

**Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee
held on Monday 21 November 2022 at 6.30pm**

Present: Cllr Ellwood, Cllr Irven, Cllr Murphy, (Chair)

In attendance: Sarah Reed, Town Clerk, Bob Hornby (Carnival Committee)

22/39C To Receive Apologies for Absence: (LGA 1972, section 85 (1))

As Chair Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'the apologies given by Councillors Campbell, Ward, Westcott and Whetlor are accepted'***. Seconded by Cllr Ellwood. Carried.

22/40C To receive any Declaration of Interests under Watchet Town Council's Code of Conduct (adopted on 9 July 2012) issued in accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 SI No: 1464 – **None at this point.**

22/41C To confirm and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2022- *circulated to members prior meeting via Appendix 1-* (LGA 1972, Sch 12 Para 41) - Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2022 are approved as a true and accurate record'***. Seconded by Cllr Ellwood. Carried.

22/42C Presentation for a Financial grant:

- (i) Carnival Committee – 2023 Carnival Parade – *paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting.* Watchet Live CIC, Carnival Parade- relevant paperwork including accounts were circulated to members at the meeting. Bob Hornby informed members that due to the Liddymore Farm development they have had to change the format of the parade to remain mainly within the town. In the past, there was a meeting of the children at Knights Templar School, but as the road is the main access road to the new development, there would be issues with Highways with regard to closing the road. The committee has had to look at the scenario presented to them and change accordingly. The parade is to start at midday on the Saturday 29 July with entertainment and lots of children's activities and the fete will be held on the Sunday 30 July. As the pub floats and large lorry floats have been lost, they have been canvassing businesses to get involved to make their premises a float to contribute to the carnival atmosphere and encourage their customers to dress in fancy dress. There then followed a question-and-answer session.

The presentation was concluded with a grant request of £3,500

Cllr Murphy thanked Bob Hornby 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.

Bob Hornby left the meeting at 6.46pm

22/43C Application for a grant:

- (i) WACET – to support 'Late Night Extravangaza' – *paperwork circulated to members prior to the meeting* – Cllr Murphy referred to his report presented at Full Council about the questions he had asked of the WACET Chair for clarity in the accounts. This led members to agree that to consider the application submitted by the WACET Committee for a grant of £100, and recognising that the accounts are unaudited, answers to the questions which had not been forthcoming were paramount in enabling them to make an informed decision when spending public money. A brief discussion ensued, whereby members agreed that whilst they were in full support of the event and the efforts by the traders, lack of transparency in the WACET accounts breached the Councils financial policy and procedures when awarding financial grants. Cllr Murphy proposed that ***'whilst members support the application in principle, and fully support the event and appreciate the efforts of all involved, due to the lack of transparency in the submitted accounts, and despite several attempts to seek clarity on their composition, members were of the opinion that the financials submitted did not meet the policy criteria for allocating public money and awarding grants, and regret that on this occasion the grant request will not be approved'***. Seconded by Cllr Ellwood. Carried.



22/44C 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
- (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
- (iv) **Precept 2023-24** – to consider Committee Budget requirements for 2023-24- the RFO presented year end spend figures and a proposed budget. After a brief discussion, Cllr Murphy proposed 'to recommend to Full Council an increase in the Committee budget for 2023-24 from £17,700 to £24,500 (38.4% increase) to include an increase in insurance and IT Services allocations, with no changes to the other allocations. Provisions should be in place to address all financial eventualities and the budget of £24,500 allows for this as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Corporate Grants | £6,000 |
| Donations | £500 |
| Insurance | £10,500 |
| IT Services (inc software) | £3,000 |
| Training | £500 |
| Citizens Advice WS (SLA) | £4,000 |
| TOTAL | £24,500 |

Seconded by Cllr Ellwood. Carried.

22/45C Update from the Personnel Committee:

- (i) New Admin Support Officers post – Cllr Murphy as Chair of the Personnel Committee reported:
 - 6 applicants were interviewed on Wednesday 19 October and Thursday 20 October 2022.
 - Personnel Committee met on Monday 24 October 2022 to discuss applicants. The applicants were of a very high calibre, and this was not an easy decision. The Committee agreed unanimously to appoint Ami Bowsher who starts on Monday 28 November 2022 and is subject to a 3 month probationary period.

22/46C Staffing Policies – circulated as Appendix 2

After a brief discussion, Cllr Murphy proposed the following:

1. Staff Handbook – **Approved**
2. Health & Safety Policy - **Approved with removal of CiLCA comments**
 - a. Training and Development – **Approved with removal of CiLCA comments**
 - b. Family Leave Policy -**Approved with insertion of definition for a father as a sole carer**
3. Grievance and Disciplinary – **Reviewed with no amendments**
4. Flexible Working Policy – **Reviewed with no amendments**
5. Protocol Policy – **Reviewed with no amendments.**

Seconded by Cllr Irven. Carried.

22/47 C Matters for the next meeting – no discussion or decisions made

- Financial application for a grant by the Carnival Committee
- Draft Precept for 2023-24
- Liaise with the Clerk

Meeting closed at 7.10pm

Signed.....

Date.....

PM Murphy

22 Nov '22