

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE AUDIT & PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE OF
BEAUMARIS TOWN COUNCIL
HELD ON MONDAY 10 FEBRUARY 2020 AT 7.00PM IN THE TOWN HALL**

PRESENT: The Town Mayor Councillor C J Theakston
The Deputy Mayor Councillor R A Jones
Councillor A N Gough
Councillor A J V Grant
Councillor H Mattocks
Councillor L J Roberts
Councillor M Sarsfield
Councillor J P Zalot – observer
Councillor S Zalot

The Town Clerk and the Administrative Assistant was in attendance

APOLOGIES: There were no apologies for absence

Councillor Sarsfield took the Chair

1.0 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

2.0 FINANCIAL MATTERS

2.1 Review of Revised Model Financial Regulations (circulated with January F & P Agenda)

The Town Clerk explained that the revised model financial regulations had been originally received in August 2019, and were on the F+P agenda in September 2019. It was noted that the Wales Audit Office required all councils to have regulations that are strictly adhered to. The Town Clerk highlighted key elements of the financial regulations, including: audit control of the annual accounts, budget control and how the banking procedures should operate for the Town Council.

The item number '6' of the revised model financial regulations 'Instructions for making of payments' was discussed. It was pointed out in item 6.15 that the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer should be the appointed Service Administrator to scrutinise and authorise payments.

A member asked if the paper in question was a set of regulations and rules that needed to be followed, or was the Council able to adapt the model for the specific requirements of the Town Council. It was pointed out in item 1: 'may only be amended or varied by resolution of the Council.'

It was noted that the revised model financial regulations had not yet been adopted by the Council. It was pointed out that the final page of the paper stated that amendments could be made as marked up in the paper with square brackets. There were 69 of these.

It was suggested that the general principle of the document could be recommended to the Finance and Planning Committee, with the amended changes.

The Town Clerk noted that the current procedures of the Town Council adhered to the financial regulations model. It was the responsibility of serving officers to carry out the administration and management of the Council's financial procedures.

There was a discussion about the online payments process, and detailed levels of authorisation.

- 1) The Administrative Officer has a secure unique log-in to the online system to prepare and input bills for payment, which include supplier details, description of the goods and services and the amount to be paid.
- 2) The first line of authorisation is for the Service Administrator (which is the Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer) to scrutinise the prepared bills, and authorise their payment by signing the 'authorise to pay' payments sheet.
- 3) Second line of authorisation is for three nominated Councillors to scrutinise the prepared bills for payment, and authorise their payment, by signing the 'authorise to pay' payments sheet.
- 4) The final line of authorisation is for the Payment Releaser (which is the Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer) using a secure unique log-in to release the payments.

Recommendation to Finance and Planning Committee:

It was agreed by a majority that Councillor N Gough would work with the Town Clerk in order to ensure the smooth transition of the Service Administrator and Payment Releaser roles to the Town Clerk.

The meeting wished to note its appreciation to Councillor N Gough for all his expertise and hard work in advising and setting up the online payments systems and procedures for the Town Council.

The Town Clerk pointed out 6.18 of the revised model financial regulations regarding the use of debit cards.

Item 6.20 detailed the requirements and management of business credit cards. It was pointed out that the Town Council business cards were not debit cards, but were credit cards with a monthly limit of £500 per card, which was a more manageable risk than the use of business debit cards. It was noted that monthly business credit card bills were scrutinised and authorised along with all bills for payment.

Recommendation to Finance and Planning Committee: (Unanimous)

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would manage the three business credit cards to a monthly limit of £500 per card.

Recommendation to Finance and Planning Committee: (Unanimous)

The office would review the Model Financial Regulations and present an amended version to the Finance and Planning Committee for formal adoption.

- 2.2 Review of Annual Timetable of actions for Small and Medium size Councils (circulated with January F & P Agenda)

A member asked about action 4 of the annual timetable in regard to 'budget monitoring'.

The Town Clerk pointed out that monthly reporting of income and expenditure was made to the Finance and Planning Committee. 2 reviews a year reported on the income and expenditure levels against cost codes as detailed in the rates estimates.

It was noted that bank reconciliations were part of the financial procedures of the Administrative Officer and the Responsible Financial Officer. This was not reported to Council, but would be in future audit and personnel sub-committee meetings.

The Town Clerk reported that the existing auditor would be carrying out the 2019 – 2020 audit as resolved by the Town Council.

- 2.3 The Town Clerk reported on the question regarding the cost code 255 'Town Hall. The expenditure of £3k had been for the Beaumaris publicity leaflet produced by a company called 'Firecracker'.
- 2.4 The Town Clerk gave advice from One Voice Wales on potential Long Service awards.

3.0 PERSONNEL MATTERS

3.1 Staffing issues

3.2 The Chairman reported on the revised dates for future meetings of the Audit and Personnel Sub-Committee. This would be circulated by the office to all members.

3.3 The Chairman highlighted that the Finance and Planning Committee meetings were taking on a great deal of items for discussion and decisions to be made. He suggested that the Audit and Personnel Sub-Committee, and perhaps other sub-committees should take on some of this responsibility and workload where appropriate.

3.4 Recruitment update for the new Town Clerk. The Chairman informed the meeting that a shortlist had been made and that interviews would be taking place on the 20 and 21 February.

3.5 Job Evaluations for Town Council staff. The Chairman reported that 2 job evaluations had been conducted as of 7 February, with more scheduled for 14 February. One was outstanding, and would need to be organised over the next few weeks. As part of the staff engagement and within these meetings the Ellis Whittam staff handbook and draft contract of employment had also been issued to staff.

3.6 Implementation of the Action Tracker. The Chairman asked if there was any spare resource within the office to take on this responsibility. The Town Clerk replied there was not.

Recommendation to Finance and Planning Committee: (Unanimous)

It was agreed to identify the relevant resources either in-house or temporary agency personnel to build the action tracker, detailing all actions from the past 2 years, including details of what was completed, what was outstanding and what was ongoing and work in progress. It was anticipated that this would be less than a week's work.

- 3.6 Office re-development. The Chairman highlighted the importance of an effective working environment for the office staff, including updating the IT requirements to run the Town Council. A number of options were suggested, they were:
- Rent a property
 - Redevelop the existing administration offices
 - Redevelop part of the Chamber, and have Council meetings in the main Town Hall
 - Find alternative office accommodation
 - Possible space in the Gaol and Courthouse

A member suggested that a property be rented, as it had been before.

A member suggested that an office designer might advise the Council on the best use of the existing space.

A member suggested that the Day Care Centre could be a suitable premise.

A member highlighted the community centre facilities that are not used in Gerddi Stanley and Bryn Tirion, which could be considered as possible premises.

Recommendation to Finance and Planning Committee: (Unanimous)

It was agreed to contact IoACC in regard to the general availability of premises including the old Day Care Centre in the town for use as possible Town Council offices.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm

Chair

.....
Councillor M Sarsfield

Date

.....