

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee

Monday 25th July 2022 at 7.30 pm

The Guildhall, Butcher's Row, Barnstaple

Present: Councillors:

V Elkins, I Roome, J Hunt, J Phillips (Chair), J Carter, L York,
J Coates, J Orange (Vice-Chair) and G Marchewka

Also in attendance:

R Ward, Town Clerk
S Ward, Vista Wellbeing
A Griggs, Vista Wellbeing
Members of the Public: 0

Apologies for absence:

V Monk

12 Vista Wellbeing proposal re St John's Community Centre

The committee approved that this item be brought to the start of the meeting so that the two representatives from Vista Wellbeing could make their presentation.

Vista Wellbeing would like to enter into a partnership with the Town Council that would involve

- Servicing of existing bookings
- Management of enquiries and new bookings
- Development of a broader community offering through increased timetabled activities
- Increase partnership working – such as NHS and other semi-clinical community rehab activities
- Facility management (cleaning, equipment and general enhancements etc)
- The creation of a Vista Wellbeing Community Hub (which seeks to develop community services to meet the needs of a demographic that is not currently well-served by mainstream provision)
- A range of leisure activities to support physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Educational courses to support individual and business needs.

Cllr Roome proposed that Vista Wellbeing work with the Town Clerk to bring a proposal to a future meeting. (NC)

Cllr Roome declared that he is an NHS employee

13 Apologies for absence.

Apologies and reasons for absence were received and approved (NC)

14 Dispensations and disclosable pecuniary or other interests.

Cllrs I Roome, J Hunt, J Phillips, L York and J Orange as members of

North Devon District Council, have a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Cllrs I Roome, as a member of Devon County Council, has a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

Cllr York declared an interest in agenda items 5, 6, 10, 14 & 16

Cllr Hunt declared and interest in agenda item 6

15 Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on 23rd May 2022

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd May 2022, are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (NC)

16 Financial Reports

All the Finance reports were reviewed under the one item.

RESOLVED: To approve and note the budget monitoring and financial reports for June 2022 (NC)

17 Small Grant applications

The following grant small grant applications were considered and the amounts indicated awarded:

Organisation	Granted 2021	Amount Requested	Amount Awarded
Tarka Child Contact Centre	£1000	£1,000	£500
Pathfield Activities Club	£750	£1,000	£500
Families in Grief (FIG)	£800	£1,000	£500
Barnstaple Ability FC	£750	£1,000	£500
North Devon Down Syndrome Group	£750	£1,000	£500

The committee agreed to fund the grants previously awarded for Platinum Jubilee activities from reserves, leaving a fund of £10,040 plus an Earmarked Reserve of £3,450 for future applications in 2022-2023

18 Amendment to Strategic Grant to NDVS

Councillors approved the request from North Devon Voluntary Services to amend the use of the Strategic Grant that was awarded for the year 2022-23.

The proposal includes:

- To increase the number of local organisations registering and updating the Barnstaple page of Devon Connect
- To increase the number of advertised volunteer opportunities

within Barnstaple

- To carry out bimonthly volunteer recruitment campaigns
- To increase the number of active and skilled Trustees within Barnstaple
- To establish an accessible volunteer hub within Barnstaple
- To recruit 50 new volunteers

To do this NDVS will recruit a Volunteer Manager – 8 hours a week. Where possible NDVS will endeavour to lever in additional funds to support this work.

Cllrs Hunt and York abstained from the vote as members of the NDVS committee.

19 Barnstaple Carnival

The committee noted that the Barnstaple Fair Carnival for 2022 will take place on Saturday 17th September but this year there will not be a procession.

20 South West Heritage Trust - Agreement

The committee approved the agreement between the South West Heritage Trust and Barnstaple Town Council for the provision of Archive Services in North Devon. The agreement will be signed by the Town Clerk.

21 The employment of a staff member dedicated to Town Centre responsive maintenance.

The purpose of this role would be to provide a visible presence and responsive service to help keep the Barnstaple town centre public realm feeling cleaner, safe and well maintained.

The committee approved:

- An allocation of up to £30,000 for the employment of a staff member and associated costs.
- To allocate the cost of employment for 2022-23 from reserves, expected to be in the region of £15,000.
- To increase the precept by the cost of the employment of the staff member for future years, expected to be the equivalent of 8p per week on a Band D precept.

22 Barnstaple Fair Licence

In order to redevelop the Seven Brethren site and build the new long-stay carpark / events area North Devon Council need to serve notice on the Town Council on the existing fair site licence, dated 11th October 1995 to achieve vacant possession. Without vacant possession it is not possible for the site to be passed to the developer.

The committee approved:

- The continued delegated authority for the Town Clerk to negotiate with North Devon Council and the Showmen's Guild.
- Subject to a legal review of the initial licence for the Town Clerk to sign the licence on behalf of Barnstaple Town Council.

The committee asked the new licence be for ten years rather than five as proposed in the draft provided and for a “letter of comfort” as a gesture of reassurance when the notice is served on the current licence.

23 Insurance Premiums

The committee noted the increase in insurance premiums for the year 2022-2023

The annual budget, based on previous years is £18,000, the premiums for all policies for this year is £45,489.68.

The policies are now with:

- Aviva for Commercial Combined Policy
- Ecclesiastical for Property (includes a three year fixed rate agreement)
- ERS for vehicles

The increase is as a result of changes in the insurance market that have also affected other similar Town and Parish Councils.

24 Utility cost analysis

The committee noted the significant impact of utility cost price rises on the Town Council budget.

The current new contracts total to £28,970.06 a year (£21,741.73 the Town Council and £7,228.33 Rock Park Trust) - £10,416.84 more than last year (£6,118.27 more for the Town Council; £4,298.57 for Rock Park Trust).

There are still other contracts are still in fixed rate agreement that will need to be renewed.

25 Historic Barum Map Project

A historic Map of Barnstaple dating back to 1650 has been discovered at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, thought to be the oldest existing map of the town.

The Bodleian Library has agreed to lend the map to the Museum of Barnstaple and North Devon and is expected to be on display from November 2022 - February 2023.

A project is being put together to coincide with the exhibition and Todd Grey MBE is editing a book which will comprise 22 contributions written by 20 authors.

The committee asked for costs of the project and a proposal for a funding request to be brought to the next meeting.

26 Guildhall renovation project update

The committee approved the proposal to set up a working group to consider the plans and proposals from the consultants to support the necessary decisions in order to progress the project. All members of the committee expressed an interest in being part of the reference group

Action: the Town Clerk to organise a meeting and invite councillors and the consultants.

27 Westacott Park Asset Transfer update

At the time of the meeting no response has been received from North Devon Council.

28 Cost of removing Illegal Encampment on Rock Park

To note the cost of the eviction of the illegal encampment at Rock Park In June 2022 was approximately £879.

29 Title Deeds

The committee noted that several Barnstaple Town Council properties do not have title deeds, or if they do their whereabouts are not currently known.

It was approved:

- that officers work with the Town Council solicitors, North Devon Council and the North Devon Record Office to ascertain whether some of the deeds do exist but have been misplaced.
- Where necessary title deeds are produced and registered for all Town Council properties.

30 Matters to be taken in the absence of press and public, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, as the item contains exempt information as defined by Standing Order 81(c, d and f).

Approved (NC)

31 Saltmarsh land purchase proposal

The committee elected to decline the offer to purchase saltmarsh land at Anchorwood for the offer price of £40,000 (NC)

32 Castle Centre Tenancies

The committee approved the request from Munro News to end their tenancy of room F in the Castle Centre six months early (NC)

33 Fairacre public open space adoption

The committee approved the proposal to enter into negotiations with Persimmon Homes to consider the adoption of public open space land on Fairacre Avenue. (NC)

Meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Chairman.

Signed:

Dated: