



NEWARK TOWN COUNCIL

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FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 8th November 2017 in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall.

Membership Present:	Councillor	D Lloyd (in the Chair)
	Councillors	M G Cope (Vice-Chairman) Mrs C Barker-Powell (Ap) Mrs I Brown M Cleasby Mrs R Crowe R A Crowe Mrs G Dawn P Duncan Ms H Gent K Girling (Ap) L Goff S Haynes D Hyde D Jones T Roberts MBE M Skinner R Williams
Apologies for Absence:	Councillors	Mrs C Barker-Powell, K Girling
Officers Present:	Town Clerk	Alan Mellor
	Market Manager	Ian Harrison
Taking Notes:	PA to the Town Clerk	Helen Crossland
	There was one member of the public present.	
Venue:	Council Chamber, Town Hall	

FGP38/17/18 Minutes of the last meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 4th October 2017

The Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 4th October 2017 were **AGREED** as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

FGP39/17/18 Matters Arising

There were no Matters Arising.

FGP40/17/18 Declarations of Interest

It was **AGREED** to accept any Declarations of Interest as and when they arose during the meeting.

FGP41/17/18 Payment Schedule 6/18

Cllr M Cleasby queried the costs for Brass Bands within the payment schedule and asked if these costs were negotiated; the Town Clerk responded that he tried to keep costs as low as possible, however, sometimes only one particular band may be available on a certain date. If that was the case, there would be no choice as to which band was booked as the dates could not be moved.

Members then **AGREED** that payment in accordance with Payment Schedule 6/18 in the sum of £208,021.88p (two hundred and eight thousand, and twenty one pounds and 88p) be **APPROVED**.

FGP42/17/18 Voluntary Body/Community Events Grant Applications

Cllr M Skinner asked if all submission for grants were now electronic; the Town Clerk responded that the applications were available electronically but he was also happy to accept handwritten forms if necessary.

Members then considered the proposed changes to the Voluntary Body Grants Policy and application form, and **AGREED** to them, as in the Agenda Report.

FGP43/17/18 Market Operations

The Town Clerk asked if Members would add in to the proposed recommendation the inclusion of 4 bollards in the Cemetery' at recommendation, this was **AGREED**

The Market Manager talked through the Agenda Report for the benefit of Members.

With regard to the bollards (paragraph 4), the Market Manager reported that the contractor had agreed that they would be in place by the end of this month.

Cllr Mrs R Crowe asked about the road outside of the Town Hall; cars were still coming into the Market Place. The Town Clerk said that this would be monitored to see what the impact was with the introduction of the new bollards.

Cllr Mrs R Crowe then asked about the two benches that had been situated outside of the Town Hall prior to the renovations. The Town Clerk responded that they were on their way back, they have been renovated by the College. The delay was that there had been a problem with the colour for the metalwork on the benches – the 'Royalist Claret' that the Town Council had decided upon for the corporate branding policy was proving difficult to match for metal.

Paragraph 6 **Operational Performance** was then discussed. The Market Manager informed Members that there had been some new traders from April of this year, and that it was clear this was as a result of introducing discounts for those new traders. The total income should rise once the discounts have stopped.

The table within the report did not reflect this fact, as only income was shown, not the number of traders standing.

Cllr T Roberts MBE felt that it would be useful to show the percentage of occupancy of the stalls, day by day, and week by week, within the table. The Market Manager agreed that this could be done; he also said that most markets in Nottinghamshire were experiencing the same difficulties with trader numbers.

Cllr L Goff then spoke; he said he was pleased to see that the percentage of recycling had increased from the trade waste on the market; however, he felt that the new position of the catering units was blocking the public view of the Town Hall.

He also asked how the market was publicised, and whether or not the discounted rates for example were shown on the website.

The Market Manager said that on the promotion side various forms of social media were used, Facebook and Twitter for example. Direct mailshots to market traders were also undertaken and he felt that general promotion of the market had increased sevenfold. He also talked about the youth initiative that he had become involved in, as outlined in the report.

The Town Clerk spoke with regard to the siting of the catering units; he pointed out that the whole point of bringing the food vans into the middle of the market place was to increase the amount of people coming into the area, so that they could sit down and look around whilst eating or drinking, and hopefully see what the market had to offer. With the caterers sited on the edge of the market place, this was not happening.

Cllr P Duncan also felt that the benefit of moving the catering was to open up the side of the market square to the retailers. He reiterated that the key was to get new, possibly younger traders onto the market.

Cllr Ms H Gent asked how the promotion of the market had increased sevenfold, without including it on the website. The Market Manager said that this was as a result of direct trader contact, local and regional journals, Radio Newark, advertising on the back of buses, and shopping bags with Newark Royal Market printed on them. The 'What's On in Newark' guide was also in most retail shops around Newark now too. He also pointed out that he tried to attract the public into the market place with the entertainment that is put on – local buskers and bands for example. A lot of the traders do not use the internet.

Cllr Ms H Gent then asked the Market Manager how he felt the improvements were going so far; he responded that the 'branding' (which would be done by Christmas) would certainly lift the market. He said he would also like to attract more Artisan traders which would attract more families. However, some of these types of new traders lack experience and they should be assisted; this assistance could be sought from the college.

Cllr Mrs I Brown asked if there was any provision made for traders in the event of bad weather, for instance, when they did not take enough money to cover their rent. The Market Manager said that a discounted rate is already in place for this eventuality.

Cllr D Hyde said that the changes made by this authority had been fantastic. He felt that there should be a fixed strategy in place – where do we advertise, how well do we do from this etc.

The Market Manager then spoke about footfall; he informed Members that N&SDC

were pursuing an objective view of footfall in Newark which would be very useful and informative – currently we only have a subjective view.

The Town Clerk said he was not convinced that promoting the market as an ‘entity’ was a worthwhile process; he felt that it was more important to promote the town generally as a place to visit if more people can be attracted into the town then the market, footfall would increase etc. More thought needed to be given as to how to achieve this.

Cllr M Cope then spoke; he felt that there should be a specific website for the market, even if it was only 2 or 3 pages. He also said that the Market Manager had been quoted as saying ‘rents have not increased for several years’ and asked how long the Council had managed to keep rents the same. The Market Manager informed Cllr M Cope that there had been one increase since 2011, and a decrease in rents on certain days of the week. He added that the traffic congestion over the last 6 months around the town had not helped matters.

Cllr D Jones said that markets had declined in general over a number of years; in Newark, one of the issues could be that there is not a car park anywhere near the market.

Cllr R Williams asked if a Vintage Car Show could be put on in the market place; the Market Manager said that at the Christmas Market there would be some classic cars.

The Town Clerk noted that slowly and gradually the culture of how the space is used (in the market place) is improving. The increasing use of the Market Place for local cafes was having a positive effect on the town centre environment.

- (i) Members **NOTED** the changes that have been made to the layout of the stalls in the Market Place, and **CONFIRMED** the proposal to keep the shop frontage area to the North/East free from stalls apart from special events.
- (ii) Members **APPROVED** the operational changes made to the handling of litter and waste from the Market.
- (iii) The submission of a Planning Application for the use of land on Church Walk (adjacent to the side entrance to St Mary’s Church) as a compound for the storage of waste bins was **APPROVED**.
- (iv) Members **APPROVED** the installation of 11 bollards around the perimeter of the Market Place, and 4 bollards in the Cemetery

It was also **AGREED** to review the impact on road in front of the Town Hall, and monitor the need for any restrictions on that road.
- (v) The Market performance for the first half of the financial year was **NOTED**.

It was also **AGREED** to add in the stall occupancy rates on this report for the next meeting.
- (vi) Members **NOTED** the update on Special Events and proposals for events in 2018.

A further recommendation was **AGREED**:

- (vii) To bring forward a market strategy with the time-bound action plan, draft costings and performance matrix to the January meeting.

FGP44/17/18 Events Update

The Town Clerk went through the Agenda Report.

- (i) Members **AGREED** to support the 2018 Armed Forces Day event in the Market Place on Sunday 24th June 2018, along with the possible visitors from Emmendingen.
- (ii) Members **RECEIVED** the report on the Newark Festival 2017 and the Newark Festival 2018.
- (iii) Members **RECEIVED** the report on the Christmas Lights Switch On event.

FGP45/17/18 WW1 100TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

- (i) Members **CONSIDERED** the possible re-location of the Memorial to the Fallen from Newark Cemetery to St Mary's Church grounds.

The Town Clerk informed Members that he had been researching the original siting of the memorial and it appeared to be been put in the cemetery for expedience as no agreement could be reached with regard to the Parish Church grounds.

He had also discovered plans for the Parish Church gardens when they were renovated in 1996. Metal railings were to be put along Appletongate side of the gardens (in line with the railings down each side) and some kind of 'gated access' at the front.

He added that if Members were minded to investigate the possible re-location of the Memorial to the Fallen, then this could form a wider project aimed to improving the area around the Church Gardens. This, in particular, could include the provision of a disabled access. Further some of the words on the stone cross already in situ now need some restoration.

Discussion was then opened on this Agenda Item; Cllr L Goff agreed with the Town Clerk in that the Parish Church was the original preferred site for the memorial but the church hierarchy could not agree, so it was placed in the cemetery. Cllr L Goff felt that the Parish Church grounds were too small and compact; he also asked if a Public Meeting would be called to make this decision.

Cllr Mrs G Dawn said she could not agree with relocating the memorial, and she did not think it was necessary. In the cemetery it is protected, secure and respectful. She felt that putting it in the Church Gardens, with railings all around, would look like a jail. Cllr Mrs Dawn thought that Members should say 'No' to this straight away, and change the recommendations.

Cllr D Jones said that he felt it would be 'disturbing the memory' and that the memorial should be allowed to remain in the cemetery.

Cllr T Roberts MBE informed Members that the current clergy were looking to invigorate the area – to make it a more thoughtful and welcoming place. The church gardens and the memorial already therein are the complete focus of the people of Newark on Armistice Day; there is a need to make this place special and this is the opportunity to do that. He also pointed out that it would be the 100th years of the foundation of the RAF and the Newark Sea Scouts next year.

Cllr D Hyde felt that it would be a more fitting tribute if it were to be placed in the Parish Church gardens.

Cllr Ms H Gent agreed with the recommendation for relocation; she said she could not see any negative aspect.

Cllr R Williams asked if Newark Town Council could declare it to be a 'Garden of Remembrance'. The Town Clerk pointed out that the gardens

are owned by the Church – there will need to be another report to this committee before a decision is made.

Cllr M Cope said he was not necessarily in favour of moving the memorial, nor against it. He said he would like to find out if it was feasible and on behalf of the people commemorated on the memorial he felt that the RBL had their voice.

- (ii) The Town Clerk was then requested to investigate the possible re-location of the Memorial to the Fallen to the Church Gardens and bring a report back to this committee to include the possible cost of the project together with possible improvements to the Church Gardens as discussed above. Also to formally consult with the Royal British Legion and other organisations associated with the Armed Forces on the proposal.
- (iii) It was **AGREED** that a 'Poppy Trail' be created around the Town.

FGP46/17/18 PWLB LOANS

The Town Clerk went through the report; he felt that from a financial perspective this would be a sensible idea.

- (i) Members **AGREED** to fund the capital projects for the new Leisure Centre, Sports Hub and Town Hall renovation by way of borrowing from the PWLB.
- (ii) Members **AGREED** to recommend to the full Town Council that permission is sought to take out PWLB loans up to an agreed value.
- (iii) As a result of (i) and (ii) the Town Clerk was instructed to submit the necessary applications to obtain borrowing approvals.

FGP47/17/18 DISQUALIFICATION CRITERIA FOR COUNCILLORS AND MAYORS

Members made the following comments on the Disqualification Criteria for Councillors and Mayors consultation paper:

- (i) The possibility of including such offences as Council Tax Benefit Fraud as those that would result in disqualification,
- (ii) Concern that the inclusion of Behaviour Orders should only be included if they were applied through the Courts rather than by a Police officer,
- (iii) Needs to be much clearer methodology going into this

It was **AGREED** that the Town Clerk be asked to submit comments to the Government taking account of the comments made above.

Meeting Closed:	9.20pm	Next Meeting:	Wednesday 6th December 2017
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