed to acknowledge that CTC has gaps within their health and safety management, and as part of a risk assessment of the new premises, to identify the gaps and look at what safety procedures we want in place moving forward.

CTC to work on this and to invest in the training of staff, before seeking external help.

To work on an Action Plan within the next 3 months.

For a framework of the plan, in terms of key areas of risk that CTC need to focus on, to be completed for next F&AM.

It was agreed for LJ to complete First Aid at work training, through the email received from The Main Place.

1. **To adopt the Privacy Policy**

After some discussion the following amendments were agreed:

To amend the typo in the first paragraph (data protection).

To change where it states ‘we’ to Coleford Town Council (CTC)

Otherwise, Members agreed this is fit for purpose and it was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: to adopt and publish on the website.**

1. **To consider renewal of Sexton’s Contract, and make recommendations as necessary**

After some discussion, the below 2 part recommendation was agreed:

**Recommendation: part 1: to ask the Contractor their view on a 3-year contract, with a**

**‘cap and collar’ / upper and lower limit RPI review of 2 - 5%.**

**Part 2: if the Contractor does not want to agree to this, to remain as proposed for a 12 month contract.**

Cllr N Penny moved, Cllr M Beard seconded, unanimously agreed.

1. **To receive update re: pond liner, and make recommendations as necessary**

The Town Clerk gave an update on the pond liner at Bells Field and relayed the report from Kilmaha, stating that the pond now seems to be holding water.

Cllr N Penny added that the liner is a self-healing liner.

It was agreed to ask Forest Equipment Services the frequency of inspecting and cleaning the hydrobrake system.

Due to an inspection needed on the pond, Cllr P Kay moved to defer this item to next month’s agenda.

All Members agreed.

**19:25pm Cllr N Penny left the room**

1. **To consider request from Drybrook RFC re: Twinning, and make recommendations as necessary**

Cllr M Cox and P Kay reiterated their personal interest in Twinning.

Cllr M Cox stepped in as Chair updating Members of the financial support request of £1000.00 for Drybrook RFC, to support their tour.

The below recommendation was agreed, noting that there is money allocated within the budget.

Cllr P Kay proposed:

**Recommendation:** **To support the financial request of £1000.00 to Drybrook RFC.**

Cllr M Beard seconded, unanimously agreed.

**19:26pm Cllr N Penny came back into the room**

1. **To adopt the Accessibility Statement**

After some discussion it was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation:**

**To go back to the website provider asking if they think the website is compliant with this policy**

**To ensure the maintenance of an accessible website**

**To remove brail, live video streams, audio induction loops and BSL from the statement.**

**To note that we have reviewed this and are seeking clarity. To update within 3 months.**

**To refer to NALC but to tailor to CTC.**

1. **To consider the Data Protection Policy, and make recommendations as necessary**

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt this Policy, excluding section 7, training**

1. **To consider the Complaints Procedure, and make recommendations as necessary**

Dated December 2018.It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt, subject to ensuring CTC have the latest version of this procedure, to then sit alongside the Complaints Check List.**

1. **To consider the Freedom of Information Policy, and make recommendations as necessary**

After some discussion, the following amendments were agreed:

1.2 should state Data Protection, not DPA.

3.5 wherever it states, ‘all information will be logged’, for CTC to create the log / record sheet and to have as an appendix.

4.5 to state Chair first and then Mayor.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt the policy subject to the amends above**

1. **To consider the Equality and Diversity Policy, and make recommendations as necessary**

Cllr M Beard provided an explanation around how legislation constantly evolves and changes, confirming that it is suitable for CTC to be in line with the NALC template.

For an opening paragraph to be added to the policy stating that CTC have signed the Civility and Respect Pledge.

All Members to be aware of this.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt the policy, subject to the amends above**

1. **To consider the Sickness Absence Policy, and make recommendations as necessary**

Members discussed and agreed that all forms need to be in line with Greenbooks.

To check whether the cleaners contracts are in line with Greenbooks.

To ensure the most recent version and to tailor it to CTC.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt the policy subject to amends above**

1. **To consider Grievance Policy, and make recommendations as necessary**

To ensure the most recent version and to tailor it to CTC.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt the policy subject to amends above**

1. **To consider Disciplinary Policy, and make recommendations as necessary**

Members discussed this policy stating that it is fit for purpose but needs some adaptation.

Where possible, to always take cases to F&AM (Staffing) committee, including where possible, for appropriate Members of this Committee to be on the appeal panel.

To only take outside of F&AM Committee, for extreme cases, where it will then go to Full Council.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt the policy subject to amends above**

1. **To review CTC’s Publication Scheme, and make recommendations as necessary**

Members discussed this scheme and agreed on the following amendments:

To take all CILCA references out.

To create a charge list, in line with the Freedom of Information charge list and schedule.

To make requests free where possible, but to allow for reasonable adjustments and charge at our discretion, adding ‘we may apply a charge based on the amount of sheets and time taken’.

Estimate of 10 pence per standard A4 sheet.

It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To adopt the publication scheme, subject to amends above**

1. **To consider Climate Change Community Fund, and make recommendations as necessary**

Deadline of the 27th of February.

After some discussion it was agreed that this fund could be used for improvements across Mushet Walk, with the suggestion of a lockable bike store.

Office to ask Cllr M Getgood for help with the application due to deadline. To cc. Chris Jones.

1. **To note the latest play area inspection report, and make recommendations as necessary**

Members noted the play area inspections, including action involving the use of mower.

1. **To note the in-house audit, and make recommendations as necessary**

Thanks was given to Cllrs M Beard and C Elsmore

Members noted the in-house audit.

1. **To note the Risk Assessments, and make recommendations as necessary**

Thanks was given to Cllrs P Kay and M Beard

Action to check that Carbon Monoxide and fire alarms are available and tested in the TIC.

Cllr M Cox suggested the need for amendment where it is unclear that the page breaks.

It was noted that CoSHH records have now been updated and copies put in all key areas.

1. **To consider strewing area of NBG, and make recommendations as necessary**

Item deferred to Full Council – awaiting guidance from ICCM

1. **To consider request for purchase of local green space in Milkwall, and make recommendations as necessary**

The Town Clerk relayed the purchase request to Members. However, it was stated that as this land is a defined Local Green Space within the Neighbourhood Development Plan, it is not for development.

1. **To consider numatic carpet cleaner, and make recommendations as necessary**

After some discussion, it was proposed and unanimously agreed to understand costs from Guy White for carpet cleaning, and to then take this to Full Council for consideration.

**Cllr P Kay proposed to move into committee, Cllr M Beard seconded, all agreed.**

**In committee**

1. **To consider any relevant Staffing, and related, Matters, and to make any recommendations, as necessary (‘In Committee’):**
   1. **Staff Appraisals**

Cllr M Cox carried out Town Clerk, Laura-Jade Schroeder’s appraisal.

Town Clerk carried out Assistant Clerk, Laura Jayne’s appraisal, feeding back new objectives to work towards

TIC Co-ordinator, Ella Beard, currently unwell. To be scheduled on return.

Cllr C Elsmore to email confirmation on Coleford Area Partnership’s, Jo Pritchard’s appraisal.

Town Clerk to look at carrying out lower-level appraisal for cleaning staff.

* 1. **Panel recommendation for Administrative Assistant post**

The recruitment panel updated Members, that after interviewing 6 candidates, they had a recommendation for the position, subject to references and Council approval at Full Council.

**Recommendation: To accept the recruitment panel’s recommendation**

**Meeting end 8:28pm.**