

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT & PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE OF
BEAUMARIS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 16 MARCH 2015 AT 7.00 PM IN THE TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: The Town Mayor Councillor I Davies
The Deputy Mayor Councillor J P Zalot
Councillor G Evans Jones
Councillor A J V Grant
Councillor M Jones
Councillor B L Kotkowicz
Councillor C J Theakston
Councillor S Zalot

The Town Clerk was in attendance

APOLOGIES: There were no apologies for absence

Councillor G Evans Jones took the Chair

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

It was agreed that these would be given as and when issues arose

2.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

2.1 The Town Clerk reported that the internal auditor had carried out an inspection of the books and audited the income and expenditure up until the end of January.

The overall balance of funds was in line with projected figures to be carried over into the next financial year. Members commented that there had been a big improvement in the financial status of the Council over the past ten years and staff were congratulated on achieving this. It now meant that the Town Council was in a position to be able to take on capital schemes and deal with unforeseen problems that might occur. It was noted that there was a small working balance held over from year to year, and this was important for much of Council's income relied on tourism. A question was raised as to whether the working balance was sufficient.

Recommendation to the Finance and Planning Committee:

That the advice of the auditor be sought on the level of cash reserves that the Council could hold.

2.2 The Town Clerk advised that he had received a new document in respect of Account And Audit (Wales) Regulations for 2014.

These were to apply with immediate effect. It was clear that Council complied with all regulations within the document. The new regulations suggested that Town Councils did not need to employ an internal auditor, and documents for the external auditor could be prepared 'in house.' Despite this, the Town Clerk advised that the internal auditor be retained to provide a totally independent assessment of the management of Council's funds. The regulations also suggested that it was good practice to publish the annual accounts in some way, and Council's web site was a possibility.

Recommendation to the Finance and Planning Committee:

That the annual accounts summary be published on Council's web site

2.3 The Town Clerk advised that LGPS Employer's Contributions were to increase from 23% to 24.18%

This did not involve a large amount of money since only two of Council's staff contributed to a pension fund.

2.4 The Town Clerk advised that he has received a claim for compensation from a company called 'Freeclaim'

The claim related to an incident on the Green in August 2014. Council's own insurance company had been informed of the claim, and would be dealing with it. It was agreed to give the Town Clerk powers to act to continue to provide information to Council's insurance company.

2.5 The Town Clerk reported that he was in the process of drawing up a new agreement for the tenancy at Happy Valley Pavilion.

This would be along similar lines as used for other tenancy agreements. It would give the tenant more security to continue her business from year to year. Council had already approved the objectives of the new tenancy agreement.

2.6 A member complained about the number of buildings that had been placed on the Green by the contractors.

He asked if Council would be paid a rent for the space being used. He had discovered that the Bill of Quantities supplied to Anglesey County Council by the contractors working on the sea defences included a sum for rent charges for land on which to place buildings. He was not sure of the figure that had been set aside. Members felt that if the contractor was going to charge the County Council for renting land, then this money should be collected by the Town Council.

Concern was expressed at the enclosure that had been constructed on the Green near to the entrance to the old Baths site. The Town Clerk said that he had been made aware of the compound earlier in the day and had held a meeting with the contractors. Prior to work commencing on the Green, the contractor had suggested this area for placing portacabins and storing materials. The Town Clerk had offered the Dinghy Park and had specifically stated that the grassed area of the Green could not be used. It was clear that this information had not been passed on to the new site foreman. During discussions with the contractor, the Town Clerk had suggested use of the County Council Coach Park and suggested a compromise which allowed storage of the steelwork until Easter. Early afternoon the contractor had telephoned and said that the Coach Park would not be satisfactory. He had asked if the enclosure on the Green could be used until Easter and then reduced in size. It would subsequently just be used for storing the stone cladding materials.

Recommendation to the Finance and Planning Committee:

That the contractor be allowed to keep the compound until Easter for the storage of steel work, but that the plastic covers presently in place should be removed. The entire compound should be removed prior to the Easter weekend, with the suggestion that the stone cladding could be stored on the beach adjacent to the Dinghy Park.

In relation to buildings on the Green, the Town Clerk said that the portacabin next to the Race Control building had been put there on a temporary basis because it had been too windy to put it in place within the Dinghy Park. A further cabin presently being used by the contractors working for Natural Resources Wales would be removed shortly following completion of the work on the bund around the Green. Members commented that the contractors working on the sea wall were still parking in the Stones area. The gate was being left open and this was allowing other people to park there. It was agreed that the Town Clerk would investigate and emphasise that this was not the general parking area.

3.0 PERSONNEL ISSUES

The Town Clerk said that he intended to re-engage seasonal workers – two for the car park and two for managing the public toilets. He intended to keep flexible hours and make adjustments as required during the season. There was a permanent reserve worker with a licence for weedkilling who did a nominal number of hours each year and would be available as a back-up if required. He would liaise with the foreman as to whether another part-time general operative was required during the peak season.

Recommendation to the Finance and Planning Committee:

To endorse the Town Clerk's actions and give him powers to act. He was also asked to compliment the staff on their good work during the past year.

4.0 CHARITABLE DONATIONS REVIEW

The Deputy Mayor said that he had placed this item on the agenda because of the increasing amount of time that was being taken up by discussions at Finance and Planning meetings about the merits of donation requests. In the last couple of years there had been a dramatic increase in the amount of money that Council was giving out to local charities and organisations. He felt there was a need to devise rules and set criteria against which the merits of requests could be judged. The aim was not to stop donations but to ensure they were given on a fair and transparent basis. He felt there might be a case for restricting the consideration of donations to just two special meetings per year, with a fixed budget that should not be exceeded.

Members commented that other grant awarding bodies required a complete list of what donations would be spent on. This had to be exact and any money not spent would have to be returned. The Chair supplied a copy of the Ynys Mon Charitable Trust's forms and it was suggested that this could be developed as a template. Members felt there might need to be a distinction between organisations that asked for donations on a regular basis, eg to cover insurance premiums, and others that asked for money for specific projects or events. It was felt that a contingency might be needed to help an organisation resolve a major problem that could not have been predicted. In relation to insurances, it might be possible to obtain group insurance to cover everything. This would probably be cheaper.

Some members felt that charitable donations and grants should be separated. Overall it was agreed that a proper policy needed to be put into place. Exact reasons for requesting donations should be made and an indication given as to what the benefits would be for the community. Up to date accounts should be submitted along with supporting bank statements. It was suggested that donations should not be given to shore up cash reserves. It was felt that an Application Pack should be produced by Council to point out criteria, rules and the expected format for an application.

It was agreed that the Finance and Planning Committee should be consulted for opinions and suggestions on the criteria that needed to be set in relation to donations, and the total sum of money that should be allocated. This information should then be considered by a further meeting of the Audit & Personnel Sub-Committee and a policy drawn up. The policy would then be submitted back to the Finance and Planning Committee for approval.

5.0 OFFICE SECURITY

The Deputy Mayor said that he had received a complaint from a member of staff about the Council Chamber being used, possibly for a meeting, when sensitive documents had been left laid out in the Council Chamber. It was clear that

anybody coming into the Chamber could walk into the offices where the papers were normally kept, along with other sensitive documents.

The meeting noted that there are only a restricted number of keys available to the Council Chamber. Apart from staff, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor have access. Despite this, it was felt that the offices should be locked when not in use and that no personal or sensitive paperwork should be left in the Council Chamber.

Recommendation to the Finance and Planning Committee:

That the offices be kept locked when staff are not in attendance. Keys should be provided for the three office staff and the senior maintenance operative only. All personal and sensitive paperwork should be kept in the offices out of normal working hours.

6.0 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the Chairman would liaise with the Town Clerk to fix a date.