

## PADSTOW TOWN COUNCIL

### Minutes of the Full Council meeting held remotely on Tuesday 24 November 2020 at 6.30 pm

**Present:** C Watson-Smyth (Chairman) [late], A Flide (Vice-Chairman), R Buscombe, M Evans, K Freeman, R Higman, J O'Keefe, M Rickard, H M Saunders, Mrs A E Symons, and D N Vivian

**In Attendance:** Mrs K Pemberton (Town Clerk), Mrs N Barnes (Responsible Financial Officer), Mrs S Daly (Support Officer and Minute Taker) and 2 members of the public

**2020/99 To receive apologies for absence and announcements:**

- i) There were no apologies for absence;
- ii) Councillor A Flide announced that Councillor C Watson-Smyth was experiencing technical difficulties in joining the virtual meeting. In his absence Councillor A Flide would Chair the meeting.

**2020/100 Declarations of Interest:** There were no declarations of interest.

**2020/101 Dispensations:** There were no dispensations.

**2020/102 Public Participation:** One member of the public addressed the Council regarding agenda item 10 Budget, comments included:

- Noted that the budget had not made any provision for community grants for the year 2021-22;
- Considered that local groups had been unable to hold fundraising events this year which raise funds and promote the town and as such may need grant funding;
- Noted that some groups such as Padstow Lions and Nadelik Lowen had redirected their funds to the help the local community during the pandemic;
- Considered that the Council's role was to support local events and that the Council had fared well during COVID. If the revenue success which followed the lockdown continued, they felt there should be some provision in the budget for community grants.

**Councillor C Watson Smyth joined the meeting whereupon he took the Chair.**

- i) **Cornwall Councillor's Report:** Cornwall Councillor R Buscombe noted that during the week of Remembrance Sunday an issue had occurred concerning filming near the War Memorial and in the town. Councillor Buscombe had been approached by members of the public who were concerned with the manner in which the film crew conducted themselves. He had passed on these comments to Cornwall Council and advised that CC do have a protocol which crews must sign up to before filming on CC land. The protocol includes working alongside the local community and being sympathetic to its needs.

Councillor C Watson Smyth noted that concerns regarding filming by the War Memorial close to Remembrance Sunday had been raised with the local landowner by himself; the landowner then stopped the filming.

- ii) **Police Report:** was noted for information. The Town Clerk advised that there had been a spate of vandalism towards the hand sanitiser stations in the town. 2 of the units had been fixed or replaced only to be smashed again. The white shelter unit had now been removed until a further replacement arrived. The Town Clerk advised that the police were taking the matter seriously due to the upsetting nature of the vandalism and were investigating CCTV footage in the area. Comment was made that the vandalism was malicious and planned, therefore all should be done to apprehend the culprits.

**2020/103 Minutes Tuesday 27 October 2020: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held remotely on Tuesday 27 October 2020 be signed as a true record.

**2020/104 Clerk's Report:** The Clerk's report was noted for information. Further it was noted that the cemetery drainage would now be undertaken in January, however the bollards in the Railway Car Park would be installed later in the week.

Councillor Watson-Smyth noted that CC had opened their Skate Parks, however Padstow Sk8 remained closed in line with advice from Skate Park England. It was hoped that it would be reopened following the tier announcements in December. It was agreed that the conflicting messages from organisations was unhelpful but it was noted that appropriate closed signage was in place.

**2020/105 Committees/Working Group Meetings:**

- i) **RESOLVED** to receive the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held remotely on 10 November 2020.
- ii) **RESOLVED** to adopt the minutes and approve the recommendations of the Staffing Committee meeting held remotely on 18 November 2020.

**2020/106 Finance: Monthly Accounts and Payments November 2020:**

- a) The monthly finance report was noted. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) noted that the state of the bank was in a better position than earlier in the year but that it was necessary to build up reserves.
- b) It was **RESOLVED** to i) ratify payments made October (c) of £3,593.54 and direct debits of £22,861.84; and ii) to ratify payments made November (a) of £12,514.86, standing orders or direct debits (regular payments of the same amount) of £10,254.69 and direct debits of £1,874.84.
- c) Car park takings were noted.
- d) The Budget to Actual Variance Report 1.4.20 – 31.10.20 was noted for information.
- e) The interim internal audit report was noted.

**2020/107 Correspondence:** Correspondence for information was noted.

## **2020/108 Budget Considerations:**

- a) The Budget Overview 2020-21 was noted.
- b) Budget 2021-22:
  - i) The Budget Overview 2021-22 was noted and the Chairman extended Council's thanks to the RFO for her work on the budget under such stressful times.
  - ii) Draft Budget 2021-22 and iii) Precept: There was much discussion on these items. One member noted that they had spoken with the RFO concerning the budget prior to the meeting and felt satisfied that the budget was reasonable under the circumstances, offering special praise for the work on the budget this year. They accepted that the approach to grants in 2021 was prudent but wished the Council to be flexible with the timeframe it set in revisiting the grant situation should revenue early in the year be good. This was supported by the Chairman.

One member considered that the community grant scheme was one of the only Council spends which directly influenced the community and a provision should be retained in the budget. They were also against increasing the general fund suggesting that this only served to set back capital projects. A member considered there was approximately the same amount in the bank as last year even with COVID. They considered that the budget should either be an austerity budget or a full budget which could be revised as required as had happened this year. They felt that Council should look at basic running costs, raised concern with administrative costs at this time and felt that the MUGA should be completed as soon as possible.

The Town Clerk advised that Council did review expenditure earlier on during the pandemic and savings had been made, which included administrative and staff costs. Comment was made that setting big projects could remove flexibility to review the budget by tying the Council into a large expenditure.

The Chairman of Finance considered that the next few months were unknown and suggested that even if finances were ok through winter, the possibility of a further lockdown after Christmas and New Year was possible before the end of the financial year.

It was noted that a conservative budget had been set based on discussions with the Chairman, Chairman of Finance and Vice-Chairman with a view to avoiding the need to set a precept which it was noted would generate very little due to the small parish electorate. The budget was undertaken at this time in order to inform CC of the 2021-22 precept within the required timeframe. It was further noted that there were several costs which the Council has little control over such as non-domestic rates and car park machine maintenance. In addition, the Council employs fewer staff than neighbouring Councils. The primary purpose of the budget was to protect the Council's financial position during this uncertain time with a view that it be reviewed again at a later date.

It was suggested by members that the budget be viewed as an "interim budget" necessary in order to notify CC about the precept. It was felt this was the best approach at this time of uncertainty with the budget being reviewed at the end of

February following, hopefully, the worst of the COVID winter. There was discussion on this point and that this should be undertaken by the Finance and General Purposes Committee but there was concern at the timing, after much discussion it was felt that instead this be moved to March. .

Members considered it best to first vote on whether or not to set a precept for 2021-22.

**RESOLVED** not to set a precept for 2021-22.

Members were in general agreement to set an interim budget. One member considered that the interim budget should contain a provision of £25-30 thousand for community grants and that the general reserve should not be kept at £1.2 million.

**RESOLVED** to approve the draft budget for 2021-22, as set out in the agenda papers, as an interim budget to be reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes committee in mid-March 2020.

**Councillor D N Vivian requested his name be recorded as voting against this decision.**

iv) Members gave consideration to a Members' allowance and it was **RESOLVED** that no Members Allowance be set.

c) Business Plan: Members gave consideration to the updated Business Plan and **RESOLVED** to agree the updated Padstow Town Council Business Plan.

**2020/109 Reports from Members/Outside Organisations:** It was noted that Councillors M Rickard and J O'Keefe had recently attended Code of Conduct Training.

**2020/110 Future Meeting Dates And Date of Next Meeting:** Date of next meeting: Tuesday 26 January 2021 at 6.30pm and future meeting dates were noted.

**2020/111 It was RESOLVED to exclude the press and public due to the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.**

**2020/112 Confidential Minutes Tuesday 27 October 2020: RESOLVED** that the confidential minutes of the meeting held remotely on Tuesday 27 October 2020 be signed as a true record.

**2020/113 Confidential Committee Meetings: RESOLVED** to approve the confidential minutes and adopt the recommendations of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 18 November 2020.

**2020/114 Emergency Scheme of Delegation Decisions: RESOLVED** to ratify the confidential decision made by way of the Emergency Scheme of Delegation taken between this and the last meeting of the Full Council and not included in the online register under FOI exemption 43.

**2020/115 Rent Matter Update:** See confidential minutes.

**2020/116 Padstow Sand Update:** See confidential minutes.

Meeting closed at 7.43 pm