

**Minutes of the Finance & Governance Meeting**  
**held (electronically) on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

Present: Cllr's M Clarke, N Clarke, A Harris, T Hill, B Lewis, J Pratt, R Smith

Town Clerk: K Grabham

Assistant Clerk: S Watkins

In Attendance: Cllr J Manley

**1. Apologies for Absence**

None.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

None.

**3. To consider item – Town Council Website – Cllr N Clarke**

Cllr N Clarke proposed that Councillors and the Town Clerk should look at revamping the website to make some improvements in order to try and make it more vibrant and user friendly. Comparisons were made to another website Clydach Community Council and suggested that Council could follow a similar format for our website.

Cllr M Clarke suggested that Council should perhaps take a lead in supporting our local businesses and develop a way in which our Tourism is supported in the town via the Town Council website.

**Resolved to recommend: - That the Clerk looks at the website, and to take the re-development forward in liaising with our website designers. The content of the website should include photographs of different wards and also include a digital marketing strategy.**

**4. Town Clerk Reports**

- a) January 2021 Accounts
- b) Bank Reconciliations April 2020 – January 2021
- c) Payments of Accounts from April 2020 – January 2021
- d) PML Accountants Notice
- e) Audit Update 2019/2020
- f) Internal Audit Provision 2020/2021
- g) Bank Signatories
- h) DBS Checks
- i) Recording of Meetings
- j) Supplier Invoice Query

- a) The Clerk explained that this document clarifies the financial position of Porthcawl Town Council at the end of January 2021. The Clerk further advised that any queries can be answered following the meeting.

**Resolved to recommend:- To approve the accounts as presented.**

- b) The Clerk advised that she is aware that spot checks have been undertaken throughout the year.

**Resolved to recommend:- To approve the bank reconciliations as presented.**

- c) The Clerk advised that all payments that are made by Council should be placed on an agenda prior to payment in order that they can be recorded as required in the minutes.

**Resolved to recommend:- To note for information.**

- d) The Clerk reminded Members that PML Accountants have been in place providing the Town Council accounts since October 2019. It was advised that if the contract is to be terminated with PML they would require three months written notice. The Clerk advised that she had liaised with the Chair and Deputy Chair with regards some accounting software packages and ran through the different options of software packages that are available. The Clerk advised that she would undertake some further investigation in respect of accounting and software packages including the cost implications and report back to the Finance & Governance committee. It was agreed that the Finance & Governance committee should be guided by the Town Clerk of when she felt thoroughly satisfied with the timescales to terminate the contract with PML.

**Resolved to recommend:- To terminate the contract with PML Accountants in April 2021 with the actual date of termination to be determined by the Town Clerk. That the Town Clerk explores the appropriate accountancy packages for Council and to discuss with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Finance & Governance Committee.**

- e) The Clerk ran through the Audit process of Council. It was explained that the first and second years would be the normal audit years but on the third year an in-depth audit would be undertaken and that this would be the process for all Councils. Members were informed that a more in depth external audit is currently being undertaken by a Mr Ian Hughes due to correspondence being

received from members of public. Members were informed that Mr Hughes is attending the Full Council meeting next week. The Clerk advised that the 2019/2020 audit has not been undertaken as yet and this would be undertaken at the same time by Mr Hughes as Audit Wales have replaced BDO for all town and community councils.

- f) The purpose of report is for the Clerk to obtain authority to get three written quotes for an internal auditor for Council to be compliant. The Clerk advised that the internal auditors would be asked to provide references from previous Town Councils of whom they had carried out audit work for within their quote. The Clerk ran through the expectations from an internal auditor on the items that they would be checking when undertaking an Audit of Council. Trace all procedures of any payments that have been made. The Clerk advised that there is an Internal Auditor Guide available of the items that the Auditor should be checking.

**Resolved to recommend:- That the Town Clerk has the delegated authority to obtain written quotes from three Internal Auditors for 2021/2022.**

- g) The Clerk advised that the purpose of the Town Clerk & RFO to be placed on the bank mandates is so that the Clerk can be an authorised signatory for Council in order to obtain access to accounts and submit any Council payments for another signatory to authorise the payments.

**Resolved to recommend:- That the Town Clerk & RFO is authorised as a first signatory on the Town Council Accounts and that a Councillor is a second signatory to authorise any payments on behalf of Council.**

- h) The Clerk sought some advice from BCBC regarding an enhanced DBS checks and their recommendation was that Council should implement DBS checks if setting up a Youth Council. It was advised that a meeting could be held with the agreed four Members of the Youth Council and The BCBC Officer. It was explained that the four Members had been consulted regarding this and three responses had been received to date.

Cllr M Clarke advised that as a matter of course going forward Council should undertake DBS checks for any Councillor who works with children as every other organisation in Wales do.

Discussion took place surrounding the safe storage of the DBS checks within Council. The Clerk advised that individual Councillors could have their own DBS checks done if preferred and the findings could be shown to the Town Clerk. The DBS document could then be stored in a sealed envelope and

placed in a document safe if Council choose to do so. It was agreed that the only persons that would have access to any Councillor DBS checks would be the Town Clerk and these would not be shared with any other persons. Cllr L Tallon-Morris suggested that Council should obtain some legal advice initially from a solicitor to establish the type of DBS that council requires for the Youth Council Members.

**Resolved to recommend:- That the Town Clerk proceeds with DBS checks for the agreed Councillors involved with the Youth Council.**

**Resolved to recommend:- That the Clerk liaises with HR Dept. to determine as to whether or not they could hold the DBS checks for Councillors and for the Clerk to have consultations with HR Dept. not individual Councillors.**

- i) The Clerk advised that Council must pass a resolution and that Standing Orders would need to be changed prior to any Council meetings being recorded. It was advised that the resolution of Council/Standing Orders would need to outline the reasoning behind the recording of Council minutes. It was advised that should a member of the public request a copy of the recording of the meetings then this would need to be provided. It was suggested that the Clerk makes enquiries with Maesteg Town Council and other local Councils to establish as to whether they record their meetings and how it works. The Clerk advised that discussions had already taken place with one Council.

**Resolved to recommend:- That the Clerk initially explores the recording of Council meetings further in terms of liaising with other Town Councils and report back to Full Council for further discussion.**

- j) The Clerk advised that since the agendas had been sent out it had come to light that an email had been received in January 2021 to the previous Town Clerk's, Alison Thomas' e-mail account in relation to an offer of a refund by KSS for the amount of £2,700. The reason for the refund was due to the works for the benches not being undertaken in 2019. Councillor M Clarke advised Members of the process at the time in relation to the payment of the KSS invoice.

**Resolved to recommend:- To note the content of the report for information.**

*The meeting concluded at 9.18pm*