



Coleford Town Council

Finance and Office Committee Tuesday 20 April 2021 Minutes

Attendees: Cllr. Penny, Allaway-Martin, Elsmore, M Cox, Holloway, Kyne, and Lusty

1. There were no apologies.
2. **Declarations of interests**
Cllr. Holloway declared a personal interest in Item 10
3. There were no dispensations
4. There were no members of the public
5. The minutes of 16 March were noted, and unanimously agreed

Note: Item 6 was noted as incorrect date, and to be amended to matters arising from the minutes of 16 February 21

Cllr. Penny signed the minutes

6. Matters arising from 16 March 21 minutes

Item 7: The Assistant Clerk reported that the Ombudsman submission was being progressed, and that he had sought advice, to clarify, with submission now being submitted

7. To make recommendation re Internal Audit Report

Cllr. Penny presented the Internal Audit Report, thanking the Assistant Clerk for the preparatory work undertaken, and also for his hard work through a significant period of covering, that the report pertained to. Cllr. Penny further summarised the report's findings, and recommendations, esp. regarding external audit arrangements, and 'public rights', timeliness, and deadlines, as well as Standing Orders/Financial Regs. review, also use of statutory powers, especially Section 137 re: grants, as well as more specific use of powers more widely, and, after further discussion, it was unanimously proposed that:

Recommendation:

the Internal Report is noted, and that actions, relating to recommendations, and actions, are addressed; and for the Assistant Clerk to implement, as necessary, and accordingly, taking particular note of the use of appropriate statutory powers in respect of payments.

8. To make recommendation re Telephone and Broadband payments

Cllr. Penny presented, for discussion, the Assistant Clerk's summary report and, after further discussion, it was agreed that the information required e.g. itemised charges, and data, to make more informed decisions re: telephone/broadband charges, was still required, and it was unanimously proposed that:

Recommendation:

a Freedom of Information (Fol) request is made to British telecom (BT) to obtain itemised data, for the past 2 years, to further inform decisions about BT contracts, telephone, and broadband arrangements

9. To make recommendation re Coleford Town Council Direct Debits (DDs)

Cllr. Penny presented, for discussion, the Assistant Clerk's summary report and after further discussion, taking each direct debit, noting that Corona Energy DDs remained suspended, until properly reconciled, it was unanimously proposed that:



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Recommendations:

other Direct Debits pertaining to companies where paperwork is not currently provided, in time, to reconcile payments, e.g. Water Plus, should also be suspended, and to be paid on receipt of invoiced paperwork;

other Direct Debits, where the Assistant Clerk had provided assurances of timely paperwork, should remain on Direct Debit arrangements e.g. FoDDC, SSE, BT, HMRC, and Siemens Financial Services.

Re: Siemens Financial Services: the Assistant Clerk investigates further, whether it is a requirement to remain on Direct Debit arrangements

10. To make recommendation re grant request from Bale Memorial Trust

The Assistant Clerk reported that no additional information had been presented by the Bale Memorial Trust and, Cllr. Penny updated on meetings that he had had with the Trust. After further discussion, it was unanimously proposed that:

Recommendation:

This Grant application was deferred to the next formal 'round' of Grant applications.

11. To make recommendation re Coleford Town Council appraisal process

Cllr. Penny summarised, thanking Cllrs. M Cox, Holloway and Allaway-Martin for the hard work, bringing these new arrangements to this stage. After further clarification, and discussion it was unanimously agreed that:

Recommendations:

These appraisal arrangements should be implemented for this Financial Year, as a 'pilot' exercise, and to be reviewed, after 12 months, at the end of that Appraisal 'cycle'.

Staffing matters would be a 'standing item' on F & O committee agendas, to include a month to month review of these appraisal arrangements.

Appropriate training sessions are scheduled, as part of the introduction of these new Appraisal arrangements

12. To make recommendation re Petty Cash payments

The Assistant Clerk summarised the context of this item and, after further discussion, it was unanimously proposed that:

Recommendation:

All petty cash transactions, are recorded as payments against the company that the purchase is associated with, and not the individual who has made the payment, and seeking reimbursement.

13. To make recommendation re Budget allocation for Angel Vale Tree Works

Cllr. Penny summarised and, after further discussion it was unanimously proposed that:

Recommendation:

Funds of £6,000 are reallocated from Events Budget Code (4252) to Parish Maintenance Budget Code (4274) to cover this expenditure

Meeting closed at 6.55pm to be re-convened at 5.00pm on Monday 26 March 21, to discuss Items 14, and 15 of this Agenda.



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Finance & Office Committee meeting of 26 April 21, re-convened at 5.00pm, Monday, 26 April to discuss Items 14, and 15 of that Agenda

**Attendees; Cllrs. Penny, M Cox, Allaway-Martin, and Elsmore
Cllr. Holloway joined the meeting at 5.22pm**

Apologies were received from Cllr. Kyne

There were no declarations of interest

There were no new dispensations

There were no members of the public present.

14. To make recommendation re Gloucestershire Highways License for planting on Highway verges

Cllr. M Cox summarised, and presented this item for discussion. After further discussion, it was unanimously agreed that more information was required, before making a recommendation to progress. In turn, it was unanimously proposed that:

Recommendation:

Cllr. M Cox would liaise, and consult, further with GCC Highways, to clarify outstanding issues, and to bring an update, to the next F & O meeting, to inform discussion, and decisions.

15. To consider any Staffing Matters

Cllr. Penny presented Annual Leave/Absence Tracker System, which was noted for all staff, and to be monitored at F & O Committee meetings quarterly.

The Assistant Clerk reported that there had been slippage in respect of his CILCA studies and, after further discussion regarding solutions, it was unanimously proposed that

Recommendation:

That the Assistant Clerk further seeks to create 'protected' time within a working day, by closing the office, and disengaging from telephone calls, emails, etc. to focus on CILCA studies, with councillors being advised to respect these arrangements

Cllr. Penny updated on the position re: Cleaners and, after further discussion it was unanimously proposed that:

Recommendation:

That the Assistant Clerk would undertake review meetings with both cleaning staff, liaising with Cllr. Penny, as necessary, to identify any issues, and to update Contracts accordingly re: hours, and to also identify any training needs.

a pay increase of £9.30 per hour is implemented w.e.f 1 April 2021

Meeting ended at 5.50pm