

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Tuesday 7 June 2022 at 11.00am.

PRESENT Cllr Sarah Carney (Chairman from item 2)

Cllrs: Sandra Brown	Anne Rickard
Maggie Ray	Dave Rickard (Leader ex officio)
Martin Ray	Steve Williams

Also present: Paul Fuszard (Finance & Office Manager) and Will Austin (Town Clerk).

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Nominations were sought for Chairman by the Town Clerk and it was proposed, seconded and:

RESOLVED: that Cllr Sarah Carney be elected as Chairman of the Sub Committee for the ensuing municipal year 2022/2023.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Geoff Ackerman, Barry Irvine and Ros Kayes.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES

Subject to the addition of Cllr Sandra Brown as attending, the minutes of the meeting of the Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee held on 1 March 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. INTERNAL AUDIT AND ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2021/22

The Finance and Office Manager reported that the Internal Auditor's final visit for 2021/22 had taken place on 1 June 2022. No issues had been raised and with sub committee approval, the report would be recommended to the Finance and General Purposes Committee, along with the annual accounts.

The Finance and Office Manager further summarised the annual accounts for 2021/22, highlighting a lower than anticipated deficit, and a slight reduction in the overall level of reserves. He reported that income had recovered well following the relaxation of pandemic restrictions. The Town Clerk reminded members that after two years of the pandemic, there would now be a need to rebuild the level of general reserves, which would present an additional challenge for the 2023/24 budget setting process. He congratulated the Finance and Office Manager for his conscientious work, and members for supporting the community through Covid-19, whilst managing the financial impact.

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

RECOMMEND: that the report of the internal auditor be approved.

6. ANNUAL REPORT

Councillors considered the Town Councils draft Annual Report, ENCL: 3716.

The Town Clerk stated that the report would be published by the middle of June 2022.

Members highlighted some minor typographical errors, and

RESOLVED: that subject to typographical amendments, the Annual Report be approved for publication.

7. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had made its submission in response to Dorset Council's second consultation on the Community Governance Review, reaffirming its support for proposals to establish a new council, based on the built-up area of Bridport. The proposals had been recommended by Dorset Council, who would be making a final decision at its Full Council meeting on 14 July 2022.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

8. GRANTS 2022/23 AND SLA REVIEWS

The Town Clerk reported that it was proposed to publicise the opening of the annual community grants scheme later in June. The West Bay Car Boot Sale grants scheme would be opened for applications in November 2022 and both would ask that consideration be given, though not exclusively, to projects that consider Climate Change, Rights Respecting, community resilience and social inclusion.

Discussions would take place in August and September 2022 with the SLA bodies, regarding their current Service Level Agreements, and reported to the sub committee in September 2022.

RESOLVED: that the arrangements for the 2022/23 grants schemes be noted.

RESOLVED: that the guidance be amended for 2022/23 to advise that applications that address the climate emergency, Rights Respecting, community resilience, and social inclusion are particularly welcomed.

9. INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Finance and Office Manager reported that a review will take place with the Town Council's insurers, prior to the renewal date of 1 September 2022. This was the fifth year of a five-year agreement, and there would be a need next year to test the market, before establishing a new agreement.

Members highlighted the need to incorporate ethical decision-making, and possibly community governance changes, into the procurement of a new agreement in 2023.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

10. FUTURE REPORTS

The Town Clerk advised that the next meeting in September 2022 was normally reserved for consideration of community grant applications, and that a separate additional meeting might be required to begin consideration of any changes to community governance affecting Bridport.

The meeting closed at **12.06pm**

The next meeting of this Sub Committee will be held on 6 September 2022 at the earlier time of 10.00am. This meeting will recommend community grant awards and may be followed by a sub committee business agenda.