



**POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held remotely on Wednesday, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 commencing at 7pm.

Present

Chair – Councillor C Jones.

Councillors A Bassett, D Chopping, J Clark, J Eastwell, D Hare, R Houlbrooke, T Maher, S Matthews, and A Mickleburgh.

In attendance: J Friend (Town Clerk), E Carroll (Deputy Town Clerk), R Fryer (Democratic Services Officer), J Friend (Senior Operations Support Officer) and P Jorgensen (WBC Councillor).

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The first twenty minutes of the meeting were set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council. There were no questions posed.

*Councillor R Houlbrooke entered the meeting*

**21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies were received.

**22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**23. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were confirmed a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**24. COVID-19 - GENERAL**

24.1 Help Shop

Members thanked the Town Clerk for the comprehensive risk assessment produced in preparation for the reopening of the Help Shop to visitors in person. It was noted that this was a live document and it was a fast-moving environment. The Town Clerk confirmed that Councillors would be notified of substantive changes to the document and that a copy had been displayed on the staff notice board. Councillors were pleased to note that the WBC Courier Service was resuming.

**25. COVID-19 – FINANCIAL IMPACT**

25.1 Financial Impact Letter

Councillors noted that the Town Clerk had written to Councillor John Kaiser at WBC on 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2020 regarding the financial impact of the pandemic on the Town Council. They expressed disappointment with the response received from Councillor Kaiser, which



confirmed that WBC would not be passing on the parish and town council's element of the government grant unless a parish or town council was in danger of bankruptcy. Members discussed the disconnect between the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government's position and that of most Tier 1 Councils. The Chair noted that this issue was likely to be re-visited regularly over the next 6-9 months.

25.2 SLCC Letter to Robert Jenrick MP

Members considered the SLCC's proposal of measures intended to assist parish and town councils deal with the financial impact of the pandemic. The Town Clerk noted that whilst some of the issues raised did not currently affect Earley Town Council, the full impact of Covid-19 was not yet known. Councillors were minded to join with their fellow town and parish councils in presenting a united case. Councillors discussed the SLCC's suggestion to send a letter to local MP's and it was

**RESOLVED** that letters would be sent to Rt Hon Sir John Redwood MP (Wokingham), Matt Rodda MP (Reading East) and Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP (Reading West) as Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

26. **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Town Clerk reported on the updated Financial Regulations which are based on the NALC Model Financial Regulations. Councillors noted that the Town Council's Financial Regulations were last reviewed in May 2015. The Town Clerk clarified matters around the role of the internal auditor and the process for the appointment of the external auditor. Members noted that the updated Regulations refer to an investment strategy and policy and they were keen that these be developed as well as a risk register compiled. It was

**RESOLVED** to submit the updated Financial Regulations to Full Council for approval and adoption at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

27. **FINANCE - GENERAL**

27.1 Internal Audit

Councillors were pleased to note that that internal audit had been completed and that the final report would be submitted to Full Council at its meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020 as part of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return approval process.

27.2 Annual Accounts

Members considered the draft 2019/20 Annual Accounts and expressed their thanks to the Senior Operations Support Officer for her efforts in producing such a clear set of figures whilst also overseeing the implementation of the new finance system. Councillors were pleased to note that the Council was paying its bills in a timely manner and that there was confidence the level of bad debt owed to the Council was low. A question was asked about the Community Infrastructure Levy funds and the Town Clerk confirmed that a CIL report was produced for Council and updated as new CIL funding was received. Members paid particular attention to the earmarked reserves and were keen to revisit them as a future agenda item to ensure complete clarity on the issue.



**28. ORDERS FOR PAYMENT**

The Committee received details of Orders for Payment since the last meeting of the Town Council (Vouchers 3212-3238) and Imprest Account (Vouchers 499-504)

**29. PUBLICATIONS**

No publications had been received.

**30. PRESS RELEASES**

No press releases were requested.

**31. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

It was **RESOLVED** that the remaining items on the Agenda be taken under Part II.

*Councillor P Jorgensen left the meeting.*

**PART II**

**32. CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**33. RADSTOCK SOCIAL CLUB**

**34. CENTREPOINT HIRER – AFTER SCHOOL CLUB**

**35. FORMER TOWN CLERK**

**36. STAFF MATTERS**

**37. TERMINATION OF MEETING**

The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8.44 pm.

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Chair, Policy & Resources Committee