

**MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON
MONDAY 13 JUNE 2022 at 7:00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Roden (Chairman), Biscoe, Mrs Carlyon, Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons (Vice-Chairman), Nolan, Rich, Smith, Mrs Stokes, Mrs Swain (Deputy Mayor), Webb (Mayor) and Wells

Also, in attendance: Roger Gazzard, Town Clerk/Responsible Financial Officer

APOLOGIES: Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Unwin and Mrs Joanne Trevelyan, Financial Officer

54 DISCLOSURE OR DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Grant Application – Truro-Morlaix Twinning Association (minute 57, page 23, 13.06.2022)

Councillor Biscoe declared an interest in the above item as a Member of the Association, who was named in the application and had provided specific advice regarding funding.

Truro Youth Council (minute 59, page 26, 13.06.2022)

Councillor Wells declared an interest in the above item as Trustee and Director of Young People Cornwall.

Zeb's Quarterly Report (minute 61, page 27, 13.06.2022)

Councillor Wells declared an interest in the above item as Trustee and Director of Young People Cornwall.

Community Facilities (minute 64, page 28, 13.06.2022)

Councillor Wells declared an interest in the above item as Trustee and Director of Young People Cornwall.

55 OPEN SESSION FOR THE ELECTORS OF TRURO

There were no electors of Truro present.

56 MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 11 April 2022, having been before Council 25 April 2022, were noted as a correct record.

57 GRANTS

As he had declared an interest in the following item, Councillor Biscoe left the meeting at 7.03pm.

(i) Grant Applications

Councillor Roden (Chairman) informed Members there had been two applications received this month:

Truro-Morlaix Twinning Association

After general discussion Members agreed they were happy to support the above application.

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon, and

RECOMMENDED that the sum of £1,000 be granted to the Truro-Morlaix Twinning Association.

As he had declared an interest on the above item, Councillor Biscoe did not take part in the discussion or vote on the above recommendation.

Councillor Biscoe re-joined the meeting at 7.11pm.

Cornwall Diversity Food Festival

Many Members commented that they had attended this event in the past and agreed it had a good turnout of local residents and they wished to support it again.

It was proposed by Councillor Webb, seconded by Councillor Mrs Stokes, and

RECOMMENDED that the sum of £750 be granted to Cornwall Diversity Food Festival.

(ii) Membership of Sub-Committee

The Town Clerk informed Members that the City Council needed to re-instate the Membership of the Grants Sub-Committee as it had not continued during the pandemic resulting in applications being discussed at meetings of the Finance & General Purposes Committee. He explained that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Finance & General Purposes Committee and Chairman of Parks & Amenities Committee sat on the Committee in an ex-officio capacity and three other Members needed to be appointed.

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, seconded by Councillor Webb (Mayor), and

RECOMMENDED that Councillors Mrs Carlyon, Nolan and Smith be appointed as representatives of the Grants Sub-Committee.

58 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2021-22

It was explained by the Town Clerk that the City Council was responsible for ensuring that its business was conducted in accordance with law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The document highlighted the areas of work that needed to be carried out, any concerns raised, and any solutions to concerns.

He advised that legally this document had to be approved as a separate item by the full Council and therefore it would be included in the forthcoming Council agenda.

A Member commented there was no framework for operating Working Groups of the Council, or proposals for the timescale of their work. It was agreed that governance surrounding Working Groups of the Council be added to item 4 of the document.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the City Council's Risk Register was currently being reviewed.

It was proposed by Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Roden (Chairman), and

RECOMMENDED that the attached statement be approved to Council, subject to the inclusion of governance surrounding Working Groups being included in item 4 of the document.

STATUTORY ACCOUNTS 2021-22

The Town Clerk explained that the continuing impact of the COVID pandemic made this a second challenging year in succession for the Council. The financial impact was not

as extreme as in 2020-21, however, some areas of income were adversely affected and for the second year the City Council worked an enhanced process of budgetary control.

The Town Clerk informed Members that he was recommending that the City Council take a £9,299 financial contribution from the Revenue Reserve against a prediction at the revised estimate review in January 2022 of £24,400.00. Under the circumstances he viewed the financial results as excellent and reflected the Council's continuing control over financial matters.

Rising Costs

The Town Clerk explained that the annual rate of inflation was now running at nearly 10% per annum and that rises in fuel and power costs were beginning to feed through into increases in a much wider range of goods and materials the City Council relies upon to complete its work. There was also the April pay award, which had not been settled and was not due to be agreed until Autumn at the earliest which resulted in it being too late to make significant cost reductions. The Town Clerk informed Members the City Council had already commenced reviewing costs in order to compensate for this potential increase and a number of reductions were being put in place.

Covid-19

The Town Clerk explained there had been further income losses from "normal" trading levels due to increased staff absences through sickness and isolation requirements, although the likelihood of further lockdowns had reduced and it was predicted trading income would recover and staff absences reduce.

Library

A Member queried an increase in overall costs for the library. The Town Clerk explained that this was due to staff sickness and the need to employ staff to cover, along with an increase in utility bills and reduction in room hire income due to Covid.

Public Works Loan Board

It was queried by a Member why the loan for the works to the Clock Tower was not being taken out until next year and whether this put the City Council at risk of paying a higher interest rate. The Town Clerk explained the reason for this was that the exact costs of the works needed to be known before the loan was taken out as there was a minimum amount that could be borrowed. Therefore, if the loan that was taken out was not enough to cover the works, he could not put in a request to borrow more if it was below the minimum borrowing amount. This did mean that increase rates may increase or decrease. Cornwall Council had agreed not to press for payment for either the completed roofing works or the forthcoming clocktower works until the final costs were known.

It was proposed by Councillor Roden, seconded by Councillor Biscoe, and

RECOMMENDED that:

1. The Committee approve the Financial Accounts for the year 2021-22, noting the contribution from the Revenue Reserve of £9,299;
2. Approval be given to transfer to earmarked funds. The City Council are required to review the recommended contributions to the earmarked funds which the Council approved at the estimates meeting in January as well as any additional ones;

Therefore, it is proposed the following contributions to the funds are made: -

As agreed in the revised estimates:-

Fund

Amount

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Finance Committee Revenue Fund | £45,400 |
| Finance Committee Buildings Fund | £15,300 |
| Parks Committee Fun | £138,000 |

In addition, in recent years, the Council set up an Allotment Development Fund which is designed to meet costs in connection with the creation of new allotments, both the loan costs of the acquisition of land and the costs of developing the land for allotment use. It is recommended the sum of £2,787 is placed in this account, which was the sum approved as expenditure at revised estimates;

3. One of the contributions made to the Finance Committee Revenue Fund relates to the replacement of the Closed Circuit TV system. Due to a revised quotation for the replacement the contribution can be reduced by £6,200 thereby reducing the overall contribution to the Finance Committee Revenue Fund to £39,200;
4. The sum of £9,299 is transferred from the Revenue Reserve;
5. Annual Return
 - a) To recommend to Council the approval of section 2 of the Annual return relating to the Accounting Statements
 - b) To recommend to Council that the Mayor be authorised to sign the Annual return for submission to the statutory auditor.

59 TRURO YOUTH COUNCIL

As he had declared an interest in the following item, Councillor Wells left the meeting at 7.40pm.

Councillor Smith, who was appointed as the liaison Councillor for the Truro Youth Council (TYC), informed Members that running the communication for the TYC internally had become impossible. Councillor Smith explained that due to safeguarding requirements, communications between the liaison Councillor and the TYC were severely constrained and the workload on the City Council's staff needed to be eased.

Councillor Smith explained that, a way to address the issue and broaden the recruitment demographic, would be to initiate a 'Young People Truro' branch of Young People Cornwall (YPC). The recruitment to TYC would have access to a wider demographic, without involving Councillor liaison time or Truro City Council admin. Training of TYC members could be efficiently delivered through workshops at YPC. He informed Members another advantage of this restructuring would be to build a working relationship between TYC and other youth centred groups in the city.

The commitment from YPC would be for approximately four hours a week in the initial stages, for which financial support would be necessary. The likely cost was approximately £3,000.

After general discussion, Members felt this should be supported and that it was important the work of the TYC continued. A Member suggested that the relationship with the TYC, should not amount to solely Councillor Smith, as should he not be available there is currently no one to take his place.

It was proposed by Mrs Carlyon, seconded by Councillor Biscoe, and

RECOMMENDED that the City Council provide financial support to enable Young People Cornwall to take a strategic and organisation role in the recruitment and maintenance of the Truro Youth Council for a two year period at a cost of £3,000 a year taken from the grants fund.

As he had declared an interest on the above item, Councillor Wells did not take part in the discussion or vote on the above recommendation.

Councillor Wells re-joined the meeting at 7.51pm.

60 TRURO BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BALLOT

The Town Clerk explained that under the Local Government Act 2003, the Business Improvement District (BID) had to conduct a ballot each five years to gain approval from the levy payers to continue for the next five years. Truro BID, in conducting a vote for its fourth term 2022-27, had a deadline for votes of 7th July. To proceed, a majority of business ratepayers had to support the BID. He was recommending the City Council votes to support the BID. He felt it was an organisation that the City Council had a close working relationship with and had a very positive impact on business in the City Centre.

Members wished to know more about BID'S plans for the next five years and the Town Clerk explained that BID's three themes for the next five years were:

- Marketing and Events
- Safety, Security & Environment
- Business Support

A Member suggested that Alun Jones of BID may wish to come and speak to Members about their business plan. The Town Clerk informed Members he had a copy of BID's Business Plan which he would circulate to Members prior to the next meeting of Full Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Biscoe, seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon, and

RECOMMENDED that the City Council agrees in principle to support the BID for a further five years, subject to all Councillors receiving a copy of the business plan prior to the next meeting of Full Council.

61 ZEBS QUARTERLY REPORT

After a general discussion regarding the report, Members felt that it was a very informative report and the work carried out by Zebs was excellent.

It was proposed by Councillor Roden (Chairman), seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon, and

RECOMMENDED that the Committee notes the report and thanks be given for the report and the work carried out.

62 ROSEDALE WOODLAND DEVOLUTION

Councillor Roden (Chairman) informed Members that this item had been to the June meeting of the Parks and Amenities Committee where it had been agreed that recommendations 1 and 2 would be removed.

A Member commented that whilst residents were happy to fundraise to purchase play equipment there was no budget put in place to maintain the equipment and that any equipment would have to be safety compliant to Cornwall Council Housing standards. A Member suggested that should the City Council become owners of the footbridge, this could be a large responsibility to take on.

It was suggested new Councillors should be able to see previous reports and minutes relating to the Rosedale Woodland Devolution, however, they did not seem to be available on the new website at present. The Town Clerk would look into this.

It was proposed by Councillor Roden (Chairman), seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, and

RECOMMENDED:

1. That the Town Clerk and Parks and Amenities Officer are authorised to enter into discussions with Cornwall Council and Cornwall Housing with a view to reaching agreement on a licence for the management of Rosedale Park, Woodland and River side path;
2. That full devolution of the area as defined is pursued at the earliest practical opportunity.

63 SHARED PROSPERITY FUND

The Town Clerk explained that the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) replaced the European Structural and Investment Programme and that Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly had the second largest single area allocation.

He informed Members he had recently had a discussion with Glenn Caplin-Grey (Lead Officer at Cornwall Council) and Councillor Webb (Mayor) about this. It was felt there was greater opportunity to obtain funds in the first year as there would be more applications going forward. The Town Clerk explained this was just a discussion at present and a report would be going to Full Council in June considering specific areas on which the City Council would like to apply.

There were concerns raised regarding the time spent preparing the application for funding, with a short time scale (end of July) and the risk of not receiving any funding, especially as the City Council had received a large sum of funding from the Towns Fund Deal. Members felt that realistically Truro was not going to miss out altogether and that it would be worth applying.

Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons left the meeting at 8.21pm

A Member pointed out that every bid made under the fund had to be signed off by each constituency MP and they would have to be kept on board throughout the process.

Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons re-joined the meeting at 8.24pm

It was proposed by Councillor Roden (Chairman), seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, and

RECOMMENDED that the report on the Shared Prosperity Fund be noted.

64 COMMUNITIES FACILITIES

Councillor Wells thanked the Committee for allowing this item to come back to the Finance & General Purposes Committee following his absence at the last meeting of Full Council. He ran through the four proposals the working group made, following the 'gap analysis' undertaken:

1. A dedicated youth facility (this could be part of a larger building) for all young people, which is larger than the current Zeb's venue and with appropriate facilities;
2. For a business case and high-level design to be commissioned and funded, for the type of facility described in 1. above. This will be essential to outline the building and running costs, and how this could be sustained financially;
3. The appointment of a Community focussed role (as part of an existing role or as a new position) who works with all 46 community venues (there could be more) identified by this report, to focus on sharing information, celebrating community

- engagement and success, signposting, advising on funding applications and encouraging a collaborative way of working;
4. A Truro directory (online and/or printed) listing all community venues, groups and events for residents, new residents, visitors and businesses. A printed edition 4-6 times a year, delivered to Truro residents, likely to include some advertising.

Regarding point 1, Councillor Wells advised that Young People Cornwall (YPC), with the assistance of the Town Clerk, was seeking a suitable venue in Truro to replace the facilities offered by Zebs and create a Youth Centre for the city.

Regarding point 2, Councillor Wells said that as the site at Pydar was not suitable for YPC's Youth Centre, he was working with the Pydar development team to establish if a viable business case could be made to accommodate the requirements of any other gaps in community provision, ensuring they did not compete with what was proposed to be provided by the new Truro Community Hub at the Methodist Church.

Regarding point 3, It was suggested that the City Council ask its Community Development Officer to produce a report to bring back to a further meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee.

Regarding point 4, Councillor Wells explained a volunteer was already working on an online directory, but the Council could give consideration as to how this was to be published and updated.

There was some concern the report did not contain what the brief had originally asked for i.e. finding out venue costings, opening hours, availability, and events already taking place at each venue. It was felt a spreadsheet containing this information would be useful.

A Member pointed out the City Council could be at risk as incorrect information was contained on page 7 of the report. It stated that the project was being delivered by Salt Projects Ltd (who are in liquidation) not Salt Projects Cornwall Ltd.

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Biscoe, and

RECOMMENDED that

1. the report be noted;
2. the Community Development Officer be requested to produce a report for a future meeting of the Finance General Purposes Committee addressing points 3 and 4 of the Community Facilities Working Group's report.

**65 TOWNS FUND PROJECT – NEW LIFE FOR CITY BUILDINGS
PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS**

The Town Clerk explained that in March 2022 the City Council approved the submission of the business case and resolved: -

That the Finance & General Purposes Committee consider the following documents:

- Form CIC 36-Declarations on Formation of a Community Interest Company; Memorandum of Association;
- Articles of Association;
- Form IN01;
- Service Agreement; and
- Amendment to the Council's Standing Orders.

The Town Clerk informed Members work was still continuing on the Articles of Association and other governance documents but as far as standing orders were concerned he recommended the below addition be made as a new Standing Order 21:

The Council will at all times ensure that its dealings with all Council Owned or Controlled Entities follow and respect the requirements as contained within the "Governance Arrangements" document as amended from time to time and Articles or other Constitutional Documents for such bodies filed at Companies House or other Registration Body

A Member expressed concern over the use of the word 'comment' in points 3.5 – 3.7 and what the status was, in legal terms, of the word 'comment'. It was agreed that no changes to the document should be made without seeking legal advice.

It was proposed by Councillor Roden (Chairman), seconded by Councillor Mrs Eathorne-Gibbons, and

RECOMMENDED that the Council amends the standing orders as described and adopts the "Governance arrangements" document and seeks further legal advice on points 3.5-3.7.

66 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Roden (Chairman), seconded by Councillor Mrs Carlyon, and

RESOLVED that in accordance with s1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items by reason of its confidential or special nature.

[N.B. The minute taker for the meeting left the meeting with the Town Clerk]

67 ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

Councillor Roden (Chairman) introduced the report on the organisational review, together with the report undertaken by Sharon Plowright. He outlined the work undertaken so far with some of the initial conclusions. Following discussion it was proposed by Councillor Webb (Mayor), seconded by Councillor Wells and

RESOLVED

1. To receive and give consideration to the reports from the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee together with appendix 1, the organisational report undertaken by Sharon Plowright.
2. That a further series of group sessions is held with Members and Sharon Plowright to discuss feedback to the report on 20th, 22nd, 23rd and 30th June.

and **RECOMMENDED**

3. That a final report with recommendations on an organisational structure with full costings is presented to a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee in July and subsequently to make recommendations to Full Council.
4. That immediately following the meeting of Full Council on 27th June that the Town Clerk together with the Mayor and the Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee undertake briefings with staff to update them on the organisational review.

68 EXTENSION OF TIME

It was proposed by Councillor Wells, seconded by Councillor Roden (Chairman), and

RESOLVED that the meeting be extended up to, but not past, 10:00pm, to enable the conclusion of business.

69 READMITTANCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Roden (Chairman), Seconded by Councillor Wells, and

RESOLVED that the press and public be invited back to the meeting.

70 CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence to report.

The meeting closed at 9:38pm.

CHAIRMAN