

FROME TOWN COUNCIL

making Frome a better place

INTERNAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Tuesday 4 February, 7pm

Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome. BA11 1DS

Members of the Internal Affairs Committee:

Toby Eliot (chair); Pippa Goldfinger; Claire Hudson; Dickon Moore; Peter Macfadyen; Helen Sprawson - White; Helen Starkie; Mel Usher
and
Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People); Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People)

AGENDA

- 1 Questions, comments and information from the public
- 2 Apologies for absence, declaration of members' interests and minutes from the last meeting on 3 December 2013
- 3 A quick review on previous actions and what is coming up next
- 4 Internal Auditors report – to note their report
- 5 External Auditors report – to note that they have no concerns
- 6 Risk Register – to approve the latest version
- 7 Finance update including current forecast for the end of March
- 8 Staff handbook – additional policy on flexible working conditions
- 9 Planning apprentice – the draft job description for approval
- 10 Health and Safety audit results and implementation progress
- 11 The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 9 April, Palmer Street Office

Yours sincerely



Paul Wynne, Town Clerk,
Frome Town Council, 5 Palmer Street, Frome, BA11 1DS
29 January 2014

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AGENDA

- 1 Questions, comments and information from the public**
- 2 a. Any apologies for absence?**
b. Cllrs to declare any interests on the agenda
c. To consider and approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 3 December 2013

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3 A quick review of previous actions and what is coming up next time

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTION	MINUTE NO.	CMTEE	MEETING DATE	RESPONSIBILITY	PROGRESS REPORT	Target Date
Establish ethical decision making matrix	2013/44	IAC	11/06/2013	Paul Wynne	An update will be given at the next meeting	09/04/2014
Frome Town Council website	2013/45	IAC	11/06/2013	Peter Wheelhouse	Good progress is being made in developing a new website. The look and structure have both been addressed to ensure that the new website is more appealing and informative for the community. Currently investigating whether a community groups database can be incorporated.	
Co Op and Lloyds TSB investments	2013/49	IAC	11/06/2013	Jackie Wheeler	The investment strategy was adopted at the meeting on 3 December. Investments were made with Triodos, CLA, Lloyds & Mendip Credit Union.	
One Frome	2013/61	IAC	06/08/2013	Paul Wynne	Waiting for a response from MDC over future of initiative	
Explore the opportunity of FTC challenging MDC to run Frome's car parks	2013/63	IAC	06/08/2013	Patrick Moss	MDC confirmed increase in car parking charges, they have no strategy and Patrick Moss and the Chamber of Commerce are discussing future options with MDC at present.	04/02/2014
Victoria Park and Mary Baily Playing Field Strategy	2013/70	IAC/EAC	09/10/2013	Sarah Hobbs	We have been working with NVB who are drawing up the strategic plan drawings in a voluntary capacity. Sarah will present these to EAC on 26th February, along with a plan for the next stage of the consultation.	26/02/2014
Expenditure Forecast to date		IAC		Jackie Wheeler	On agenda	04/02/2014
Recruitment of Energy and Recycling Officer		IAC		Paul Wynne	Interviews will be held on 31 January and verbal update from Paul Wynne will be given at the meeting	04/02/2014
Youth support worker job description		IAC		Sarah Hobbs	We are holding off on the JD until secure additional match funding to make it full time and it is possible that it might be managed by another organisation.	04/02/2014
Internal Auditors Report		IAC		Jackie Wheeler	On agenda	04/02/2014
Keep Frome Clean/ The Landscape Group contract	2013/77	IAC	09/10/2013	Peter Wheelhouse	Update to be provided at next meeting. In the meantime, officers are monitoring the effectiveness of the street cleaning contract; any problems are being reported directly to the contractor/Mendip DC	09/04/2014
Risk Register		IAC		Jackie Wheeler	On agenda	04/02/2014
Dog control orders	2013/74	IAC	09/10/2013	Caroline Stevens	Caroline Stevens will be attending a beat meeting on 29 January to gather police input to the consultation process. A verbal update will be provided by Paul Wynne at the meeting	04/02/2014
External Auditors Report		IAC		Jackie Wheeler	On agenda	04/02/2014
Health and Safety		IAC			Recurring item	09/04/2014

Key

	Overdue
	On going (on schedule)
	Action required
	Upcoming item

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4 For Information - Internal Auditors Report

Author: Responsible Finance Officer

The Town Council's Internal Auditors have completed the first three quarters check on the financial aspects of FTC's accounts from 1 April 2013 through to 31 December 2013. In their opinion there is nothing of concern to report (see appendix 1)

They will complete the final quarter of the accounts in April/May in order to complete the Internal Auditors section of the 2013/14 annual return for audit of the accounts year ended 31 March 2014.

5 For Information - External Auditors Report

Author: Responsible Finance Officer

Frome Town Council submitted the annual return and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013 for Audit in June last year.

A new External Auditor, Grant Thornton was appointed to audit the 2012/13 accounts and on the basis of their review, and in their opinion, the information in the annual return is in accordance with proper practices and no matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirement have not been met.

The conclusion of the Audit was received in November 2013.

Grant Thornton suggested that it is good practice to have an internal controls policy document which is being drafted. This will be tabled at a future meeting of this committee and will be in place for the year ended 31 March 2014 audit.

6 For Decision – Review Of Risk Register

Author: Responsible Finance Officer

Summary

This paper summarises the need for a corporate risk register and recommends Cllrs review the attached register and agree that it represents FTC's risks and the actions taken to manage them.

Background

Most public sector organisations maintain a Risk Register, a document detailing all known risks to the organisation and the actions taken and to be taken to manage those risks. Every year the Clerk and RFO review the Risk Register. It is amended and new risks are added as appropriate and the level of every risk is re-assessed.

In 2013 Local Council Risk Software (LCRS) software was updated and enabled a complete review. The final document has been approved by the Internal Auditors.

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The full document has been considerably reduced with the removal of many risks on allotments as these have now passed to the Allotments Association as part of the 2013 agreement.

Discussion

Cllrs attention is drawn to the high risks that score 4 and above. The following four risks scored 4 and above on the Risk Register (see appendix 2)

Information Centre

This is highlighted as high risk as the Information Centre staff could potentially have contact with aggressive customers and are at risk of being verbally abused. Training and support with dealing with this type of customer is given to these staff members to minimise the risk.

Public Conveniences

Vandalism is an unavoidable on-going risk but with Outside Services (OS) staff completing regular checks, removing graffiti immediately, reporting incidents to the police and if necessary requesting additional PCSO's presence especially during the summer months, FTC is doing as much as possible to manage this risk. The option of CCTV has proved too expensive given that this is an intermittent problem. Plans for the restoration of Victoria Park will probably include building new toilets that can be managed better. These plans will be presented to EAC as part of the Community Project Officer's summary on 26 February

Skatepark and Pump Track

Due to the nature of the activities at these sites this is scored as a high risk. In 2013 the OS team completed equipment safety training and the measures taken to manage this risk include regular equipment checks, ensuring damages are reported immediately, equipment taken out of use until repairs are complete and ensuring adequate signage is in place regarding advice on safety wear and emergency contacts. Daily visual checks are carried out and recorded and full quarterly checks supplement these.

Web Site

The web site has remained unchanged for 2013/14. This website is in need of a re-design and a new website has been commissioned which will be on line by May 2014.

Recommendation

That Cllrs review the risk register and agree to ask the Chair and Clerk to sign it as a true record of current risks on their behalf.

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7 For Information – Finance update including current forecast for the end of March Author: Responsible Finance Officer

A breakdown of Income and Expenditure as at 31 December 2013 is shown at appendix 3.

Payments equal to or over £500 for the period 1 November to 31 December 2013 is shown at appendix 4.

Income

Significant income received during November and December was the Santander sponsorship of the Extravaganza/Jenson Button event (£45k), S106 for the Rodden Meadow land purchase (£24k) and HMRC repayment for the 2nd qtr (£23k).

Expenditure

Aside from normal monthly running costs, significant expenditure items during November and December were:

- Cheese & Grain development costs including Ken Biggs; Bruges Tozer; KJA (£281k)
- Extravaganza weekend and Jenson Button event (£65k)
- Public Works Loan Board interest and capital repayments (£49k)
- Final Neighbourhood Plan policy document (£33k),
- Third and final round of Community Grants (£13k)
- Establishment of the Fair Frome project (£5k)
- Youth Research Consultancy (£4k) funded by Mendip YMCA

Budget savings/extra spend

As reported at Council on 8 January 2014, decisions were taken to incur additional expenditure on the Cheese and Grain redevelopment (£35k) Neighbourhood Plan (£25k) and the Christmas Extravaganza/Jenson Button event (£18k). The main areas of savings that enabled these decisions to be made without going over total budget were in the following areas:

- Community Tree Planting Scheme (£17k) - reduced scheme
- Youth funding (£23k) - grant secured by SCC following partnership project with Mendip YMCA for youth research project
- Sustainability Projects (£15k) - Energy and recycling post recruitment delayed
- Economic & Community Research (£9k) – planned projects completed at lower costs
- Youth & FE training (£8k) – not required as £55k EMR established for FE Training
- Newsletter & Guide (£8k) – two last editions of newsletter and town guide not produced

The fundraising anticipated income for 13/14 (£35k) was funded by S106 agreements Rodden Meadow Land Acquisition (£24k) Tickleberry Alley (£5k) SCC Youth funding (£7.5K).

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The Cheese & Grain development was a massive project and although now completed the final bills are due mid-March. While we are uncertain how much the final invoices will be we have incorporated an estimated amount into this forecast. Based on this estimate the predicted forecast for year end 2013/14 is that total FTC expenditure will come within budget.

Reserves/Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet at appendix 5 shows the deposits currently held in the bank and investments. Total reserves stand at £1,241,883 as at 31 December 2013.

Section 106 agreements

Continued pressure from FTC regarding the Mendip Lodge Hotel S106 Tourism Contribution due from the demolition of the hotel, has resulted in MDC securing £38k with the developer in settlement of this obligation. We are in discussion with MDC about how to use this amount to promote Frome.

The McCarthy & Stone, Rossetti House development (£10,000) was approved by EAC to add to the funding for the implementation of the River Frome Project and is being considered by MDC.

The enhancement of the Showfield (£44,398.00) is still waiting MDC approval. Similarly, acquisition of the new play area at Garston Road has been held up because of uncertainties regarding an underground water tank that was installed without the knowledge of either MDC or ourselves.

Investments

At the previous IAC meeting an Investment Strategy was adopted and current investments are 90 day with Lloyds (£300k) 3 months with Triodos (£145k) CCLA (£125k) and Mendip Credit Union (£1k). These investments are either short term or instant access.

Recommendation

Note the Council's main areas of income and expenditure, the third quarter year end forecast, the update on main s106 budgets and the status of FTC investments.

8 For Information - Staff handbook update on flexible working policy

Author: Town Clerk

Summary

There have been two formal and one informal request recently for more flexible working. All of these would result in a full time member of staff working a compressed four day week, while working the same amount of hours.

The approach I have taken has been to consider each request on its merits as summarised in the Staff Handbook (see appendix 6) I took advice on how to proceed

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when I received, before Christmas, the second formal request. Our HR advisor is South West Employers and they forwarded me a policy which provides a structure on how to deal with such request that is neutral and transparent. I followed the process in determining the second request and have come to an agreement in principle with the officer. The detail needs to be agreed but I expect the outcome will be mutually beneficial.

Recommendation

Given the usefulness of the policy from SW Employers I have amended it slightly to refer to Frome Town Council and propose that it is adopted as part of the Staff Handbook.

9 For Decision – To approve job description for the Planning & Regeneration Apprentice

Author: Economic Development & Regeneration Manager

At the meeting of Internal Affairs Committee meeting on 9 October 2013, councillors asked officers to draft a job description for the post of an apprentice to work in the Sustainable Economic Regeneration Team which now has a working title of Planning & Regeneration Apprentice. The proposed job description can be seen below.

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Planning & Regeneration Apprentice

Job Purpose

1. To enhance knowledge in order to attain accreditation in a series of formal qualifications equivalent to NVQ level 4 or BTEC Level 3 Diploma
2. To develop on-the-job skills in local government administration, including planning, economic development, town centre regeneration, tourism promotion and other areas of work that make use of new rights and powers for communities under the Localism Act
3. To provide clerical support and administrative assistance with the day to day functions of the Town Council

Salary Starting salary of £7,696 per annum (depending on age)

Responsible to Planning & Development Officer

Responsibilities and Duties

1. To provide administrative and clerical support to Town Council Officers and Councillors including administration of the Planning Sub-Committee

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2. To work as part of the Sustainable Economic Regeneration Team to ensure an efficient function is maintained
3. To assist with personal, telephone and internet callers dealing sensitively and courteously with their enquiries
4. To provide excellent Council, tourist, local business, visitor and general town information to the public including keeping the Discover Frome website up-to-date
5. To process sales of tickets and merchandise, as required
6. To carry out printing, photocopying, filing and faxing as requested
7. To assist in arranging and facilitating meetings
8. To attend meetings and take minutes
9. To utilise various software to prepare correspondence, meeting information and the maintenance of databases and spreadsheets e.g. business and property databases and information on local shopping facilities
10. To support the Team in relevant research
11. To monitor, record and report complaints regarding street cleanliness to the relevant authorities
12. To support town and community events
13. To take part in the appraisal process and be responsible for personal development
14. To undertake identified training
15. To take on additional duties and responsibilities that are in line with the grade

General

The post holder has personal responsibility for safety in accordance with Health and Safety legislation and Council policies.

All staff are required to abide by and promote equalities within the Town Council as outlined in the NJC Pay & Conditions of Service and Council's Constitutional Policies.

This job is reflective of the current position and is subject to review and alteration in detail and emphasis in the light of future changes or developments.

Frome Town Council is a Quality Town Council authority and therefore all members of staff are required to be aware of the Council's performance and endeavour to maintain this high standard.

The responsibility for the smooth running of the Authority is incumbent on all members of staff. During times of absence of colleagues or high workloads, you will be expected to help with or take on additional duties and responsibilities that are in line with the grade.

This position is office based and involves liaising with colleagues both within and outside the Council. There is limited travel involved, no regular anti-social shifts required although attendance at meetings normally takes place outside of normal office hours, for which time off in lieu can be taken.

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The normal working hours of this post are 37 hours per week, 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. This is made up of 30 hours based in the office and 7 hours for study time/day release at college. There will be a requirement for some attendance at weekend town events organised by the Town Council for which time off in lieu would apply. It should be noted that this is an apprenticeship position. Once the NVQ 4 has been achieved the apprenticeship will either cease or a permanent position may be offered, if one is available. Although there is no guarantee of a future job with Frome Town Council, there should be plenty of employment opportunities available for a fully qualified and experienced person in the local government or third sector.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS

A good general education including 5 GCSE grades A-C (including English and Maths).

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS – ESSENTIAL

Good literacy, numeracy and communication skills

Strong administrative aptitude

Ability to work under pressure

Flexible approach to work

Good IT skills especially Microsoft Office packages to manage all electronic communications including social media

Confident, professional and personable character

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS – DESIRABLE

Strong local community and local government knowledge

Knowledge of planning, economic regeneration and tourism services

Event organisation skills

Recommendation

Approve the above job description and person specification for the Planning & Regeneration Apprentice and delegate recruitment to the Town Clerk

10 For information - Health and safety update for Outside Services

Author: Grounds and Properties Manager

Summary

The town council recently engaged the services of Mr David Cox to review its safety procedures and documentation.

The conclusions were that we needed to update our risk assessments, control of substances hazardous to health and formalise the staff briefing system as well as recommendations on fire control and environmental management.

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Background

The last time Frome town council had a comprehensive review of its H&S procedures was in 2008 with some interim work done on specific items in 2010/11. I felt it was important to have an independent review of our current procedure's and get expert advice on what we need to do to achieve best practice. Mr Cox compiled a report outlining various updates and methods that would best suit our current service including the following:

- New five point risk assessment forms to demonstrate that risk has been reduced
- New format for the COSHH forms which are now laminated and used within the parks office
- A briefing sheet / method statement that enables staff to contribute to the health and safety assessment of each task
- Fire escape and risk for the parks office

The report includes an action plan and we have been working through this since we received it and have carried out the following works:

- Update and rewrite of all the old risk assessments to the new five point system
- Update and rewrite of all the COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health forms)
- Adoption of a new works briefing sheet
- New Fire notices and escape plan to include the greenhouse

I still have to implement the recommendations to obtain certification in the following:

- BS EN 14001:2004 (Environmental management)
- BS OHSAS18001:2007 (health and safety management)
- BS EN ISO 9001:2008 (quality management)

I am currently exploring distance learning courses to qualify in safety management to help achieve the above and have joined the institute of groundsmanship to enable access to up to date information and procedures within the industry

Conclusion

This has been a very valuable exercise, keeping up to date with changing legislation and best practice is extremely difficult for a small team of people. Commissioning the work from an H&S expert has been illuminating and has made me feel much more confident that what the outside services are asked to do is safe

In the coming months I will be carrying out a similar exercise for the remaining areas of work that staff cover. These are in the town office and the Library. I will report back to this committee of the results.

I ask the committee to note the above report.

11 The next meeting will be at 7pm on Wednesday 9 April, Palmer Street Office

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Draft Minutes of a meeting of the Internal Affairs Committee

Tuesday 3 December at 7pm
Saxonvale Centre, Garsdale, Frome. BA11 1RZ

Present:

Councillors: Toby Eliot; Peter Macfadyen; Mel Usher
Alex Shingler (Deputy Mayor for Young People)

In attendance:

Paul Wynne (Town Clerk), Jackie Wheeler (Responsible Finance Officer), Laura Poulton (Administration Officer)

4 members of the public

Minute Ref	Agenda Item	Action
2013/83/IAC	<p>1 QUESTIONS, COMMENTS AND INFORMATION FROM THE PUBLIC</p> <p>Cllr Eliot expressed his thanks to all FTC staff who were involved in the organization of the Frome Christmas Extravaganza for 2013.</p> <p>Charles Wood enquired as to whether there was any progress with the One Frome initiative. Cllr Usher explained that there had been no progress despite writing to MDC twice. He noted that he was yet to have a response from them.</p>	
2013/84/IAC	<p>2 a. APOLOGIES</p> <p>The Chairman formally opened the Council meeting at 7.05pm and apologies of absence were received from Cllrs Goldfinger and Moore and Cara Honey (Mayor for Young People).</p>	
2013/85/IAC	<p>2 b. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS</p> <p>None were received</p>	
2013/86/IAC	<p>2 c. MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the Internal Affairs Committee meeting held on 9 October 2013 were approved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.</p>	
2013/87/IAC	<p>3 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS ACTIONS AND WHAT IS COMING UP NEXT TIME</p> <p>The Town Clerk noted that Participate Frome week identified a need for a community database which would now be considered for inclusion on the one of the new websites currently in development.</p>	

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2013/90/IAC	<p>6 FOR DECISION – INVESTMENT STRATEGY Cllrs noted the paper.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The principles are accepted as the strategy for investment of FTC reserves 2. The Responsible Finance Officer invests FTC reserves 3. In future, investment decisions are delegated to the Responsible Finance Officer in discussion with the chair of the IAC <p>Proposed Cllr Eliot, seconded Cllr Usher, agreed unanimously.</p>	JW
2013/91/IAC	<p>7 FOR DECISION – TO APPROVE JOB DESCRIPTION FOR THE ENERGY AND RECYCLING OFFICER The Town Clerk informed Cllrs that the salary had been set at £24,289 pro rata for half time. He also noted that the post would be advertised in the first half of January 2014.</p> <p>The recommendation was to approve the job description and person specification for the Energy and Recycling Officer.</p> <p>Proposed Cllr Usher, seconded Cllr Macfadyen, agreed unanimously.</p>	
2013/92/IAC	<p>12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING The next meeting will be at 7pm on Tuesday 4 February, Palmer Street Offices</p>	
<p>The Chair closed the meeting at 7.41pm</p>		