

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

Finance, Community and Policy Committee

18th November 2019

Present: Councillors Geoffrey Andrews, Simon Arundel (from item 6), Kevin Cranston, Rob Green, Margaret Poulton and Alan Sage (Chair)

Absent: Cllr Dechan

In attendance: Cllr Camilla Hale, Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Kate Kay (Stroud Subscription Rooms Trust)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs John Bloxsom (work), John Marjoram (personal) and Lucas Schoemaker (personal)

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Dispensations

There were no requests for dispensations.

4. Questions from the public

There were no questions.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 14th October 2018 were **approved** by those present and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

6. Report from the Stroud Subscription Rooms Trust

Kate Kay presented a report from the Trust on progress after 6 months since the Trust took on the management of the Subscription Rooms. She thanked the Council and the Council officers for their ongoing support.

It was reported that the financial situation had been challenging, especially in view of the lack of bookings inherited from Stroud District Council, but from September income had greatly improved. It was noted that many practicalities have been dealt with, for example setting up accounts systems, creating a new website and dealing with the staff transfers and contracts. The Trust are now focusing on addressing the need for a change of operational culture and working styles and developing volunteering opportunities.

ACTION

Cllr Arundel arrived.

It was reported that one of the Trustees had stepped down and subsequently been contracted as an interim consultant artistic director. The Clerk confirmed that Charity Commission rules regarding this had been checked, but the Committee requested that the Trust double-check.

SSRT

With regard to fundraising it was noted that decisions on several grant applications were due, but it was acknowledged that many funders are reluctant to fund an organisation with a limited financial track record. The Trust had therefore decided to make the most of the existing bars and café by completing cosmetic refurbishments, until such time as funds are available for more significant renovations.

Councillors were asked to encourage community groups and events to make use of the Subscription Rooms. Cllr Hale provided feedback on the recent Book Festival.

Regarding the financial situation it was reported that the situation is improving after a shaky start and there is now greater clarity on the running costs than was apparent from data provided by Stroud District Council. Current measures to improve income include: trialling a new model for the cafe and selling tickets for external events. The Trust are also urgently reviewing staffing arrangements.

The Mayor thanked the Trustees for stepping up and congratulated them on the much improved programme of events.

7. Trial project on volunteer recruitment and development

The Committee considered a proposal to fund a volunteer coordinator post to be employed by the Stroud Subscription Rooms Trust. The purpose of the role would be to recruit and develop volunteers at the Subscription Rooms, with the potential for this to be expanded to the wider arts and cultural sector in Stroud town.

It was **resolved** to recommend to Council a grant of £10,000 to the Stroud Subscription Rooms Trust from the council's Arts and Cultural Strategy budget to fund: the salary/PAYE and pension contributions for the post for 6 months, volunteer training and IT equipment if required. It was **agreed** that a project steering group should be set up including Cllr Hale and representatives from the Subscription Rooms and Lansdown Hall. The group would be required to provide a written progress report to the Committee after 4 months to enable consideration of further funding beyond the first 6 months.

Clerk

8. Authorisation of payments

It was **resolved** to authorise payments listed in **Appendix A** from October 2019.

9. Budget Monitoring

The budget monitoring report to end of October 2019 was noted.

10. Appointment of internal auditor

It was **resolved** to appoint GAPTC auditor Julie Shirley.

Clerk

11. Development works at Lansdown Hall

The Committee considered a report and budget for improvement works at Lansdown Hall. Cllr Hale introduced the plans.

There was some concern about the small number of responses to the public consultation and the impact that this might have on the success of any grant applications. Although there are funds held in reserve for the project, based on the cost estimate provided at least £120,000 would need to be raised from other sources.

There was a discussion about potentially splitting the work into two phases, but it was felt that this would be detrimental to the potential for grant funding.

It was **agreed** to refer the report to full Council without a recommendation to enable wider discussion of the proposal. The Clerk was asked to contact the Lansdown Hall and Gallery trustees for an update on their business plan and to seek their support for fundraising. The Clerk was also asked to report on the CO2 implications of the works.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

12. Lansdown Hall and Gallery Service Level Agreement

It was **resolved** in view of the potential for delay in starting improvement works, and to allow for any loss of income while works are carried out, to extend the current service level agreement for 12 months from 1/4/2020.

Clerk

13. Request for funding from the Cotswold Canals Trust

It was **agreed** to offer in principle a grant of up to £5,000 for the purchase of an additional mud hopper, subject to funding also being sought from the other parishes along the canal route.

Clerk

The Clerk was asked to remind the Trust of the agreed spending priorities for the balance of the canal fund reserve.

Clerk

14. Uplands Care Services Level Agreement

It was **agreed** in principle to renew the current service level agreement subject to receipt of an annual report.

Clerk

15. Draft budget for carbon reduction projects

A draft long-term budget was **approved**, but the Clerk was asked to keep the whole budget under regular review and to consider making allowance for normal equipment and vehicle replacements, and bringing forward offsetting.

Clerk

16. Draft budget for NDP projects

A draft budget was **approved**.

17. Draft Committee budget for 2020-21

The Clerk and Cllr Green, as Chair of the Personnel Committee, explained the impact on the staff budget of staff increments and the estimate of potential salary increases arising from the national agreement of local government employees. It was reported that a review of four posts had been authorised by the Personnel Committee and that any recommendations impacting on the staff budget would be reported before the final budget is agreed.

It was noted that a new budget for community safety had been included. It was recommended that the budget for carbon reduction grants should be kept under review depending on demand.

The draft Committee budget was **approved** for recommendation to Council.

Clerk

18. Minutes

The minutes of the following meetings were received:

Sub Rooms Working Group

25th October

The meeting closed at 10.02pm.

Chair

Date

Appendix A – payments October 2019

Date Paid	Ref	Transaction Detail	Total	Payee Name
02/10/2019	B/P	Stroud-Chalford cycle project	£6,034.20	Witteveen + Bos UK Ltd
02/10/2019	10643	Biscuits,etc.	£9.67	STC
02/10/2019	10643	SN&J	£3.00	STC
02/10/2019	10643	WWT Slimbridge	£73.67	STC
02/10/2019	10643	Coffee,milk,etc.	£28.64	STC
02/10/2019	10643	Mammal food	£2.00	STC
02/10/2019	10643	Room hire	£10.00	STC
02/10/2019	10641	Cemetery gate-October 19	£125.00	Mrs.J.Knee
02/10/2019	10642	Postage stamps	£235.80	Post Office Ltd
07/10/2019	D/D	Diesel 123.88L; Unleaded29.62L	£192.66	Allstar
07/10/2019	10644	Accessibility access-SVA,CP	£360.00	Accessible Gloucestershire
08/10/2019	10645	PAYE	£4,686.76	HMRC
09/10/2019	13746	Office&Admin services July19	£222.00	Aero21
09/10/2019	13747	PD Resistograph test &report DB	£360.00	All Tree Services Ltd.
09/10/2019	13748	Domestic water services- June19	£130.00	Enviroflo (Midlands)
09/10/2019	13749	Business cards	£50.00	JAMES & OWEN LTD
09/10/2019	13750	Planting	£453.20	The Nursery at Miserden
09/10/2019	13751	Play sessions	£3,291.88	Play Gloucestershire
09/10/2019	13752	Royal Mail-response services	£47.07	Royal Mail Group Ltd.
09/10/2019	13753	Safety boot,etc.	£233.86	SAFPRO INDUSTRIAL SUPPLY COMPA
09/10/2019	13754	SDC-contribution to Warden Sch	£2,000.00	Stroud District Council
09/10/2019	13755	Rental bin - September 19	£18.00	Smiths (Gloucester) Ltd
09/10/2019	13756	Fundraising Services - Sept.19	£860.00	Nadja Gajadharsingh
09/10/2019	13757	Stroud 2D map	£400.00	Silvermaze Ltd
09/10/2019	13758	Plywood	£86.69	Travis Perkins Trading Co Ltd.
09/10/2019	13759	Grave digging	£550.00	Teleshore Ltd
09/10/2019	13760	Bottled water	£22.25	Thirsty Work Ltd.
09/10/2019	13761	Fee-appraisal&report on TH	£840.00	HAWKINS WATTON LTD
14/10/2019	10647	Training 22.07.19	£43.50	SLCC Glocs & Sth Clocs
14/10/2019	10646	3 month media consultancy	£2,225.00	Damselfly Communications Ltd
15/10/2019	D/D	Payroll - October 19	£16,770.34	Payroll
15/10/2019	D/D	Pensions LGPS - October 19	£5,882.53	Payroll
15/10/2019	D/D	Rates - October 19	£737.00	SDC
15/10/2019	D/D	Rates - October 19	£915.00	SDC
16/10/2019	10648	Expenses May-October 19	£466.34	K.Cranston
17/10/2019	10649	StroudGoodwill Evening - Grant	£1,500.00	Stroud Goodwill Evening
17/10/2019	10650	Art Couture Painswick-Grant	£500.00	Art Couture Painswick

17/10/2019	10651	PCC Stroud St Laurence-Grant	£300.00	PCC Stroud St Laurence
17/10/2019	10652	Stroud Wassail - Grant	£250.00	Stroud Wassail
21/10/2019	D/D	Hire agreement-battery	£30.00	RCI Finance Services Ltd
24/10/2019	D/D	Payroll -October 19	£59.34	SGW Payroll Ltd.
25/10/2019	D/D	Call charges - September 19	£75.54	Lister Communications Ltd.
28/10/2019	D/D	Call charges - October 19	£70.37	EE phone
29/10/2019	13762	Installation IR System	£3,697.45	Avelec Solutions Ltd
29/10/2019	13763	Grass cutting works-August19	£2,208.00	Countrywide Grounds Maintenance
29/10/2019	13764	Site materials	£29.80	HHGL Limited
29/10/2019	13765	Larch Close Boarded Fencing	£3,238.77	Hailey Wood Sawmill Ltd
29/10/2019	13766	IT services - September 19	£919.63	ITEC Support Ltd
29/10/2019	13767	Parish Online29.10.19-29.10.20	£270.00	GeoXphere Ltd
29/10/2019	13768	Training Seminar 30.10.19	£600.79	SLCC Enterprises Ltd
29/10/2019	13769	Stroud Alarms-replace batteries	£9.09	Stroud Alarms Fire and Security
29/10/2019	13770	A4 map pads	£190.00	Silvermaze Ltd
29/10/2019	13771	Town Newsletters Autumn	£516.00	Wheatley Printers Ltd.
02/10/2019	D/CARD	Van Seat Covers	£53.90	Rhino Uk Bootliners Ltd.
09/10/2019	D/CARD	Ceiling Pull Cord	£10.73	Ribble Valley Building Service
09/10/2019	D/CARD	Flu Voucher x7	£66.50	Lloyds Pharmacy
11/10/2019	D/CARD	Rectangle Mirrors	£21.84	Amazon.co.uk