

## **PADSTOW TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Tuesday 20 February 2024 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station House, Padstow**

**Present:** Councillors R Higman (Chairman), J O'Keefe (Vice-Chairman), Mrs J Dawe, K Freeman, M Rickard, A Rees and Mrs T Walter

**In Attendance:** Mrs N Barnes (Responsible Financial Officer) and Mrs S Daly (Assistant Town Clerk/Assistant RFO and Minute Taker)

- FGP2023/30      Apologies for absence and announcements:** None
- FGP2023/31      Declarations of Interest:** Councillors Mrs J Dawe, J O'Keefe and A Rees declared an interest in agenda item 7 ii) Community Grant Scheme: Timescales.
- FGP2023/32      Public Participation:** There was no public participation.
- FGP2023/33      Minutes Tuesday 21 November 2023: RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 21 November 2023 were a true record of the meeting and they were signed by the chair.
- FGP2023/34      Budget To Actual Variance Report 2023-24** The budget report, providing an overview of the total income and revenue expenditure from 1.4.23 – 31.1.24 and explanations for any significant variances, was noted.
- FGP2023/35      Committee Works i) Update:** was noted for information. In response to a member query regarding banking, the RFO confirmed payment of invoices by BACs is encouraged, and that the acceptance of payments by cheque is a "back up" payment option; relatively few cheques are received.
- ii) Programme:** was noted for information.
- FGP2023/36      Community Grant Scheme:**  
Update on grants awarded 2023-24: The Chairman referred members to the agenda report outlining what, if any, paperwork/conditions remain outstanding from organisations awarded a 2023-24 grant. Consideration was given to the anomaly spending and to visiting some of the grant funded projects. A Councillor commented that he had seen the 2 new toilet blocks at the Football Club, though was not sure whether these had been plumbed in yet.
- RESOLVED** i) to permit Trevone WI to use the balance of the 2023-24 grant awarded to purchase folding tables due to these being broadly similar to the original application request; ii) to ratify the RFO's interpretation of the purpose of the grant awarded to the Padstow Senior Citizen Club

being for all expenditure related to day trips/social events; and iii) not to make arrangements to view any particular works funded by a 2023-24 grant award.

**Councillors Mrs J Dawe, J O'Keefe and A Rees left the meeting at this point.**

Timescales 2024-25: Members gave consideration to this matter. Whilst noting the correspondence received from the Blue Ribbon Obby Oss Committee, members considered it wouldn't be appropriate to amend timescales specifically or wholly for 1 organisation but did take note of the report which looked at possible amendments and implications to timescales for both a June grants meeting, and an April grants meeting.

A member expressed that although the decision to move the grants meeting to June was relatively recent, they were concerned it would make the grants meeting the first meeting of the new FGP Committee (appointed each May) and the new Chair (appointed at the first meeting). Furthermore, in an election year such as 2025 this would also be one of the first meetings of a new Council. For these reasons it was felt better to hold the grants meeting in April. The RFO considered an April meeting would better align with the Council's financial year and noted this used to be the case but office commitments had seen it moved to February. It was noted that there was now greater capacity to facilitate a grants meeting in April, with the Assistant Town Clerk/Assistant RFO able to lead on this with support from Council's Support Officer.

Consideration was given to the timing of the grant application process and date of the grants meeting. In response to member queries, the Assistant Town Clerk/Assistant RFO confirmed that although time would be tight for this year (in respect of opening the application process), the team would be able to facilitate a grants meeting in April 2024.

**RESOLVED** to i) move the timing of the grants meeting to April, as per the timescales set out in paragraph 4.1, to better align with the Finance and General Purposes Committee work programme; and ii) to agree Tuesday 16 April as the date of the 2024 grants meeting, inviting applications from 29 February with a closing date of 11 April.

**Councillors Mrs J Dawe, J O'Keefe and A Rees returned to the meeting.**

Policy Review: The Chairman referred members to the considerations in paragraph 6 of the agenda report and they

were generally supportive of the suggestions and recommendations therein.

There was discussion as to the merits of adding more clarification to the policy to remove potential ambiguity over the rationale for awarding less than a requested amount of funding, or for not awarding funding. Generally, members were satisfied that the current considerations within the policy (as per 2.2 of the agenda report) worked well and were used when agreeing grants. Committee acknowledged that the criteria of some groups can be less defined as could their benefit to the wider community and that this made them difficult to compare. Overall members did not wish to make the process too difficult and barring a few minor amendments and inclusions, were satisfied with the policy "as is".

**RESOLVED** the following in respect of the Community Grant Scheme policy:

- i) not to make any amendments in respect of decision making;
- ii) to include that at the grants meeting, Committee will give specific consideration as to the benefit of setting release conditions for grants of £3,000 or more;
- iii) to include a mechanism for organisations to request their grant be ring-fenced and claimed after the expenditure date due to a delay in a project or purchase beyond their control;
- iv) to simplify the application process for nominal grant requests of up to £300 as per 4.1 of the agenda report;
- v) to support the suggestions in 5.3 and 5.4 of the agenda report in relation to details to be required in applications and Officers rejecting the same;
- vi) that Committee is generally satisfied with the policy, in particular with the items it will/will not award a grant for; and
- vii) That the Committee Chairman and Vice-Chairman work with the RFO / Assistant Town Clerk/Assistant RFO in progressing the outcomes of this meeting and, to avoid delay, the revised policy be taken to the February meeting of the Full Council but consulting Committee members by email.

**FGP2023/37**

**Future meetings:** The date of the next meeting was noted, being the grants meeting on Tuesday 16 April 2024 at 7pm as agreed at the meeting.

Meeting closed at 7.24 pm.