

**MINUTES** of the **Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee** Meeting held on Thursday 21 February 2019 at 6.30 p.m. in the Shire House Suite, Shire House, Bodmin

**PRESENT:** Councillor A M Kerridge, presiding, together with Councillors P Brown, P T Cooper, L L Frost, J Gammon, S H Kinsman, P L G Skea and K W Stubbs.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs A Banks (Responsible Finance Officer (RFO)) Mr P Martin (Executive Support Officer (ESO)) and Mrs B Briggs (Senior Admin Assistant (SAA)).

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS AND APOLOGIES:**

Apologies had been received from Councillor A J Coppin.

The Chairman wished to raise a matter that she was aware had been discussed via email regarding a request for information from Officers. She understood that the issue had been resolved but she wished to use the opportunity to address the interaction between Members and Officers. She noted the difference between the public and private sectors and that, in comparison to the private sector where speed is of the essence, local government is bound by statute due to the fact the Council is responsible and accountable for how public money is spent in the Town.

The Chairman informed that no Member is individually entitled to instruct an Officer to carry out a piece of work. As a Council, Members make decisions and the Town Clerk is bound to carry out the work related to those decisions but it is down to the Town Clerk to allocate work to other Officers based on capacity and expertise. She noted that staff have professional expertise on which they base the advice they offer to Council. She acknowledged that Members may not always agree with this advice, but that it was based on their professional knowledge and that it was not appropriate to challenge this advice, especially at meetings.

The Chairman then reminded Members that they do not have an automatic right to information. Members of a committee can expect to receive information relating to business on that committee. Members not on a committee are welcome to make a case for access to information to the Chair of the relevant committee and, with appropriate reasoning, this information would be made available to them.

		Action	Date
FSPM/2019/011	<b>Public Representation Session</b>  There were no members of the public present.		
FSPM/2019/012	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>  Councillor J Gammon declared a Non-Registerable interest in item FSPM/2019/015(a) - Letter from Sowenna Appeal and item FSPM/2019/018 – Cemetery Charges.  Councillor S H Kinsman declared a Non-Registerable interest in item FSPM/2019/015(a) – Letter from Sowenna Appeal.		
FSPM/2019/013	<b>Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on 13 December 2018</b>		

	<p>The Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on 13 December 2018 had been before Full Council on 17 January 2019 and they were acknowledged as a true record.</p> <p>Matters arising</p> <p><b>Page 2 – FSPM/2018/123(a) – To locate all office-based staff within Shire Hall</b></p> <p>The RFO noted that the move was now complete with all staff now located in Shire Hall. The Shire House Working Party was reviewing the options for future use of the Shire House.</p> <p>On a separate matter, Councillor P Brown wished to comment on the availability of the information requested by Councillor K J Phillips the previous week, as referred to by the Chairman at the start of the meeting. He felt that the information should have been available to her immediately and that, should the information not be to hand, this is a matter that needed to be addressed.</p> <p>The Chairman reiterated that Councillor Phillips was not on the FS&amp;PM Committee. The RFO commented that there was public information available to non-Committee members which was made available to Councillor Phillips as soon as practicable given other pressing work. She noted that a great deal of her time had been taken up coordinating the office move the previous week and that she was currently preparing for year-end and that, as such, her time to work on the request in more detail had been very limited.</p> <p>The RFO noted that she had not been made aware of a specific reason for the request, without which she was not able to understand its basis and had therefore not been able to prioritise it as an urgent matter. The Chairman confirmed that she was aware how much of the RFO's time had been taken up with the office move over the past three weeks and that it had not been possible to treat the request as a top priority.</p> <p>Councillor S H Kinsman commented that her understanding had been that the request had consisted of two parts and that the main issue with providing the non-publicly available information was that of timing. She noted that, due to the request relating to information to be provided to a member of the public, a specific question was required in order to provide the correct information rather than any Member/Officer interpretation of the required information. She also noted that, as the Chairman had mentioned earlier in the meeting, the correct path to requesting information, relating to a committee of which they are not a member, was to send a request to the Committee Chair to consider. She noted that all Members were now aware of that for any future requests.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that two senior Officers had been absent from work and that she understood that the requested information would be available by the end of the week. She felt that all</p>		
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	information that could be made available to the public should be and felt that the Council and Officers were aiming to be as transparent as possible.		
FSPM/2018 /014	<p><b>Minutes of the FS&amp;PM Committee (Budget) Meeting held on 3 January 2019</b></p> <p>It was noted that the Minutes of the Finance, Staffing and Performance Management Committee Meeting held on 3 January 2019 had been before Full Council on 17 January 2019 and they were acknowledged as a true record.</p>		
FSPM/2019 /015	<p><b>Correspondence, to include:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Letter from Sowenna Appeal requesting support dated 3 January 2019</b></p> <p>Councillors S H Kinsman and J Gammon reiterated their Non-Registerable interest in this item and left the meeting at 6.42 p.m.</p> <p>A copy of the letter was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Members were of the view that a financial contribution would not be possible at this time as the budget had been set and there were many projects requiring the Council's resources. However, it was considered that the Parks Team may be able to offer some assistance in terms of plants, as previously offered to the BlueTits team, to help with the new unit's landscaping. The RFO confirmed that she would discuss the matter with the Parks and Open Spaces Manager (POSM).</p> <p>The RFO noted this request may be appropriate for consideration by Bodmin Relief in Need (BRIN).</p> <p>Following discussion, it was <b>AGREED</b> to <b>RECOMMEND</b> discussing the contribution of plants / assistance by the Parks Team with the POSM.</p> <p>It was further <b>AGREED</b> to <b>RECOMMEND</b> contacting Sowenna to suggest they refer their request to BRIN.</p> <p>Councillors S H Kinsman and J Gammon returned to the meeting at 6.44 p.m.</p> <p><b>(b) Email from New Life Church, Bodmin regarding regular Sunday bookings of the Shire House Suite</b></p> <p>A copy of the email was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO reported that this request had been considered previously and Council had not been able to support it due to the requirement of a Councillor or member of staff to be on site for the</p>	<p>RFO / POSM</p> <p>SAA</p>	<p>Following approval of Minutes</p>

	<p>duration of the booking for insurance purposes. She noted that no Members had previously been able to commit to this every Sunday and that the alternative would be that Kestrel Guards provide this service, with the cost being passed on to the hirer.</p> <p>In terms of hire charge, the RFO recommended that the same price as other long-standing room hirers of £44.33 per session be offered. Taking into account the cost of Kestrel Guards attending the booking, the total cost to the hirer would be £75.00 per session.</p> <p>The RFO noted that this was on the assumption that Kestrel Guards were able to fulfil this service and provide a member of staff every Sunday.</p> <p>It was noted by Members that, in consideration of the future uses of Shire House, it might be possible in future to allow hirers to open/lock the building themselves should the Suite be separated from the rest of the House. However, should that be Council's decision, it would not be possible to achieve this within the timeframe required by New Life Church.</p> <p>The possibility was raised of offering Narisa Hall to New Life Church as an alternative, whilst Narisa Hall remains unoccupied by a long-term tenant.</p> <p>The RFO commented that the building is currently fenced off due to the recent spate of vandalism to the property and that, due to insurance purposes, a Council representative would still be required to open and lock the property. She also noted that the available space in Narisa Hall may not be adequate for the Church's needs.</p> <p>It was noted that the notes from the recent Shire House Working Party meeting were to be considered later on in the meeting (minute ref FSPM/2019/019 refers). Members felt that the information within these notes should be considered before any decision was taken on this item and that this item would therefore be revisited following item FSPM/2019/019.</p> <p>It was noted that at this juncture the review of the hire charges was an ongoing process and that any changes could not be applied to any bookings being taken prior to any new charging structure being considered by Council.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was <b>AGREED</b> to <b>RECOMMEND</b> that the RFO respond to New Life Church informing them that the hire charge to use the Shire House Suite every Sunday would be £75.00 per session. This offer would be made with the provision that a commitment would be required from Kestrel Guards that they would be able to provide the opening and locking service.</p> <p>Councillors P T Cooper and J Gammon voted against this decision.</p>	FA	Following approval of Minutes
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FSPM/2019/016	<p><b>To consider the draft Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy</b></p> <p>A copy of the draft document was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted that the dates had been updated but that, at the current time, there was no plans to take out a loan or repay the current loan so the document remained as set out for the following year.</p> <p>Under 2.5, Members queried whether Council should approve the RFO's actions in terms of commitment of funds. The RFO clarified that this was now checked by two Members as part of the assurance procedure and also signed off by the Town Clerk. The Chairman added that, as discussed earlier in the meeting, this fell within the professional expertise of the RFO.</p> <p>The RFO noted that this could be clarified within the policy to include the wording 'These are verified by the Town Clerk'.</p> <p>Members sought confirmation that the RFO had received appropriate training as referenced under 2.7. The RFO confirmed that she had.</p> <p>The RFO also confirmed that, although the legal requirement was to report on investment activity annually, a quarterly report was shared with the FS&amp;PM Committee at the next available meeting after receipt from HSBC.</p> <p>It was also noted that the address should be amended to reflect the recent office move.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was <b>AGREED to RECOMMEND</b> adopting the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2019/20, including the amended address and the amendment in section 2.5 as outlined above.</p>	RFO / SAA	15.03.19
FSPM/2019/017	<p><b>To consider the draft Credit Management Code of Practice</b></p> <p>A copy of the draft document was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The second paragraph under 1.1 was discussed as it currently mentions Cornwall Council, who the Town Council no longer use as their internal auditor. It was agreed that the wording should be changed from "<i>...in consultation with the Internal Audit Department Cornwall Council...</i>" to "<i>...in consultation with the Council's Internal Auditor...</i>".</p> <p>Clarification was sought under 3.6 as to who checks the invoices for accuracy. The RFO confirmed that the finance team checks them and a sample are now checked as part of the monthly assurance checking by Members of the FS&amp;PM Committee.</p>		

	<p>The RFO also confirmed, under 4.1. that the RFO checks and approves cancellations, whereby she reviews the reason for the cancellation and gives authority via email.</p> <p>It was discussed under 'Recommendation of Collection Methods' on page 3 that bullet point five should include the wording "...unless there is a legal requirement." To make it explicitly clear that information would have to be shared by the Council under some circumstances.</p> <p>Councillor P Brown wished to raise an issue with regards to the Accounts reconciliation being a part of the monthly assurance checking by members. He felt that, without having personally been through the reconciliation process, Members are being asked to sign off a figure they are presented with which is essentially meaningless to them.</p> <p>The RFO responded to comment that this was useful feedback and that she would bring this information back to the internal auditor.</p> <p>The Chairman noted that this did not relate directly to the current item but commented that it was an important point. She then recommended adopting the Credit Management Code of Practice, subject to the minor amendments outlined above.</p> <p>It was <b>AGREED</b> to <b>RECOMMEND</b> adopting the Credit Management Code of Practice, subject to the following amendments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Page 1 – 1.1 – Paragraph 2: change "<i>...in consultation with the Internal Audit Department Cornwall Council...</i>" to "<i>...in consultation with the Council's Internal Auditor...</i>"</li> <li>- Page 3 – Recommendation of Collection Methods – Bullet point 5: include the wording "<i>...unless there is a legal requirement.</i>"</li> </ul>	RFO / SAA	15.03.19
FSPM/2019 /018	<p><b>Review of Cemetery Charges 2019/20, to include:</b></p> <p><b>(a) Review of Bodmin Town Council Cemetery Fees</b></p> <p><b>(b) Draft Cemetery Fees from 1 April 2019</b></p> <p><b>(c) Parish/Town Council Comparison of Interment fees and Exclusive Rights fees</b></p> <p>A Review of Cemetery Fees report was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Councillor J Gammon reiterated her Non-Registerable interest in this item and left the meeting at 7.05 p.m.</p> <p>The RFO reported that the accounts team had broken down every element of the cost of an interment. She confirmed that this included consideration of acquisition of new cemetery land and</p>		

grave maintenance. She noted that the aim was to cover the costs involved in interment from 1 April 2019, when the new charges would be applied. She also commented that, having been through this thorough exercise, the Council would be able to justify these costs going forward as they are based on real costs. She noted that Cornwall Council had been through a similar exercise and also provided this level of detail.

The ESO commented that this also seemed like an appropriate opportunity to invest in new technology, in the form of a new cemeteries database, in order to make record keeping more efficient.

The percentage of parishioners versus non-parishioners currently interred, and the rules surrounding the definition of a 'parishioner' were queried. The definition, as included in the report, was read out. The ESO also responded that he was not aware of the exact percentage but that the take up was higher for parishioners than non-parishioners. He noted that the parishioner rate was currently very low in comparison to other towns and parishes. He confirmed that parishioners moving away from the area were entitled to the parishioner rate for five years after leaving and that there was no minimum term of residency before being entitled to the parishioner rate when moving to the town.

The additional costs involved in issuing an Exclusive Right were queried, with the ESO confirming that there were additional administrative costs involved.

The RFO commented that there were also administrative costs relating to contacting Exclusive Rights holders / next of kin when required when, for example, memorial safety issues.

The RFO then outlined the Recommendations in Section 8 of the report which required a decision from Members as follows:

**8.1 Fees charged for interments** – it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** adopting the recommendations as set out in the report.

The Chairman noted that she was aware the cost of a ceremony at the crematorium could be prohibitive to some residents but that she was aware that some undertakers have a chapel so it was possible to have a cremation at the crematorium without the associated cost of their ceremony.

It was noted that the fee to be charged for non-parishioner child interments reflected the real cost of such an interment and was to be maintained in order to prevent local residents from subsidising this cost. It was noted that there would continue to be no charge for parishioner child interment (under the age of 16).

**8.2 Amendments to Exclusive Rights** – it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** adopting the recommendations as set out in the report.

	<p>It was noted that, as detailed in the report, the requirement to purchase an Exclusive Right of Burial for all types of interment would cut down on a huge amount of administration, reduce errors and ensure responsibility for the upkeep of all graves and memorials.</p> <p>Members commented on the necessity of keeping these records up to date in order to know the correct person to contact for each grave. The ESO commented that a new cemetery database would register the date of each Exclusive Right and update automatically. The system could then be interrogated to find out, for example, all Exclusive Rights nearing expiry.</p> <p>Councillor P Brown queried the requirement for an online system when hard copy records are also required.</p> <p>The Chairman commented that the online system was necessary in terms of consistency, ability to update records, contact Exclusive Rights holders and in the event of staff handover. She also noted that the ESO has brought a lot of experience with him and is working to future proof the systems in place and ensure they are more robust.</p> <p>8.3 Amendments to memorial fees and types – it was <b>AGREED</b> to <b>RECOMMEND</b> adopting the recommendations as set out in the report.</p> <p>8.4 Amendments to additional fees charged – it was <b>AGREED</b> to <b>RECOMMEND</b> adopting the recommendations as set out in the report.</p> <p>It was <b>AGREED</b> to <b>RECOMMEND</b> introducing the new fee structure from 1 April 2019.</p> <p>Th RFO reiterated that these new charges reflected the real costs of interment and the aim of the report was to be open and transparent in order that members of the public can see the justification to charges.</p> <p>Councillor J Gammon returned to the meeting at 7.44 p.m.</p>	RFO	01.04.19
FSPM/2019/019	<p><b>Notes from meeting of Shire House Working Party held on 7 February 2019</b></p> <p>A copy of the notes was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted that an Officer had not been able to attend this meeting and that the ESO was scheduled to attend the next meeting on 12 March, where he would be able to provide the required information coming out of the 7 February meeting. She also commented that, should members have any feedback regarding this project, they should email Councillor K J Phillips as Chair of the Working Party, or the ESO.</p>		

	These notes were noted.		
FSPM/2019 /020	<p><b>Fair Park May Fair – provision dates Thursday 9 to Sunday 19 May 2019, with operational days of Saturday 11th to Saturday 18th May</b></p> <p>These dates were provided for information and were noted.</p>		
FSPM/2019 /021	<p><b>Year to date budget 31 January 2019</b></p> <p>A copy of the budgets was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted the variances as follows:</p> <p>Information Centre – Accommodation List Advertising – it was noted that this expenditure was to refund accommodation providers following the decision not to produce the accommodation list for 2019.</p> <p>Information Centre – VIC – Sale or Return Items Books &amp; Maps – it was noted that the books income is budgeted across two years and would therefore be adjusted for at year end.</p> <p>Information Centre – Gross Salaries &amp; Wages – it was noted that this variance was due to the current staff vacancy and the recently agreed flexible working request resulting in a reduction of hours to be paid.</p> <p>Information Centre – Printing &amp; Photocopying – it was noted that this variance was due to the printing of the parish leaflets project which was funded by Cornwall Council from the Local Devolution Fund so this cost would therefore be adjusted at year end.</p> <p>Information Centre – Computer Hard &amp; Soft Support – it was noted that this cost was due to cross allocation of budget and would therefore be adjusted at year end.</p> <p>Court 1 – Living Museum Experience – it was noted that these budgets were adjusted across the year.</p> <p>Shire hall – Professional Fees – it was noted that this cost related to the replacement of the curator system.</p> <p>Shire Hall – Training costs – it was noted that this cost related to the roof inspection.</p> <p>Shire Hall – Energy Costs - Electricity and Gas – it was noted that this variance was due to quarterly billing.</p>		

	<p>Shire Hall – Property Repairs and Maintenance – it was noted this variance was due to the costs of repairing the back door of the building.</p> <p>Shire Hall – Property Alterations – it was noted that this budget was allocated for the refurbishment of the cells.</p> <p>Shire House Complex – Hirings – it was noted that this variance related to the number of bookings exceeding those expected and that the budget had been reduced awaiting a decision on what Council wished to do with the building in the longer term.</p> <p>Shire House Complex – Gross Salaries &amp; Wages – it was noted that this variance was due to the Council not currently employing the budgeted second caretaker.</p> <p>Shire House Complex – General Rates – it was noted that these rates were paid over 10 months rather than 12 and would therefore be adjusted at year end.</p> <p>Shire House Complex – Property Alterations – it was noted that these fees related to the work involved with the specifications and tender process for the heating system.</p> <p>Shire House Complex – Equipment Hire/Rental – it was noted that this variance was due to the procurement of new coffee machines being put on hold.</p> <p>Shire House Complex – Equipment Repairs &amp; Maintenance – it was noted that this variance was due to necessary boiler and dishwasher repairs being carried out.</p> <p>Shire House Complex – Large Expenditure Items – it was noted that this budget was for the refurbishment of Shire House.</p> <p>The RFO noted for information that the reports would be presented in a new format at the next meeting.</p> <p>This report was noted.</p>		
<p>FSPM/2019 /022</p>	<p><b>Risk management update</b></p> <p>A copy was circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO noted that there was a Risk Management Working Party meeting scheduled in two weeks' time.</p> <p>The actions assigned to the risks was queried, with the RFO responding that these had not been updated for some months and this would be addressed at the upcoming meeting and that more information would be included in the action column going forward.</p>		

FSPM/2019 /023	<p><b>To consider and, if appropriate, pass for payment the Schedule of Accounts for February 2019</b></p> <p>The RFO noted that the Accounts Team had reverted to listing individual invoice amounts on the schedule in order to be as transparent as possible about what each payment specifically relates to.</p> <p>The Schedule of Accounts was approved and passed for signing from payment ref 4300001270 to 4300001330 and cheque number 0000124173.</p>		
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Due to the confidential nature of the next business it was **RESOLVED** to go into Committee.  
Please see separate page.