Minutes of meeting of the Members of Stanley Town Council Finance & General Purposes Committee

**Tuesday 12th April 2022 - 6.30pm**

**Attendees**

G Binney (Chair) A Hanson (Vice Chair) H Clark L Ferry

J Nicholson S McMahon D Tully O Milburn ∞

A Clegg ∞

∞Ex-officio

Cllr Binney welcomed everyone to the meeting and confirmed the meeting is being recorded and will be downloaded to YouTube for a period of at least 6 months

**1** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Cllr J McMahon and Cllr A. Jones.

Absent: Cllr J Kane

**2** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** 

Declaration from Cllr Nicholson being the Vice Chair of Police and Crime

**3** **PROCEDURAL AND APPROPRIATE ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIR**

None

**4** **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** 

None

**5** **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 8th March 2022 – **APPROVED** as correct - confirmed by Cllr Clegg and seconded by Cllr S McMahon.

**6** **ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT & BANK RECONCILIATION** 

No comments from Committee in relation to the February 2022 Schedule of Payments, Schedule of Receipts, Bank Reconciliation and Bank Balances:

**APPROVED** and **NOTED** by Cllr A Hanson, seconded by Cllr A Clegg

**7        COUNCIL TAX QUERY**

Question raised by Cllr Tulley re increase in the precept on council tax bill. Increase in precept of 2.5%. Ann Barry commented >>>>>>>>

**8         CIVIC HALL UPDATE**

Update from Town Clerk, there is still no heating in the building, there are lots of conversations occurring behind the scenes, Town Clerk has met with Cllr J Nicholson and is also waiting for feedback. Surveyor has been out and has provided us with a quote for 1 industrial boiler – 1 boiler which will be fitted into any other system, quote sent to DCC for their approval. Done last week and chased this week.

The Louisa centre has recently had some work done on their roof, and they had scaffolding outside. We came in on Monday to find a broken window. Windows have been boarded and secured and we are now waiting for glass to replaced.

Town Clark has spoken to The Louisa Centre about the scaffolding. Works had finished some time ago. One of the scaffolding knuckles had come in through the ceiling. Ceiling has been fixed, DCC came out and found further scaffolding posts and joints on the roof, they have also found lead around the windows. Part of roof has been fixed and has now dried out. Scaffolding incident has been reported to the police – there is no CCTV available so nothing police can do. The alarm did not go off, so will need to be looked at for that area of the building.

Scaffolding has been removed today, so hopefully will stop further damage.

We need to keep the building safe and secure. Items which need to be done, discussion with Ann Barry and Helen. Previous Town Clerk had set aside budget for works which have not yet gone ahead. Very little of that budget has been used.

STC have an amount of £59,500 which was allocated but which has not been spent – suggestion to use this element of budget as a contingency for works, this would enable us to have the heating fixed with some of 2022 budget allowance. This would enable us to pay for roof repair, window, heating – general emergency repairs. This is about keeping building running.

Cllr A Clegg asked about claiming off the insurance. Unlikely as they were able to access an unsecured site. Or is there an option to submit a third party claim towards cost.

Cllr A Clegg asked about the radiators. No boiler in place at moment. Town Clerk confirmed that the building needs a boiler first – meet as full council to discuss the future of the building.

Cllr Milburn – releasing that amount which has been sourced is a good solution. Agreed it has to be done.

Cllr J Nicholson says the reason the building is as it is because there has been no maintenance done, we would be using allocated monies which should have been spent. Cllr S McMahon agreed with Cllr J Nicholson,

General agreement from all – earmarked these funds as a reserve for the building.

All agreed to put to full council

**9         POLICE VANS**

Town Clerk advised that the police vans which are supported by STC 3 years ago, there appears to be nothing in the paperwork to say that the vans would be returned to us at the end of the 3 year term. Nor is there anything in the paperwork to say there would be a cost of £5K per van after the term ended. There was no budget put aside to cover this. Town Clerk suggested that perhaps the police have one van and the other stays with STC.

Noting that 1 van is due to go out of commission in June - £5K but not covered for maintenance repairs. 1 van now out of action

Question from Cllr Milburn and Cllr D Tulley - Can we afford the vans – Town Clerk has confirmed there is no budget for this.

Cllr S McMahon says it would be nice to keep the vans but not sure if £5K is something we can currently afford. Suggests letting them go.

Question from Cllr H Clark - how does not having vans affect our warden service. Town Clerk suggests asking the police if they would sell STC one of the vans. It was also noted that one of the wardens hires a van directly from DCC.

Question from Cllr D Tully – is there any funding available that we can tap into to fund the vans. Seems wrong to just do nothing. Cllr G Binney unaware of any funding.

Cllr J Nicholson says the police are still running one of the police cars which we bought into some 8-9 years ago. Joan declared interest. The idea of having a car was because it was a greener option than driving around in a van.

Town Clerk feels that STC have been held over a barrel by the police over the vans. STC stance of we can’t afford the vans. Town Clerk has offered to speak to the fleet depot to seek options directly – explain situation. STC have other things which are a priority and supporting the vans are not the highest priority. All agreed.

Look at whether there are any grants available? All agreed

Possible point of argument to fight for the vans - Without the availability of the vans, we would not be able to focus on anti-social behaviour incidents

**10       STANLEY COMMUNITY FUND REPORT AND FUNDING PROPOSAL**

To **RECEIVE** **AND CONSIDER** the report and funding proposal, from County Durham Community Foundation

Cllr H Clark sits on the fund. Proportioning the spend is being done by County Council division not Stanley Ward – can they split the fund, coming out as 4 divisions and not 7 wards. For transparency can this be shown as a split.

Discussion over the funding of £50K and paying someone £7.5K to look after the fund. Considered not a good idea, should we bring that money back in to spend CDCF funding

Cllr S McMahon likes the fund and thinks it is good for Stanley – would like to see fund continue for a 12 month period rather than a 3 year period. This has been budgeted for so fund it for a 12 month period whilst we look at exactly what the fund is being spent on.

Could a representative of CDCF come to full council meeting to answer questions?

Cllr J Nicholson is not happy – how to CDCF contact groups, previous applicants – invite to meeting.

A Barry, STC Finance asks if it would be worth considering a reduction in the funding, amount, still fund but with a lesser contribution. Cllr J Nicholson would be happy for each counsellor to have a funding pot of £1K each for their Ward and the rest go back into CDCF.

STC are not a funder. £150K brought in over 3 years, Cllr S McMahon says the fund has done it job.

Cllr H Clark has been to several meetings. They are saying we have had £300K – some of the money which would have been made available anyway. Now we know that CDCF exists, the Stanley funds – the costs to administer the Stanley fund are significant.

Fund now supported by STC and AAP. Why should the people of Stanley not get some of money from Durham?

Better publicity so we can reach the wider area to ensure funds are distributed more fairly,

Consideration needs to be given to fund opportunities for the smaller community groups.

Majority consensus is to bring in CDCF to a full council meeting to ask why smaller groups are not being made aware of what is available

Cllr J Nicholson would like to fund everyone; however, we can’t even fund ourselves. £50K may be a contribution to STC heating. This was Town Clerk’s contingency. Cllr Milburn in agreement that we keep the money inhouse if we can. £1K may not be much to the county; but may mean the world to a smaller group.

Cllr S McMahon would like to see the fund continue, happy for someone to come in and answer questions. Feels we should continue to fund for the next year and review after 12 months,

Dave Tulley, small grants fund

Proposed to continue for 12 month, bring in to full council to discuss, all agreed

**11       EVENTS 2022**

The Events Group was a very small gathering on 23rd March made up of Town Clerk, Cllr L Ferry and Scott Hilary. Went through budgets for Jubilee Play in Parks, Miners Sunday, to check budgets set aside was going to be enough. Agreed that the budget set aside will be more than enough.

Miners Sunday moved to another day – suggested 24th August to hope that attendance may be better,

The Pantomime is all sorted. Reece the producer is doing their own advertising this year. But we will jump on back of this to support.

No further comments.

**12** **DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING** 

 Tuesday 10th May 2022, 6.30pm, Stanley Civic Hall.

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