

**Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
held on Monday 21 February 2022 at 6.30pm**

Present: Cllr Bowden, Cllr Murphy (Chair) and Cllr Westcott

In attendance: Sarah Reed, Town Clerk, Kris Scotting (Seed of Hope), Kate Radford member of the Watchet group, Linda Bulpin (Chair of Governors, Knights Templar School)

22/170C To receive Apologies for Absence (LGA 1972, section 85 (1): Cllr Murphy proposed that the '*apologies from Cllrs Campbell, Corlett-Shaw, Irvén and Whetlor are approved*'. Seconded by Cllr Bowden. Carried.

22/171C To receive Declarations of Interest:

Name	Minute No:	Description of Interest	Personal / Prejudicial	Action Taken
Cllr Murphy	22/173C (i)	Spouse is an associate Governor in a non – voting role	Personal	Councillor participated in the discussion and voting

22/172C Presentation for a Financial Grant:

(i) Seed of Hope – *paperwork circulated prior to the meeting via **Appendix 1.1***

Kris Scotting gave a background of the Seed of Hope CIC and how it is a social enterprise helping people with mental health problems to change their lives through Recovery based Social and Therapeutic Horticulture. There are three groups held in Bridgwater, Watchet and Glastonbury, as well as a volunteer community gardening team. Seed of Hope reinvests money they make through selling goods and providing services straight back into the business and local community. This allows them to tackle social problems, improve life chances, support communities, and help the environment. The funding amount requested of £4,000 will help support the core costs of running the Watchet group.

There then followed a question-and-answer session on how many members from Watchet benefit and what the Watchet community garden project entails.

Cllr Murphy thanked Kris Scotting for his presentation and informed him that in accordance with the Councils financial policy for awarding grants, a decision would be made by the Committee at the next meeting.

Kris Scotting and Kate Radford left the meeting at 6.39pm

22/173C Presentation for a Financial Grant from the COVID Reserve:

(i) Knight Templar School – ***decision required in line with the Councils financial policy for awarding a COVID grant** – paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting via **Appendix 1.2***

Linda Bulpin, Chair of Governors gave a background on the inception of the swimming pool 35 years ago, and how it has provided and continues to provide vital swimming facilities to Watchet families, school children swimming, baby and toddler groups, private groups, disabled swimmers and aquafit. A breakdown of costs to maintain the pool were then listed and how essential maintenance to the heat exchanger had to be carried out or the pool would have had to close. During COVID the pool was closed and there was no income, and even though it was not permitted for use, it had to remain in a low gear operational mode as it could not remain dormant, and this has left a £ 3,400 deficit. To re-open this facility in full working order for the community after COVID restrictions were lifted has also left the school with an expected £5,000 repair bill. Any financial help the Council can give to allow the pool to be re-opened safely after COVID would be very much appreciated.

There then followed a question-and-answer session.

SB

The Clerk informed members of the balance of the COVID reserve which had to be spent before the year end on 31 March 2022.

A brief discussion ensued whereby Cllr Westcott proposed that **'£2,500 from the COVID reserve is awarded to Knights Templar School to enable the swimming pool to re-open to full capacity after COVID restrictions are lifted'**. Seconded by Cllr Bowden. Carried.

Linda Bulpin thanked the Council for their ongoing support and left the meeting at 6.47pm.

22/174C Financial Matters:

- (i) **Once per quarter, the Chair of the Committee shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations for all accounts produced by the RFO, the contents to be noted by this Committee, as per regulation 2.2 – Noted**
- (ii) **All payments above £500.00 and below £5000.00 are itemised and reported to this Committee, as per regulation 4.1 - Noted and signed off by the Chair of the Committee**
- (iii) **All payments issued for payment outside of Full Council Meetings, shall be reported to this Committee, as per regulation 6.6 – Noted and signed off by the Chair of the Committee**

22/175C Cemetery Matters:

- (i) Garden of Remembrance – to plant a foxglove tree to replace the dead yew tree as the centre piece and install a plaque – *report from the Cemetery Administrator circulated to members via Appendix 2-*

Cllr Murphy proposed that the **'following recommendation is approved – delegation is given to the Clerk to arrange for one foxglove tree to be purchased at a cost of £35 to replace the commemorative yew tree in the Garden of Remembrance, and approval is given to a replacement plaque wording agreed, to be purchased at a cost of up to £50 from the Tourism & Leisure Platinum Jubilee budget'**. Seconded by Cllr Westcott. Carried.

22/176C Exclusion of Press and Public

"That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded, and they are instructed to withdraw" (Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

Cllr Murphy proposed that **'in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted that Standing Order 1c is invoked and the public are instructed to withdraw from the meeting'**. Seconded by Cllr Bowden. Carried

See Excluded Notes **22/50EX**

22/177C Staffing:

- (i) To review staffing salary increases in accordance with the approved allocated budget for 2022-23 – *Clerks report circulated prior to the meeting* – Members agreed to award the staff salary increases in accordance with the 2022-23 budget effective from 1 April 2022.

Cllr Murphy proposed the **'re-admittance of the public to the meeting'**. Seconded by acclaim. Carried.

22/178C Matters for the next meeting:

- (i) Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 7.02pm

Signed: 

Dated: 15/3/22