

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a VIRTUAL meeting (GoToMeeting ID: 379-563-949) of the BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held on Tuesday 2 June 2020 at 11.00am.

PRESENT Cllr Sarah Carney (Chairman from item 2)

Cllrs: Barry Irvine Martin Ray
Maggie Ray Anne Rickard

Also present: Cllr Dave Rickard, Will Austin (Town Clerk), Paul Fuszard (Finance & Office Manager) and one member of the public.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for Chairman and it was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: that Cllr Sarah Carney be elected as Chairman of the Sub Committee for the ensuing municipal year 2020/2021.

PUBLIC FORUM

The one member of the public present, on audio only, did not wish to speak.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Cllrs Geoffrey Ackerman, Sandra Brown and Steve Williams.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee held on 3 March 2020 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity following the meeting.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2019/20

The Finance and Office Manager reported that the Internal Auditor's final visit for 2019/20 had taken place virtually on 29 May 2020 and that the report would be presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. Members received the report, which had been issued after publication of the agenda and raised no recommendations for improvement.

The Finance and Office Manager further confirmed that the auditor had also agreed the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

The draft annual accounts for the financial year 2020-21 were presented at the meeting, and the Finance and Office Manager explained the contents.

Having considered both the Internal Auditor's report and the draft accounts, members

RECOMMENDED: that the report of the Internal Auditor be approved.

RECOMMENDED: that the annual accounts for 2019-2020 be approved.

RESOLVED: that the Finance and Office Manager be thanked for his effective stewardship.

6. ANNUAL REPORT

Councillors considered the Town Councils draft Annual Report, ENCL: 3512.

The Town Clerk summarised the draft Annual Report for 2019-2020 that had been circulated with the agenda. Members raised the following:

- CCTV information had been duplicated.
- There was a need for the document to be publicised via the media and online.
- References to West Dorset District Council should be changed to Dorset Council.
- The report should offer more information about the Rights Respecting Charter and project.

The Town Clerk stated that the report would be published by the end of June 2020.

RESOLVED: that subject to incorporation of the comments made at the meeting, this incorporation to be delegated to the Town Clerk, the Annual Report for 2019-2020 be approved.

7. TOWN COUNCIL FIVE-YEAR PLAN REVIEW

The Town Clerk reminded members that a summary of the response to, and impact of COVID-19 on the Town Council had been circulated. He advised that members should consider whether, in light of the impact, a working group should be established to review the previously agreed consultation draft of the Town Council Five-Year Plan.

The Finance and Office Manager reported the levels of expenditure and income to date in relation to the financial year 2020/21 to provide an updated financial assessment.

Members discussed:

- Arrangements for Bridport Market which was due to re-open to non-essential stalls on 3 June 2020.
- The need for any working group to be open to all members.

- The absence of Government support to town and parish councils, and the best route to lobby for such support.
- Consideration of different scenarios given the current uncertainty arising from COVID-19.

RECOMMENDED: that consideration be given by the Finance & General Purposes Committee to the creation of a working group to review the Town Council Five-Year Plan.

8. GRANTS 2020/21 AND SLA REVIEWS

The Town Clerk reported that the Council's community grants scheme would normally be opened for applications at the end of June. He asked members to consider whether this remained appropriate in the context of COVID-19. He further reported that discussions would take place in August with the SLA bodies, regarding their current Service Level Agreements. He anticipated a significant reduction in activity by the funded organisations, and a need for funding to meet their ongoing financial commitments.

Members considered the timing of the community grants scheme, and

RESOLVED: that the SLA body grants continue unchanged for this year and that the smaller grants scheme is publicised as normal.

9. INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Finance & Office Manager reported that a virtual review meeting would likely take place with the Town Council's insurers, prior to the renewal date of 1 September 2020, to consider and agree the cover requirements for the following year.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

10. STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Town Clerk reported that both need to be reviewed.

RESOLVED: that separate working groups be set up for each element, open to all members.

Cllr Ray indicated that he would sit on the Standing Orders group.

11. FUTURE REPORTS

RESOLVED: that regular reports be provided on the impact of COVID-19 on the Town Council.

The meeting closed at **12.21pm**

The next meeting of this Sub Committee will be held on 8 September 2020 at the earlier time of 10.00am. This meeting will recommend community grant awards and will be followed by a sub committee business agenda.