**HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE**

**The Committee Room, City Council Offices, Town Hall Hereford**

**Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 6.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs Bushkes, Hey, Lloyd-Hayes, Nicholls, Rone, Stevens (Chair) and Tawn.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Steve Kerry – Town Clerk, Lesley Robinson – Administration, Finance & Information Officer.

**FP2017/18.36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Boulter, Dykes, Edwards and Wilcox.

**FP2017/18.37 APPPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTES**

Cllr Bushkes was substituting for Cllr Boulter, Cllr Hey was substituting for Cllr Dykes.

**FP2017/18.38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

 There were none.

**F2017/18.39 MINUTES**

Members noted one amendment to be made, under item FP2017/2018.25, where Cllr Lloyd-Hayes was incorrectly shown as Vice Chairman. Cllr Nicholls proposed, seconded by Cllr Tawn and

**RESOLVED That the** **Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 18th July 2017**, be accepted as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**F2017/18.40 SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

Members received a schedule of items paid since the last meeting of the Committee which went up to the end of July and the Chairman asked members for any questions:

Members’ questions were as follows:

Cllr Tawn queried two payments - Cheque no 000896 (£624.00 - Paul’s Doors) and the Town Clerk replied that this related to the replacement of the garage door.

Cheque Ref RS-JUL (£189.50 – Arc Car Wash) – Cllr Tawn asked why this car wash payment was so expensive and the Town Clerk responded that this was for a full valet for the Mayor’s car but he would double-check.

Cllr Lloyd-Hayes referred to cheque no 000898 (£2,765.58 – Balfour Beatty Living Places) for installation of four litter bins and felt that the entry should state which wards the bins are for. The Town Clerk explained that the financial system currently doesn’t generate that information but he would look into the possibility of getting that type of information included and how much more general information we could get out of the financial system.

Members noted the schedule.

**F2017/18.41 BANK RECONCILIATION**

Members received reconciliations for each account held by the Council for July 2017 and were asked for any questions on it.

Cllr Tawn queried unpresented cheque no 000805 (£179.40 – The Bunch of Carrots). The Town Clerk believed this was for a Mayoral lunch with the Polish visitors but he would double-check this with the Finance Officer.

Cllr Stevens queried unpresented cheque no 000898 (£2,765.58 – Balfour Beatty Living Places - four litter bins). The Town Clerk replied that the Finance Officer had informed him that two Councillors had not approved this cheque as they felt that the cost, at £690 per bin, was too expensive and the cheque therefore had not been signed or sent. Cllr Wilcox suggested to the Town Clerk to obtain a separate quote for purchasing ten litter bins.

There were no further questions and members noted the schedule.

**F2017/18.42 KEY PROJECTS - UPDATE**

As requested from the last meeting, members received the Service Level Agreement and Business Plan from Rural Concierge to operate a Tourist Information Centre in the Butter Market.

The Town Clerk gave a brief update and explained that both he and the Deputy Town Clerk had gone through and were happy with these documents, Rural Concierge had also made a couple of additions to the SLA and the officers were happy to recommend that this project starts. He added that new signs would soon be appearing to direct visitors to Rural Concierge at the Butter Market. Cllr Lloyd-Hayes commented that City Council was fortunate to have Liz Hall running the service who was very professional.

Town Hall Building - The Town Clerk gave members a brief oral update of progress with the possible asset transfer of the Town Hall building to City Council. He had recently spoken to Bill Jackson, who had recommended that Council do not take on the buildings on either side of Town Hall which are very inaccessible and not DDA compliant (Disability Discrimination Act). Regarding a structural survey, Bill Jackson had recommended Architects, Hook Mason whose representatives had recently been to look around the Town Hall and would be getting back to us with their findings. The Town Clerk emphasised that existing repairs to the front of the building must be completed and signed off before Hereford City Council would take on the building. Herefordshire Council would complete the front canopy works and possibly the boiler replacement. Very thorough survey data would be required looking at drains, foundations, roof etc. As advised by Herefordshire Council’s Property Services, the issue with the archway to the side of the building was purely cosmetic. The Property Services contact person is Giancarlo Pagnuzzi. The building is now known to have structural steel decay and if Herefordshire Council can get funding for repairs, this would be approximately six month’s work. Money from Heritage Lottery is part of the funding. The contact for that aspect was thought to be Dave Tristram. There was another possible issue with replacement of the garage door due to the presence of asbestos ceiling tiles in the garage.

In summary, the Town Clerk clarified that City Council would exclude the buildings next door on either side of the Town Hall to focus on the central building and would also put in a bid for the car park and revenues to be included.

**F2017/18.43 KEY PROJECTS – NEW PROPOSAL**

Members received a brief overview of the Town Clerk’s report concerning potential projects relating to the City Walls and other heritage assets.

City Walls – The Town Clerk explained that a comprehensive report was commissioned by Herefordshire Council in September in 2011 and possible areas of activity for City Council would be working with several partners to deal with the more obvious problems, including weed control etc, which would need careful management by the appropriate contractors to make the walls more visible. The City Council could also consider developing a city walls perimeter walk with provision of a paper map and digital guide via a mobile phone App, however, we recognise that working on the city walls is a key project which would involve lots of partnership working and a need for more detailed proposals.

Duck pond at Cantilupe Street – The Town Clerk stated that there had been several recent press releases and involvement by the former Mayor on this and if there is to be a big community clean-up of the duck pond, the Council should use that opportunity to get the Roadshow vehicle in attendance and provide a good supportive presence by Hereford City Council.

Members were invited to make comments and ask any questions, which covered:

* Lots on social media over the summer on both these projects and Hereford Civic Society organised a talk by Derek Foxton at Asda Kindle Centre.
* Organised work at Holmer War Memorial – Garth Lawson who writes for Hereford Times may also write up a heritage trail walk to be available via Rural Concierge.

City Walls

* Cllr Lloyd-Hayes did a tour of city with 12 Liveried men visitors to Hereford -All visitors picked up on the city walls, recognised one part and looked for the embedded cannon ball.
* Very good project to develop a perimeter walk around city walls.
* A member pointed out they had past involvement with walls when first became ward Councillor – Ideal opportunity but was met with ‘brick wall response’ and many obstacles at time – Emphasised extremely difficult project to progress and not to expect it to be short term.
* Different people involved this time – Councillors may have some success and were wished luck with project going forwards.
* Idea to develop one section at a time – Suggested section near Tesco and light up the bastion.
* Supportive of city walls project – Agrees huge task - Developing as tourist asset is great idea and good to phase it in sections.
* Benefits - Good educational aspects and living history element - Own children had been on a school visit.

Duck Pond

* Pleased about community effort – pity had to come via Facebook.
* A working pump may make some difference – Main problem is people feeding bread to ducks – clogs water, encourages algae growth and kills fish.
* Suggested a poster be sited to inform people what to feed the ducks, i.e. seeds, etc.
* Local pet shop had agreed to sponsor a sign - and some suggestion of ‘seed dispensing stations’ to be installed.
* Pond covered in algae for very long time – City Council should consider replacing pump which is no longer operational.
* More pressure needed on those bodies who are responsible for looking after pond.
* Overall cuts and smaller budgets are bane of people’s lives - People’s expectations way too high.
* Unless there’s a safety risk, unlikely work would get done in next five to ten years – Herefordshire Council would have to stop other projects – this would be unlikely.
* Community volunteers are the best way forward - Only way things will happen is by local people taking the initiative.

Following discussion, the Chairman moved on to the recommendations. The Town Clerk suggested a modification be made to recommendation 5.4, to say that City Council agrees to support a community clean-up of the Duck Pond, better signage and to do further investigation into the pump. All members agreed and it was unanimously

**RESOLVED**

**5.1 - That the Chairman of the Committee and the Clerk be authorised to continue to explore options for effective intervention by the City Council to enhance the appearance and accessibility of the City Walls and to enhance the information publicly available about their importance in the city’s history.**

**5.2 - That the Chairman and Clerk be authorised to explore further the possibility of restoring the Duck Pond to a pleasant and safe condition including the option of restoring or replacing the pump to bring a flow of fresh water through the pond.**

**5.3 - That the preservation, restoration and publicising of the City Walls be recognised as a key project.**

**5.4 - That City Council agrees to support a community clean-up of the Duck Pond, with better signage and authorises the Clerk to make further investigation into the pump.**

**5.5 - That further and more detailed proposals are brought to this Committee when they are ready.**

**F2017/18.44 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 17th October 2017 at 6 pm

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 6.45pm.

Signed ……………………………………………………………………

Date ………………………………………………………………………