

MINUTES OF THE
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER 2019 AT 7.00pm AT 25(a) LOAD STREET

PRESENT

Councillor A Coleman
Councillor P Gittins MBE
Councillor P Harrison
Councillor H Lacy
Councillor R Stanczyzyn

In attendance:

Sharon Hudson, Town Clerk
Cllr C Edginton White, observer

- f&gp/223** Both the Chairman and Deputy Chairman were unable to attend the meeting. Cllr P Harrison proposed Cllr A Coleman chair the meeting, seconded by Cllr H Lacy. It was **RESOLVED** to **Agree** that Cllr A Coleman be appointed chairman of the meeting.
- f&gp/224** **Apologies**
Due to technical issues, electronic copies of the agenda were not sent out prior to the meeting – manual copies were made available.

Councillor R Coleman (Chairman)
Councillor L Davies
Councillor L Kearns (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor D Morehead
- f&gp/225** **Declarations of Interest**
Members were reminded of the requirement to declare all interests:
- None received
- f&gp/226** **Councillor Dispensations**
- There were no requests for dispensations.
- f&gp/227** **Public Question Time**
A question was raised relating to the condition of the war memorial and the need for it to be cleaned.
The Town Clerk confirmed that the Lengthsman had been tasked to removed the weeds and tidy the area prior to Remembrance Sunday.

f&gp/228

Minutes

To approve the minutes of the meeting of this committee held 18/09/2019

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 18/09/2019 are signed by the Chairman of the meeting as a true record.

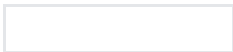
f&gp/229

To receive an update from the Town Clerk on the Council’s current financial position

a) It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the bank reconciliation as at 30/09/19 (Half Year).

Bewdley Town Council

Unity Current Account, Period
Ending 30/09/2019



RECONCILIATION REPORT

Reconciled on: 04/10/2019


Reconciled by: Sharon Hudson

Any changes made to transactions after this date aren't included in this report.

Summary

GBP	
Statement beginning balance	69,358.96
Cheques and payments cleared (24)	-24,719.36
Deposits and other credits cleared (3)	81,404.50
Statement ending balance	126,044.10
Uncleared transactions as of 30/09/2019	-2,558.94
Register balance as of 30/09/2019	123,485.16
Details	

- b) It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the Council's bank balances as at 30/09/2019 (Half Year).

 BEWDLEY TOWN COUNCIL	
<u>BANK BALANCE @ 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019</u>	
<u>UNITY BANK CURRENT ACCOUNT</u>	
Summary	
Statement beginning balance	69,358.96
Cheques and payments cleared (36)	-24,719.36
Deposits and other credits cleared (6)	81,404.50
Statement ending balance	126,044.10
Uncleared transactions as of 30/06/2019	-2,558.94
Register balance as of 30/06/2019	123,485.16
<u>UNITY BANK DEPOSIT ACCOUNT</u>	
Balance B/Fwd	£ 10,599.73
Interest received	£ 10.70
BANK BALANCE @ 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019	£ 10,610.30
<u>SCOTTISH WIDOWS INVESTMENT</u>	
BANK BALANCE @ 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019	£ 30,460.85
<u>CAMBRIDGE BUILDING SOCIETY</u>	
BANK BALANCE @ 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019	£ 30,000.00
<u>PETTY CASH</u>	
BALANCE @ 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019	£ 110.63
<u>TOTAL CASH & INVESTMENT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2019</u>	£ 194,666.94

f&gp/230 To receive an update on the budget to date (half year)
It was **RESOLVED** to **note** actual spend against budget 2019/20 as at 30/09/19 (Half Year)

f&gp/231 To receive an update from the Town Clerk on progress of matters discussed at previous council and committee meetings, including:

1. Progress to date on the Internal Auditor's recommendations:
 - Work On-going –Audit working group meeting 16/10/2019 – reviewed and agreed actions taken to date.
 - Cllr P Gittens MBE as a member of the Finance and General Purposes committee agreed to undertake quarterly audit reviews.
 - Officer Management System – work is underway on the electronically filing of documents and updating stock control record.

2. Localism – feedback from meeting with Linda Draycott 09/10/2019
WFDC provided a work in progress document detailing all assets and services identified for transfer under Localism. During discussions concerns were raised regarding to the lack of information provided including financial data. Not to be progressed until detailed information is received.

3. Benches – Town Clerk to provide WCC Highways Officer with an up to date summary of the WCC owned benches plus details of their extract locations; also, to contact WFDC with regard to the maintenance of their benches.

4. Electricity Pillar – E-on attempted to de-energise the feeder pillar on Severnside North but were unable to locate the box. The location has now been confirmed.

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the on-going actions being taken by the Town Clerk on the above issues.

f&gp/232 Purchases to note – not yet invoiced:

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the following purchases:

- O/n 19-20-032 – Signal 107 – Christmas event (budget – christmas event)
 - O/n 19-20-033 - Community Worksop Café – Repairs to Noticeboard
(budget – signs and notice boards)
 - O/n 19-20-034 – St Georges Hall – Flood Defence Meeting (budget Public Meetings)
 - O/n 19-20-036 – Royal British Legion - Poppy Wreath (budget – Civic Ceremonies)
To be cancelled, replaced by donation see minute 238.
 - O/n 19-20-038 – Num Lock Solutions Ltd – Malware software (budget – software and support)
 - O/n 19-20-039 – Num Lock Solutions Ltd – Injector Adaptor – (budget – computers)
 - O/n 19-20-040 – Worcestershire CALC – Training (budget - Staff & Councillor training)
- Lengthsman

f&gp/233 External Auditors Report

It was **RESOLVED** to **note** the PKF Littlejohn external auditors Notice of Conclusion for the audit 2018/19.

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2018/19

In respect of

BEWDLEY TOWN COUNCIL – W00016

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2019; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2018/19

Except for the matters reported below, on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

The internal auditor has provided examples of where the smaller authority has not complied with financial regulations. As a result the response to Assertion 3 should have been 'no'.

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertions in Section 1, Boxes 2,5,7 and 9 but it has provided the appointed auditor with an adequate explanation for non-compliance and details of the actions necessary to address weaknesses identified. This is consistent with the Annual Internal Audit Report, as the internal auditor has drawn attention to significant weaknesses in relation to internal control objectives B, C, D, E, and H. The smaller authority must ensure that action is taken to address these areas of weakness in a timely manner.

3 External auditor certificate 2018/19

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2019.

External Auditor Name

PKF LITTLEJOHN LLP

External Auditor Signature

PKF Littlejohn LLP

Date

19/09/2019

* Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews for 2018/19 in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

f&gp/234 Policies for Review and Approval

BTC015 – Guide to Mayoralty
BTC023 – Risk Management Policy
BTC033 – Beale’s Corner Notice Board (Terms and Conditions)

Following review and discussions it was **RESOLVED** to recommend for **Approval** the policies above..

f&gp/235 Risk Assessments

To review and **approve** the Councils risk assessments:

- General risk assessment
- Wyre Hill Sand Park risk assessment

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend for **Approval** the General risk assessment and the Wyre Hill Sand Park risk assessment

The Following risk assessments have been deferred to the next meeting.

- Christmas Light Switch-on Event risk assessment
- Remembrance Sunday risk assessment

f&gp/236 Pantomime and Music Festival Review

The Pantomime and Music Festival post event analysis, as recommended by the Internal Auditor, identified a number of area’s for improvement. The following recommendation will strengthen internal controls going forward.

- Grant application protocols and procedures are introduced. (actioned)
- Financial regulations must be strengthened to include grant applications.
- Pre-project costings and risk assessments are undertaken and approved prior to any grant applications being made.
- All grant applications must be approved by the Finance and General Purposes committee and agreed by Council prior to any applications being submitted.
- For openness and transparency Councillors are reminded of the need to declare interests in relation to their connection to suppliers and none paid service providers when organising events.
- Quotations should be obtained for all expenditure in line with financial regulations and standing orders.
- Pre-project/event costings and risk assessments are undertaken prior to any event being agreed to or undertaken.
- Expenditure on any event must be reported to and approved by the Finance and General Purposes committee and agreed by Council.
- To ensure openness and transparency all non-chargeable supplies should be recorded in the event reconciliation accordingly.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend for **Approval** the recommendations above, as identified in post event analysis report of the pantomime and music festival.

f&gp/237 Preparation of Budget for 2020/21

The initial version of the budget for 2020/21, as reviewed by the budget panel, was presented for consideration. It was **noted** that the no financial information had, as yet, been received in relation to the proposed Localism asset transfers and therefore no figures could be included. No budget had been included for Neighbourhood Planning; this is to be reviewed once more information is available.

f&gp/238 Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend for **Approval** a donation to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal of £100.00 this includes the provision of 2 poppy wreaths for Remembrance Sunday.

f&gp/239 Christmas Light Switch-on Event

Jennings will be providing the Fun Fair on the lower Load Street car park. Signal 107 Radio are sourcing additional sponsors, as yet to be confirmed. Cllr Ian Hardiman has pledged £500 toward road closures and road safety for the day and Cllr Becky Vale has pledged a donation of £200 towards the event. Further meetings have been arranged with Signal 107 Radio to confirm final arrangements.

A proposal relating to the use of a food voucher scheme for volunteers was rejected; snacks and drinks will be provided for volunteers in the Guildhall.

f&gp/240 Road Safety Group

Due to technical issues in the office the Road Safety notes from the meeting held on 08/10/2019 were not available to present at this meeting, these notes will be reviewed at the Council meeting 04/11/2019

Cllr P Gittins MBE, spoke of the Heighington Road, road safety issue discussed during the meeting and the swift action taken by the Police with the cooperation of the farmer to close the access gates.

f&gp/241 Update of Town Development Plan

Deferred until the next meeting

f&gp/242 Lifebuoys

Following a survey of the Lifebuoys it was identified that there was a need to renew some of the housings; the Environment Agency also recommend the use of B-lines rather than a standard ring.

During discussions various consideration were made, it was **RESOLVED** that moving the lifebuoy housing away from the railings and installing stands on the footpaths was not an option at the time.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend for **Approval** the following:

- All damage lifebuoy housings are replaced with overhead hinged units.
- A rolling program of B-line installations is introduced to replace current rings.
- That the Lifebuoy maintenance budget is increased from 2020 onwards to allow for regular risk assessment reviews and cleaning.
- That a Capital budget is introduced to support a replacement program.

f&gp/243 To receive any urgent matters not on this agenda subject to prior notification

Representation has been made to the Council with regard to WCC proposal for a multi user track from Bewdley into the forest. More information is to be sought.

f&gp/244 In accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, s1(2) it was RESOLVED to exclude the public and the press from the meeting to allow for discussion of confidential matters relating to any of staff, legal matters

f&gp/245 Website
The Council's website is due for an upgrade, 5 quotation have been received and reviewed; further due diligence is now required prior to the final decision being confirmed.

f&gp/246 Date of next meeting: 20th November 2019, 7pm

Meeting closed 9.24pm

These minutes are signed as a true and accurate record:

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Finance and General Purposes Committee

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Date