

**ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Revenue & Resources Committee held on Thursday 15th June 2017 at 7.45pm in Manor House, Lime Kiln, Royal Wootton Bassett.

PRESENT: Councillors: Robert Anstee, Steve Bucknell, Mike Farrow, Nic Hughes, Mike Leighfield, Jenny Stratton, Marion Sweet and Steve Walls.

Also in attendance: Councillor Janet Georgiou

Officers in Attendance: Johnathan Bourne, Town Clerk, Michelle Temple, Administrative Services Manager, Emily Maiden, Committee Clerk and Administrative Assistant.

**4. APOLOGIES**

There were no apologies for absence.

**5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with sections 10 and 12 of Wiltshire Council's Members Code of Conduct, as adopted by Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council at a meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

RESOLVED to note that no Declarations of Interest were made.

**6. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED to confirm and sign minutes of meetings of the Committees held on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2017 [R&R/6/2016-2017] and Thursday 25th May 2017 [R&R/1/2017-2018]. Copies previously circulated.

## **7. GRANT AID**

Grant Aid application was withdrawn at the request of the applicant.

## **8. FLY THE RED ENSIGN FLAG OF THE BRITISH MERCHANT NAVY**

The Council received a letter from Seafarers UK inviting the Council to fly the Red Ensign flag of the British Merchant Navy for Merchant Navy Day which is Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017.

The cost of purchasing the flag is £45.71. A guide on how to take part was previously circulated.

RESOLVED to purchase the Red Ensign flag at a cost of £45.71, and fly the flag to take part in Merchant Navy Day on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017.

## **9. HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENTS**

Following the Council's decision to abolish all working parties, highways improvement issues are to be considered by the Revenue and Resources committee.

A request has been received from the Area Board seeking to open a dialogue to streamline the system for assessing Highway improvements.

Currently requests for highways improvements sent to Wiltshire Council as the Highway authority, are immediately referred to the relevant Parish or Town Council, who are asked to consider whether they support the request and if so to pledge funding towards those works.

The request is then forwarded to the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) who in conjunction with Highway Engineers and Parish and Town Council representatives, will prioritise the schemes against the funding available.

The Committee was asked to consider opening a dialogue with the Area Board to explore ways of improving the system.

Supplementary to this, under the previous working party system, a number of requests were considered and these were detailed in attached papers from the working party dated 29<sup>th</sup> March 2017. All of these items were deferred at committee level as the then chairman; Councillor Mike Farrow had been unable to attend to that meeting to answer member's questions. Working party paper previously circulated.

Since this time four further applications have been received, copies also appended to the agenda, covering Area Board issues 5164, 5269, 5270 and 5271.

It was suggested that all requests first be passed to the unitary member for consideration. The unitary member would be able to visit the resident concerned, and evaluate the request. Should the unitary member feel that highway improvements are required, they could submit a funding request to the Town Council detailing the proposed scheme and the reasons why. The Town Council could then discuss the matter in relation to its highway improvements budget.

RESOLVED to contact the Area Board to outline the proposed new procedure for dealing with highway improvement requests, whereby the unitary member investigates and evaluates any requests prior to bringing them to the attention of the Town Council as a funding request.

## **10. COMMUNITY HUB UPDATE**

Natasha Gumbrell, Senior Transformation Delivery Manager, attended a number of meetings during the week of the Revenue and Resources Committee meeting, following which she agreed to draft an update report for town council member's information.

Recent discussions have revolved around the costs assigned with option 2 and 3 on the circulated plan. Early indications suggest that option 3 which is favoured by the Town Council will cost £30,000 more to provide in view of the significant increase in glazed partitions, a much longer operable wall

(folding pane) requiring significant reinforcement in the ceiling, increased ventilation and lighting. Discussion on this matter is still ongoing as the additional glazing requirements are queried, as is the need for a folding partition wall.

The second area of discussion concerns branding and previously circulated was the Wiltshire Council suggestion of “Boroughfields Community Hub and Library”, together with other suggestions they have made.

This suggestion was opposed by the Council’s representatives on the basis it needs to reference either “Royal Wootton Bassett” or perhaps just “Bassett” and should clearly acknowledge the partnership contribution of the Town Council.

Wiltshire Council were approached to send a representative to the meeting in order to answer members’ questions, however no one was available to attend.

Councillors Mike Leighfield and Marion Sweet updated the Committee on the current situation with regards to the Community Hub. The initial agreement between Wiltshire Council and the Town Council, agreed by Wiltshire Council’s Cabinet in January 2017, was for the Town Council to contribute £140,000 towards the £450,000 total cost for the upgrade of the Library. This would allow the Town Council to have a 30-year lease on the building, and use of a large committee room for Council meetings.

Wiltshire Council appear to have unilaterally amended the agreement, reducing the overall cost of the project to £280,000, of which both parties will be expected to contribute £140,000. The revision specifies that the larger meeting room would not now be available without the addition of extra funding of £30,000 due to budget constraints. This represents a significant change from the Cabinet approval, which has been made without consultation with the Town Council.

RESOLVED to: -

- Respond to Wiltshire Council in relation to the branding, and advise that the use of the word ‘Boroughfields’ would not be appropriate as this references the shopping centre, which is privately owned, and

would therefore not be suitable for the Community Hub. Any branding should therefore reference Royal Wootton Bassett or Bassett, and clearly acknowledge the partnership funding of the Town Council.

- Invite the Wiltshire Council Cabinet Member and Laurie Bell, Associate Director of Communities and Communications at Wiltshire Council to the next Full Council meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2017 in order to establish why the original agreement has been changed unilaterally. The Town Council is happy to honour its side of the initial agreement, and would therefore expect Wiltshire Council to do the same. The new agreement does not reflect the ambitions of the Town Council and would therefore not be something that the Council could take forward.

## **11. MERCHANT HOUSE UPDATE**

Report from Aricab Architects detailing progress in respect of maintenance works required at Merchant House, 34 High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett. Copy previously circulated.

RESOLVED to note and confirm the report.

## **12. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee was asked whether it wished to issue any press releases or other communications in respect of the committee agenda items.

RESOLVED to issue a press release regarding flying the flag for Merchant Navy Day on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2017.

*The meeting closed at 8.20pm*