**Finance and Asset Management Committee**

**Monday 26 September 22**

**Council Chamber**

**6.30 pm - 8.30 pm**

**Attendees: Cllrs. N Penny, C Elsmore, M Beard, M Cox, N Holloway**

1. Apologies were received from Cllr. C Allaway-Martin and L Baker
2. Cllr Penny declared that he may have a future potential interest in item 11, as this involves his employer
3. No dispensation requests received
4. The minutes of 19 July 22were proposed (NH) seconded (MB), and unanimously agreed

**Cllr. Penny signed as a true record**

1. **Matters arising from the Minutes of 19 July 22**

Cllr Cox updated that good feedback had been received regarding the cemetery maintenance.

The Town Clerk updated that the kissing gate at Bells Field had now been installed. The broken parts on the toilets are out of warranty, replacements have been sourced.

1. **Public Forum**

There were no members of the public present.

**6:36pm it was proposed and unanimously agreed to move into committee to discuss the next agenda items.**

**In Committee**

1. **To consider any relevant Staffing Matters, and to make any recommendations, as necessary (In Committee) including:**
   1. **Update re: Appointments**

Town Clerk updated on the two new appointments and re: seconded employee to CAP on a fixed term contract, it had been previously agreed that all employer related costs, not just salary, would be recovered from the seconded employer. Town Clerk confirmed a formal letter regarding these arrangements was being prepared following discussion with the CAP manager to cover all aspects under these arrangements

* 1. **Staff training / development**

Town Clerk updated on RFO beginning AAT level 3 course and newly appointed Administrative Assistant to be booked on to ILCA. Further training courses have been offered by GAPTC and it was proposed and unanimously agreed that:

**Recommendation**:

1. **The Clerk and RFO attend the Procurement training on 8th November**
2. **The Administration Assistant attends the Parish Newsletters training**
3. **Sessions for Councillors were also identified and course dates to be distributed to Councillors for consideration.**
   1. **Town Clerk support sessions**

Town Clerk updated regarding his support sessions and it was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To extend the support sessions until the end of the financial year where it will be reviewed again at that point.**

Town Clerk expressed his appreciation for this level of support.

**6:51pm it was proposed and unanimously agreed to move out of committee and back into the public forum.**

1. **To consider external auditor’s (PKF Littlejohn) formal response re: AGAR, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated and Council agreed that the evidence re: Risk Management had been identified and brought to the attention of the auditors, although there had been a discrepancy in respect of the internal audit report, which had confused this issue. It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation:**

1. **To contact the Internal Auditor to seek correction of her Internal Audit (IA) report in taking account of the identified evidence, and for this to then be received.**

**Note: Subject to this corrected and updated IA report confirming evidence of this Town Council’s Risk Management position, Cllr Penny, as Chair, will formally write to PKF Littlejohn with this information.**

1. **For RFO to take forward formal arrangements re: the publication notice in accordance with transparency rules.**
2. **To Consider Sexton Contract renewal, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated regarding the productive Sexton meeting, in light of expiry of the current contract, and it was noted that the contract value was insufficient to be subject to a tender exercise. In turn it was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To formally invite Ernest Heal and Son to reapply including a full list of rates for consideration regarding a new contract, with a proposed 3 year with a 2 year review.**

1. **To discuss proposed new Bank arrangements, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The RFO summarised the situation at present regarding switching the bank account and a number of accountability and authorisation and obtaining a debit card issues had been identified. It was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To continue to explore setting up with Lloyds but to take full account of the issues raised regarding accountability and hierarchy, ensuring a fit with our Financial Regulations, and to include exploring a debit card with a controlled limit**

1. **To consider Youth Investment Fund opportunities, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

Cllr Penny updated on the Youth Investment Fund and it was recognised that there was great potential to secure future funding, possibly in partnership with other Town Councils and to take account of UWE activity, and Cllr Baker and Cllr M Cox were identified to take a lead on this funding stream activity.

1. **To receive update on CTC utilities rates, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated on a review being undertaken regarding the utility rates and it was noted that the Council’s utility rates are currently on contractually good tariffs within the current market conditions, and fixed until 2026, although recognising that utility companies can revoke at any time.

1. **To receive RFO Summary re: BT Account, and to make recommendations, as necessary.**

The RFO updated with a summary report, including reconciled amounts, on the lengthy work she has undertaken to resolve the outstanding and irreconcilable charges linked to the initial installation of the new BT system; reporting that all charges she challenged, have now been removed. Cllr Penny congratulated the RFO on a great outcome. In turn it was proposed and unanimously agreed with Council satisfied with the summary accounts presented that:

**Recommendation:**

* 1. **The outstanding legitimate arrears be paid**
  2. **The RFO takes forward payment arrangements with BT regarding monthly billing moving forward, with a view to direct debits after a settling period of 3 months**

1. **To receive an update re: KGV works (water and roof), and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated re: water supply and it was noted that the work to hopefully restore the supply would be carried out on 3rd October. It was noted that health checks on the water will need to be completed prior to use. Compensation may need to be considered from the insurance company due to the loss of revenue during this period of no water supply.

The Town Clerk updated re: the roof of the pavilion. Only one quote had been formally received despite chasing the identified contractors for the remaining two quotes. It was agreed that this should be deferred until next month when hopefully the quotes will have been submitted. The urgency of this work, before Winter, was recognised.

1. **To consider additional payment re: Christmas Lights, following Full Council’s August recommendation, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

Having received the RFO’s event budget review, Cllr Penny noted that Council has underspent vs budget due to extra funding having been received from GCC and given that these volunteers helped enormously with the jubilee flags and preparation in the town without payment, it was proposed and unanimously agreed:

**Recommendation: To pay the budgeted allocation of the £5000 request to the Christmas lights committee in full, as identified in the latest invoice.**

**Note: receipt of Christmas Lights Committee contribution has been received as agreed under this arrangement.**

1. **To receive update re: Contract Management issues, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated regarding current contract arrangements with another round of contract review meetings scheduled. It was noted that there are increasing extra costs due to vandalism and further cost-benefit analysis work to be undertaken and for contracts to be reviewed in relation to work undertaken.

1. **To receive an update on outstanding Bus Shelter issues, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated and it was noted that he is seeking to progress the outstanding works with full costs from GCC – to be progressed urgently.

1. **To consider other CTC premises issues, Parish Inspection Reports / Working Group proposals, reports, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The Town Clerk updated and various emails from Councillors were considered. This was noted and to be considered more specifically through committee stage, and also some elements under the youth investment funding. Re: Sylvan Close identified issues, following site visit from councillors and resident to be considered more specifically and further through committee.

1. **To receive an update re: Phone Boxes, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The RFO updated on the status of all phone boxes; noting Greenacres Campsite will be relocating their purchased phone box at the end of October. It was proposed and unanimously agreed that:

**Recommendation:**

* 1. **Re: Broadwell and Mile End phone boxes can be scrapped, subject to the scrap metal company charges, and for Office to obtain costs for consideration**
  2. **Re: Coalway phone box, Coalway Schools to be initially invited to adopt, and to consider usage, e.g. a book exchange; and if not successful,**
  3. **Refurbishment of this phone box in situ seeking costs from identified contractor for possible relocation to Bells Field**
  4. **Re: Staunton Road and Milkwall phone boxes – review again once disconnection is complete**

1. **To consider wider waste disposal services under the existing recycling contract at CTC office, and to make recommendations, as necessary**

The RFO updated on the current situation with waste management and since the newly installed recycling system is working well, it was proposed and unanimously agreed, taking account of additional costs:

**Recommendation: To proceed with the supplementary and identified general waste management service**

**Meeting ended 8.27pm**