**Crewe Town Council**

**Finance and Governance Committee**

1 Chantry Court

Forge Street

Crewe

CW1 2DL



**Minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2018**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***18/2/01*** | Present |
|  | Cllrs Houston, B Minshall, John Rhodes, Jill Rhodes, Roberts, Straine-Francis, D Yates and S Yates.  In attendance: Steve McQuade (Town Clerk) |
| ***18/2/02*** | To receive apologies for absence |
|  | Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Lundie and P Minshall  Cllr Minshall asked it to be noted that there may be a number of future absences due to medical treatment. |
| ***18/2/03*** | To note declarations of Members’ interests |
|  | Cllrs Jill Rhodes and Roberts declared a none pecuniary interest in the item relating to the establishment. |
| ***18/2/04*** | To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting (Finance and Governance Committee) held on 12th June 2018 |
|  | The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed as an accurate record. |
| ***18/2/05*** | Public Participation A period not exceeding 15 minutes for members of the public to ask questions or submit comments |
|  | Mr Conner raised a number of issues related to the delivery of the Crewe Cosmopolitan Market. The Leader asked Mr Conner to write to the Clerk explaining the issues he wished to raise with the Council.  Ilona Humphries (Manor Way Allotment Association) provided information with regard to the request for the Council to fund work at the site to improve site security. Cllr John Rhodes replied in his capacity as lead member on allotments. |
| ***18/2/06*** | To review the year to date expenditure for the Committee and for Council as a whole and to review and consider debts to the Council – See agenda notes, income & expenditure tables for Council and Committee and debt summary. |
|  | Members reviewed and noted the information presented. |
| ***18/2/07*** | To receive and consider an update in relation to Crewe Markets (Cllr Yates). |
|  | Cllr S Yates provided an update noting that:   * The Partnership Board had met in August. * Joint work is planned to push out updates in relation to the markets and also general town centre development. * Physical work to the market building is due to commence and procurement of an operator has started. |
| ***18/2/08*** | To consider an update in relation to strategic dialogue with Cheshire East (Cllr Yates). |
|  | Cllr S Yates provided an update in relation to:   * Highways * Town Centre Development/Regeneration * Public relations management |
| ***18/2/09*** | To receive and consider an update in relation to the allotments in Crewe (Town Clerk) and to consider a request for capital funding from Manor Way Association for the installation of security fencing. Three quotes have been sought of which the cheapest is £11,550k (Inc VAT)  The Clerk reported on the latest position with regard to the allotments including the payment from the three sites that are not part of the Federation and the progress in releasing capital to the sites now that matters were resolved.  With regard to Manor Way members ***resolved*** that Members allocate the existing budget and the remainder is drawn from reserves if it cannot be absorbed from within the Committee budget. |
|  |  |
| ***18/2/10*** | To receive an update from internal audit (Cllrs Jill Rhodes, P Minshall and Houston) |
|  | Members received an update from Cllr Rhodes in relation to the latest internal audit and noted the next meeting would be tomorrow. |
| ***18/2/11*** | To note correspondence from the External Auditor in relation to the completion of the audit for 2017/8. Papers to be submitted to Council in line with governance requirements.  Members noted the successful completion of the audit process and noted that the papers would be submitted to Council later in the month. |
|  |  |
| ***18/2/12*** | Policy Review – To review Financial Regulations, Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation and to make any recommendations to Council for changes.  Members reviewed the information presented and asked that the suggested changes be sent to Council with a recommendation that the changes be accepted and made. Amended changes set out at the foot of these minutes. |
|  |  |
| ***18/2/13*** | To consider the disposal of all or some of the items presently held in storage in light of the valuation of those items and the ongoing cost of storage. |
|  | Members received an update. Due to health matters the work had not yet been undertaken. It is anticipated that the work will be undertaken in the near future. |
| ***18/2/14*** | To consider making a recommendation to Council that the venue for Town Council meetings is varied on an ad hoc basis to allow Council to meet at other venues by invitation from community organisations.  Members ***resolved*** to recommend to Council that the Clerk in consultation with the Mayor should accept invitations where appropriate and facilities permitted. |
|  |  |
| ***18/2/15*** | To consider an update on joint working arrangements with Kidsgrove Town Council together with an update on matters related to the general establishment of the Town Council. |
|  | Members discussed this item following a resolution to exclude press and public on the grounds that it related to contractual matters of one or more employee. The item was discussed at the end of the meeting.  Members ***resolved*** that a months-notice be given bringing the support arrangement to an end and that as a consequence of the change in income the establishment should return to that in place prior to the inception of the arrangement with Kidsgrove.  Members noted matters raised by the Clerk in relation to succession management and capacity issues. |
| ***18/2/16*** | To consider a presentation on the New Homes Bonus and consider how the Council will contribute to determining the use of the funds. To consider proposals arising from Committees on priorities for consideration in the use of the New Homes Bonus (see below). |
|  | Members noted the presentation from the Leader Cllr S Yates and agreed that the Council should participate in the scheme and bring forward bids in line with its strategic priorities. This might include streetscene, parks/greenspaces and homelessness/vulnerable individuals projects. |
| ***18/2/17*** | To consider a request from Town Development Committee for an increase in budget of £2k to cover the development of a bid for New Homes Bonus funding connected to the improvement in play areas |
|  | Members ***resolved*** that the increase in budget should be authorised. |
| ***18/2/18*** | To consider a request from Town Development Committee to allocate 4k to cover the costs of an additional Christmas Tree. |
|  | Members ***resolved*** that the increase in budget should be authorised to provide for a real tree on Market Square. |
| ***18/2/18*** | To consider a request from Community Plan Committee for the Council to act as responsible authority and manage funds were a bid to the Creating Civic Change Fund be successful. This may mean managing up to £300k over three years.  Members ***resolved*** that should it be necessary the Council could act as the responsible financial organisation, subject to more information being provided from the Clerk in relation to the benefits the project will bring and subject to members informally confirming no objection. |
|  |  |
| ***18/2/19*** | To consider working with Cheshire East to deliver Street Scene improvements with particular reference to the management of fly-tipping and littering in hot spot locations that supports the priorities identified by the communities most affected.  Members ***resolved*** to accept the offer of funding made by Cheshire East and to work with partners and residents to determine how the monies are to be spent in ways that maximise the community impact. The Town Centre Project Officer would be asked to develop an agreed programme of work. |
|  |  |
| ***18/2/20*** | To consider the date of the next meeting (11th December) |
|  | Members noted the date of the next meeting. |
|  |  |

**Meeting closed: 21:30**

**Annex: Recommended changes to Standing Orders, Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations**

**Appendix A1: Suggested improvements to Financial Regulations**

1. To confirm existing bank signatories (Committee Chairs plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor) as the members authorised to approve/reject payments using the established processes for routine approvals.
2. To include a call in procedure for delegated actions by officers. Where an officer plans to take an action which they believe might be contentious or involves new/unforeseen expenditure >1k, they will contact all members indicating that the matter will be actioned in five working days unless the action is ‘called in’. A call in will be taken to the next available meeting and is defined as a quorum of the Council/Committee or more members contacting the officer asking for a call in. A log will be retained to record requests for call in. Note: members should generally avoid calling in any matter in which they have an interest.
3. That the debit card only be topped up to a maximum of £2k.
4. To remove references to the use of cheques.
5. To amend 6.1 to add ‘written’ before the word confirmations.
6. To amend 6.2 such that the Clerk and other officers would undertake the role of checking invoices.
7. To delete 10.1
8. To replace 10.2 to confirm that the order book is held as part of the Purchase Ledger on the finance system.

**Appendix A2: Suggested improvements to the Scheme of Delegation**

1. To delete section 7 (as this is picked up by the call in procedure (see Financial Regs changes)
2. To include reference to the Town Centre Project Officer at relevant points.
3. To include a general condition applying to any urgent spending decision. ‘Where any urgent spending decision is thought necessary the officer concerned will consult with both the chair and vice chair of committee or in the case of Council with the Mayor and Leader and proceed if both agree the matter is of urgency. All members should be informed (Council or Committee as relevant) as soon after as practicable and in all cases the matter should be noted at the next relevant formal meeting’.

**Appendix A3: Suggested improvements to Standing Orders**

1. To make consequential changes including such items as committee names.
2. Add to section 3b an indication that the expectation is where possible to circulate the summons a week in advance of meetings.