

GOOLE TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of meeting held on 16th February 2023 commencing
following the Planning Meeting at 7.15pm

PRESENT: Councillors Flynn (In the Chair), Bailey, Bottomley, Handley, Harrison, B Jeffreys, D Jeffreys, Marshall, Moiser, Raspin and Walker.

OFFICERS: Mr B. Robertson (Town Clerk)
Ms S. Norfolk (RFO/Deputy Town Clerk)
Mr G. Whitehead (Head of Arts & Culture)
Mrs C. Brophy (Administration Assistant)

PR2232 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Boatman, Cooper, Turner, and Walker.

PR2233 TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND THEIR NATURE

There were no declarations of interest.

PR2234 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 19th January, 2023 approved at Council on 2nd February, 2023 be signed as a true record by the Chair (Councillor Flynn).

This was **PROPOSED** by Councillor B Jeffreys and **SECONDED** by Councillor D Jeffreys.

PR2235 REPORT OF THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCE OFFICER/DEPUTY TOWN CLERK

Members were in receipt of the following reports

(a) Monthly Payments – December 2022

Members were recommended to approve the schedule of payments for December 2022 of £209,209.67.

Councillor Bottomley asked why there were several payments to Fisher Security.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that some were monthly standing orders and she would discuss the matter further as an exempt item.

Councillor Raspin informed Members that Councillor Cooper wished to discuss the cost and value for money of our CCTV again. He said that some incidents are not being picked up.

The Town Clerk informed Members that there is only one month left on the contract. He answered that most incidents are being picked up, people are being caught and evidence is being given.

Councillor Bailey queried a payment of £20,000 to Scotts.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that this is payment for the Mission Hall. After giving it back following the end of the lease, a dilapidation report was issued. This initially started off at £70,000 to £90,000 and was negotiated down to £20,000. This was budgeted for and includes VAT which we can reclaim.

Councillor Bailey queried a payment of £15,600 to JMS Roads Ltd.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that following a Health & Safety audit in the Cemetery we were told that the paths needed repairing.

Councillor Bailey also queried a payment of £2,480 to Singleton Security Services.

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that this was for security, stewarding and first aid for the Illuminarium

Councillor B Jeffreys **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the schedule of payments for December 2022 of £209,209.67.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Bailey.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members **APPROVE** the schedule of payments for November 2022 of £209,209.67.

(b) Monthly Bank Reconciliation & Bank Statement – December 2022

Members were recommended to approve the bank reconciliation for 31st December 2022.

Councillor Bailey **PROPOSED** that Members **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation for 31st December 2022.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Harrison.

It was **RESOLVED** to **APPROVE** the bank reconciliation for 31st December 2022.

(c) Income & Expenditure to December 2022

Members were requested to note the report for the period ending 31st December 2022.

Councillor Bailey **PROPOSED** that Members **NOTE** the report for the period ending 31st December 2022.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Moiser.

It was **RESOLVED** to **NOTE** the report for the period ending 31st December 2022

(d) Precept/Budget Report

Members were requested to accept the budget with a loss of £17,999 for the year ended 2023/24.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that they acted unlawfully in setting the precept prior to the Budget being approved. Based on the precept figure submitted to ERYC this has resulted in a loss of £17,999. This would bring the general reserve below the recommended acceptable threshold of 3-12 months net revenue expenditure. We achieved the minimum required this last financial year but are going to fall below again.

Councillor Bailey stated that Councillors were unhappy with the 5% rise. He said that many councils have raised taxes to the 5% maximum. He added that compared to many other councils, we are in a fairly good position. He added that we do need to look at getting the money up to a safe level, however Councillors are trying to look after the people of Goole as well as the Council. He thanked the RFO/deputy Town Clerk for all her hard work stating that he understands that it is a fine balancing act.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk informed members that she spends time with every department head and looks line by line at the figures, taking into account all things such as mortgage interest rates, energy prices, government pay including pensions and falling audiences at Junction.

She explained that they had erred by agreeing the precept without a Budget. On being asked why Councillors were only being told this now, the RFO/Deputy Town Clerk said that this was the first meeting since the precept setting.

Councillor Handley suggested that Councillors should possibly have rejected the proposal and waited for the RFO/Deputy Town Clerk to come back and spend time going through the Budget with them. She suggested that moving forward, some Councillors sit and look at the Budget with the RFO/Deputy Town Clerk. Councillor Handley told members that she has been involved with the budget at ERYC and now feels much better advised with a greater knowledge of budget setting.

The RFO/deputy Town Clerk answered that this would be fine with her however until the tax base from the East Riding is set, further progress can't be made. She explained the process to Councillors.

On being asked whether reserves carry across following the year end, the RFO/deputy Town Clerk answered that at year end, Councillors authorise the transfer of funds from reserves into the general fund. She added that any earmarked reserves remain untouched until the year end.

She explained that some money has remained untouched for many years for eg in the Arts. We know however that a new projector is needed and the money will be used for this. Similarly, the money for the office refurbishment will be transferred across and the balance reduced.

Councillor Flynn stated that Councillors were unanimous in saying that the 8% was unacceptable. He said that the timescale was horrendous, when they wanted to reduce it to 4.9% there was no opportunity to see anyone to gain advice. He stated that the decrease in reserves is not illegal and that these are unprecedented times.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk answered that whilst not illegal it is good practice.

Councillor Bailey **PROPOSED** that Members **ACCEPT** the budget with a loss of £17,999 for year ended 2023/24.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Walker.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members **ACCEPT** the budget with a loss of £17,999 for year ended 2023/24.

PR2236 **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ARTS & CULTURE – BONFIRE NIGHT 2022**

Members were in receipt of the above report

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that now the final invoices are in we have the the total income and expenditure for the event. The total expenditure for materials, hire and fireworks is £20,127, the total income is £19,362. This means a total loss of £765. Staff costs are not included in this.

Discussions took place regarding the number of tickets sold discounted in advance, to families 4 for the price of 3, at the gate and online. It was agreed that £3 to £4 is very cheap and the price might have to go up to £5 per ticket next year.

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that he prefers people to pay in advance as this makes it easier to know how many are attending. He added that just less than 20% of people prefer to buy at the gate on the night dependent on the weather. He said that while many people paid online on the night, only 20% of people paid cash.

Councillor Raspin informed Members that although the event made a small loss, it was an exceptional effort, a very good night and he was very happy at that.

Members **AGREED** to **NOTE** the report.

PR2237 **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ARTS & CULTURE – ARTS UPDATE**

Members were in receipt of the above report

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that this is the latest update for the Arts Council. As a National Portfolio Holder of the Arts Council, we have to report every quarter.

End of Quarter 3 – current performance against KPIs/Investment Principles (Apr-Sep inclusive)

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that as we come towards the year end we are behind on some things. The Advisory Board consisting of Councillors, Members of the Public and Peer Groups should have commenced by now.

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that KPI 10 – increase workshop attendances, is lower than it should be. The target is 1,500 and it is currently at 968. He explained that this is mostly our Youth Groups, Ukuleles, Choir and Teen Music. He said that some decisions have had to be made regarding programs and workshops as some groups were dwindling to unsustainable levels. The Ukulele group became too small to sustain and is temporarily on hold, as is Adult Music. The Youth Theatre Groups are working on their own in house productions. The younger group are performing Jungle Book, the older group treasure Island. Their numbers have increased with the younger group being full, they have gone from 4-5 people to 20. The older group has gone up from 1-2 people to 6-7 weekly.

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that there are also more one-off events, for example afternoon tea dances with Swing Dance Leeds. This proved very successful during Kingsway Primary Schools Takeover Festival, and they are now held every two months. We also host Northern Ballet Productions and Singing in the Round.

The Head of Arts & Culture informed Members that KPI 20 – All earned income, shows a big discrepancy. This has been reflected in the RFOs year end projections and has also been offset by funding.

On being asked whether we will look at trying to include more groups when the leisure Centre closes for refurbishment, the Head of Arts & Culture answered that he is attending a HEY Creative network meeting soon. This will look at opportunities for more events at Junction, he is also in talks with the Library and is looking at an increased participatory budget, dementia friendly events and other things such as baby yoga. Much is reliant on the availability of space and compatibility of events.

A discussion took place regarding marketing, Junction's website, and Goole Town Council's Facebook page. Councillor Raspin informed Members that they should be updated far more frequently or daily.

The Head of Arts & Culture answered that there are some access rights issues and also a low marketing budget. He said that we are trying to advertise more. We are however getting more people back to Junction and have sold out several films recently.

Members AGREED to NOTE the report.

PR2238 **TO SIGN OFF THE BUSINESS CASE FOR VICTORIA PLEASURE GROUND STADIUM DEVELOPMENT**

Members were in receipt of the above report

Councillor Bottomley asked whether there is any possibility for amendments.

The Town Clerk answered that this wouldn't be possible as this is required by the Town Deal Board tomorrow. He said that slight tweaks can be made, for example on materials and cost, but the basic principles will remain. These will include a compact track, pavilion and 91 car park spaces.

Councillor Bottomley informed members that he has spoken with Athletics who asked whether there could be a fence around the track.

The Town Clerk answered that this was looked into and it is not viable.

Councillor D Jeffreys informed Members that after meeting with the Town Deal Board it is the first that he has heard that the new venue will hold 180 people. He stated that he is very disappointed for the Athletics group who are there every week. He said that this would go down badly. He also asked why only one design was considered.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the presentation in September set out how things were going to be. He said that all options and proposals had been considered. The green Book has been adhered to and the business

plan needed completing on time to get the money.

Councillor Raspin stated that we know we can't have what we would ideally like, and it is heartbreaking for Athletics, they aren't losing the track, we are providing another solution. As a Council, as much as we would like to, we can't please everyone. The redevelopment has to happen and is something to look forward to.

Councillor Handley informed Members that this is the main topic of conversation at the Town Deal Board, the athletics is not being lost it is purely a different offer. While athletics is still available at VPG, we must consider the masses. She went on to say that everything has had to be taken into consideration for a successful future.

Councillor Raspin said a thank you must go to Emily, the GooleTimes reporter for their fair coverage of this topic. He reiterated that everything is being done for the right reasons.

Councillor Handley **PROPOSED** that Members sign off the business case for VPG stadium development.

This was **SECONDED** by Councillor Bailey.

Members voted all in favour. This was carried unanimously.

It was **RESOLVED** that Members sign off the business case for VPG development.

PR2239

CONSULTATION ON THE EAST RIDING STREET TRADING AND COLLECTIONS LICENSING POLICY 2023 – 2028

Members were in receipt of the above report

The Town Clerk informed Members that this is an updated version of the policy.

Members agreed to accept the policy.

It was **RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded for the following item under the public bodies (admission to meetings act) 1960 in that it contains commercial or personal information as defined under the local government act 1972 schedule act 12a the divulgence of which may be detrimental to the council.

PR2240

MONTHLY DEBTORS REPORT AS 31st DECEMBER 2022

Members were in receipt of the above report.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that this report covers the period up to 31st December 2022. She said that Debtor A are owed over £3,000 in credits. GTC is in the process of changing gas suppliers and we are owed £11,000 energy relief, some of which will be passed on to Debtor A. She said that we are still in negotiations with them and are changing our methodology of invoicing. We are aiming for more transparency. There is currently a delay with meter readings and it often takes 3 months to catch up. We will start to invoice monthly for actual usage. A payment will be made when things are resolved. Debtor A is in the process of changing the gas account into its own name.

Councillor Flynn stated that Debtor B is falling behind. He is however now opening more and is setting up a standing order. He has paid £480 this week.

The RFO/Deputy Town Clerk informed Members that it would have been better on a daily rate as first proposed. The increase in utility bills has also been an issue.

Councillor Flynn queried the accounts for Debtor D. He said that Councillors had requested to see them at the P & R meeting.

The Town Clerk answered that we have only just received the accounts. They will be available for the next P & R meeting.

Meeting concluded at 8.45pm

