

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE held at Mountfield on Tuesday 1 March 2022 at 11.00am

PRESENT Cllr Dave Rickard (ex officio, in the absence of Sarah Carney)

Cllrs: Geoffrey Ackerman Martin Ray
Barry Irvine Anne Rickard
Maggie Ray Steve Williams

Also in attendance: Will Austin (Town Clerk), Paul Fuszard (Finance & Office Manager) and Alan Heeks.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no declarations of interest.

31. APOLOGIES

In the absence of the Chairman, it was RESOLVED that Cllr Dave Rickard should chair the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Sarah Carney.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33. MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee held on 7 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the chairman.

34. WEST BAY CAR BOOT SALE GRANTS PANEL

Consideration was given to the notes of the West Bay Car Boot Sale Grants Panel meeting held on 15 February 2022, ENCL: 3698.

The Town Clerk summarised the meeting notes and the recommendations of the panel, noting that one application would be considered as the next agenda item. He also apologised to Cllr Martin Ray, who had not received the meeting agenda.

Members thanked the panel for its work, and

RESOLVED: that grants totalling £8,050 be awarded, covering 16 organisations as follows:

Ref	Applicant and Grant Purpose	£
A1	Puncknowle, Swyre & West Bexington Village Hall – Replace kitchen equipment.	500

Ref	Applicant and Grant Purpose	£
A2	1 st Charmouth Guides – Funding for camping trip and group activities. See note (a).	250
A3	Bridport St Mary’s Parkrun – Portable defibrillator. See note (b).	350
A4	Stepping Out Cancer Rehabilitation – Exercise and wellbeing programme.	1,000
A5	Bridport Community Orchard Group – Replacement of 12 raised beds.	300
A6	Bridport & District Citizens Advice – Training and support.	500
A7	West Bay Discovery Centre – Refresh two displays & retail outlet.	500
A8	St Catherine’s Pre School – Replace four raised beds with seven smaller beds.	450
A9	Home-Start West Dorset – Funding to recruit/train volunteers and overall running costs.	1,000
A10	Seeding Our Future – a climate emergency communications programme with young people involved in creation/delivery.	Deferred
A11	Bridport Young Performers – Funding for weekly rehearsals.	500
A12	The Cowshed – learning horticultural skills.	550
A13	Bridport Heritage Forum – Planting trees to commemorate Bridport’s WW2 casualties – military and civilian.	300
A14	Chancery Trips – Door to door transport service led by volunteers to provide day trips. See note (c).	500
A15	Bridport Gateway Club / West Dorset Mencap – Funding towards fortnightly Gateway club nights.	500
A16	Bridport Youth Dance – Dance production in 2022.	500
A17	Bridport Community Shed – Volunteer training.	350
	Total Grants approved	£8,050

- (a) 1st Charmouth Guides (grant ref A2) also be encouraged to ask their own parish council for funding and to advise the panel of how many guides will benefit.
- (b) Bridport St Mary’s Parkrun (grant ref A3) be asked if equipment purchased could be used for other events in the town.
- (c) Chancery Trips (grant ref A14) be encouraged to also pursue other funding opportunities.

35. **GRANT APPLICATION – SEEDING OUR FUTURE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3699, outlining an application to the West Bay Car Boot Sale grants scheme. The panel which sat to consider the application, for a climate-related communications programme aimed at young people, had recommended that further information be sought and that the application be referred to the Sub Committee for consideration.

Alan Heeks of Seeding our Future attended the meeting and with the permission of the Sub Committee, reported further information as requested by the panel. He advised that he was concerned to ensure engagement beyond ‘the usual suspects’ and would like to pursue an experimental approach.

Members considered:

- How a figure for the number of residents benefiting from the proposal, estimated at 16,000, had been calculated. Alan Heeks advised that this was his understanding of the population of Bridport;

- A need for regular updates on the project if funding was approved, and for further engagement with the Town Council before funds were expended;
- The potential benefit of engaging with the successful 'Right Up Your Street' engagement project undertaken by the Lyric Theatre and the Rights Respecting Group. Alan Heeks said he would be delighted to explore this; and
- Concerns about approving funding without a clear understanding of how it would be used.

Following discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED: that a grant of £500 be awarded on condition that

- (i) detailed spending plans be agreed with the Chairman of the Best Value & Scrutiny Sub Committee; and
- (ii) regular updates be provided by Alan Heeks to the Council's Climate Action Sub Committee.

Cllr Anne Rickard abstained.

36. INTERNAL AUDIT

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3700.

The finance and Office Manager reported on the second visit that the internal auditors, Lightatouch, had made in February 2022.

He highlighted each section covered under the audit, namely:

- Town Council minutes
- Policies and Procedures
- Bank and cash
- Investments
- TIC Income
- Lease agreements
- Petty cash
- Risk Assessment
- Insurance
- Budgetary Management
- Income and expenditure
- VAT claims
- Transparency of the Council website

The Auditors reported that whilst checking the period October to December 2021, the records and procedures in place continue to provide a good standard of control, making only minor recommendations regarding the Tourist Information Centre.

Members thanked the Finance and Office Manager for all his work.

RESOLVED: that the internal audit report and recommendations be received and approved.

37. INVESTMENT REVIEW 2021/22 AND STRATEGY 2022/23

The Town Clerk summarised a report setting out the Council's investments over the past year, and a draft investment strategy, ENCL: 3701. The draft included options for incorporation of a greater emphasis on ethics.

Members noted the investment income over the past year, and the Council's proposed future investment strategy. They discussed ethics in detail, including:

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the investments made in 2021/22 be noted as in the report; and
- (ii) that the Investment Strategy for 2022/23 be approved as drafted.

38. ASSET REGISTER

Councillors considered the Asset Register, ENCL: 3702. The additions and disposals in the year were summarised since the previous year's register. Other minor changes might be required before the financial year end.

RECOMMEND: that the Asset Register be approved and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make any final amendments, before it is signed by the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Town Clerk.

39. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Town Clerk reported that Option 1, as one of three submitted to Dorset Council, had been recommended by Dorset Council and would be taken forward for 12 weeks of consultation from on Monday 28 February 2022 and that it will then be further considered by Dorset Council in July 2022, with any amendments to the current arrangements to be effective from April 2024, slightly in advance of the May 2024 local elections.

Cllr Dave Rickard noted that the Community Governance Working Group was considering community engagement during the consultation, and he asked members to speak to residents and encourage responses to the consultation.

RECOMMEND: that the update be noted.

40. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to the draft agenda, ENCL: 3703.

Members considered the draft agenda and

RESOLVED: to return it to a face to face meeting, with a virtual option, and that the agenda be agreed as drafted.

The meeting closed at **12.12pm**

The next meeting of this Sub Committee will be on 7 June 2022