

**MINUTES OF THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2015 AT THE GUILDHALL TOTNES**

Present: Councillors Harper (Chairman), Cohen, Horsburgh, Boswell, Paine and Westacott MBE

Apologies: Councillor Marion Adams

In Attendance: Helen Nathanson (Town Clerk)

No	Subject	Comments
1	To receive apologies and to confirm that any absence has the approval of the Council.	It was <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the apologies be accepted.
2	To elect a Deputy Chairman of the Committee.	Councillor Horsburgh was elected to be Deputy Chairman of the Committee.
	<i>The Committee will adjourn for the following item:</i>	
	Public Question Time: A period of 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make comment regarding the work of the Committee or other items that affect Totnes.	No members of the public were in attendance.
	<i>The Committee will convene to consider the following items:</i>	
3	To consider any matters arising from the last meeting.	The following matters arose: The installation of a defibrillator is still being investigated and the Civic Hall Working Group will be asked to discuss it in due course. The Guildhall wedding licence application has been submitted. The planters for the Plains have been ordered and will be planted up by Totnes Gardens as soon as they arrive.
4	To approve the 2015 Insurance Renewal quotation and schedule.	Councillors checked the renewal schedule and the following items were discussed: The Contents insurance for the Museum needs to be reviewed. The Castle Meadow walls and the Cemetery Walls need an insurance value to ensure that they are covered. The Fidelity cover needs to be raised in accordance with the recommendation from the Internal Auditor.
5	To note the Internal Audit Report.	This was noted.
6	To discuss the production of a TIC Business Plan/Tourism Strategy.	The Town Clerk had received three quotations and proposals from different providers with experience in tourism, which she had discussed with the TIC Manager. The three proposals were from: the manager of a local area tourism partnership; a consultancy which has previously worked with the Town Team to create a town marketing strategy; and a consultant with experience of running TICs and creating area tourism strategies. Discussion was held about these consultants and their skill sets in terms of which would be most appropriate. At this stage, the Committee felt that the third provider had the most relevant skills and experience to carry out the work. After discussion, it was clear that the production of a TIC/tourism plan could be complex and that there was a need

		<p>for councillors and TIC staff to determine the scope before they could commission a plan. Councillors therefore discussed the advantages of holding an information day with a consultant to allow councillors and staff to explore what we want from this process before commissioning the actual plan. It was <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Council contracts the third provider to conduct an initial one-day session as soon as possible and which will include half a day with councillors and half with the relevant staff with the aim of establishing exactly what is required from this plan. There will also be time involved in writing the plan and feeding back to the Council. The Clerk was asked to find out how much this would cost and it was <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Council requests this sum from the Paige Adams Trust. Funding of further work would then need to be discussed.</p>
7	To note the minutes of the Civic Hall Working Group and to approve the recommendations.	<p>It was <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the name of the WG be changed to the Council Venues WG in order to reflect the changing focus of the Group in terms of events and community. The request to move it to the umbrella of the People Committee was considered but it was decided that it should remain with the Operations Committee for now because of the financial focus. However, councillors are conscious of spreading workload across the Committees and asked the Mayors and Chairs Meeting to discuss this.</p> <p>The Clerk explained the need for an external Survey of the Civic Hall. Recently a wall tile fell from the building and narrowly missed a pedestrian, which has highlighted the urgent need to have the building surveyed externally. There is also likely to be urgent work required to the guttering and this needs to be investigated. There has been no external survey since 2008 and it was therefore <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that £1000 be allocated from the Civic Hall maintenance budget to provide an up to date survey.</p>
8	To review the requirements for the Investments Working Group.	<p>The Clerk briefed the councillors about the need for changing the remit of this group to broaden it to include all Town Council assets, including finance. The Committee <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that a small Assets WG of 4 councillors be established. It will be reviewed in 12 months' time and its remit will be to establish a long term assets maintenance plan and to consider the financial implications of this. It will report to the Operations Committee and councillors from other committees will be invited to join.</p>
9	To receive a proposal for refurbishments to the Guildhall office.	<p>The Assets manager joined the meeting to brief councillors about this item. She has put together a package of works to improve the office as a working environment. Councillors were shown around the office to show them the proposals on site.</p> <p>Discussion was held about the proposals and it was agreed that the improvements are necessary. It was therefore <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the proposal for refurbishments to the Guildhall office be accepted. The EMR Buildings Maintenance fund now contains £5,480 and this will be used to make up the shortfall in the £10,000 allocated to office maintenance.</p>

10	To discuss the requirements for out of hours security cover in the Guildhall and Eastgate Clockhouse and to recommend a solution.	<p>The Town Clerk explained the need for changes to the out of hours cover for our monitored buildings – the Guildhall and the Eastgate Clockhouse. Not all staff live in Totnes which slows the response time and there are clear safety implications for female staff responding to alarms in an empty building at night. An alternative option was therefore presented to the Committee as follows:</p> <p>Quotations were received from 2 local security companies and the best quotation was from a company based in Torquay. As keyholders for the Guildhall and the Eastgate Clockhouse they will respond to out-of-hours alarms for £80 per annum and £27.50 per callout with £15 per hour after that as required. In addition, we can switch our alarm servicing contract to them for £300 pa. Our present alarm service provision costs £506 per annum so this is an overall saving of £126 which would cover the emergency callout fee based on the average number of incidents in a year.</p> <p>It was therefore <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that we contract this company as keyholders to the Guildhall and Eastgate Clockhouse and that we switch our alarm servicing provision to them.</p>
11	To receive a request from Totnes Gardens for a payment of £370 for the spraying, rotovating and wildflower seeding of the land at Coronation Road. This service has previously been provided by SHDC at no cost but this is no longer possible.	<p>The Committee discussed the request and the fact that it was made after the work had been carried out. For this reason it was <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Council should not grant payment: any works requiring financial support should be arranged with the Council in advance.</p> <p>It was noted that we do need to discuss the broader issue of grass verge cutting and this will be brought to the next meeting.</p>
12	To note that the Castle Meadow lease has continued under the terms of the previous agreement.	This was noted.
13	To approve the quotation from Vu Online to produce the Totnes Guide for 2016.	<p>The Committee was asked to approve the quotation for Vu to produce next year's Totnes Guide because we have been very happy with the product to date and Vu has a good working relationship with the TIC staff. They hold a bank of photographs and artwork for the Guide and would be ready to start now. Their quotation this year is only a 2.7% increase on last year which represents good value: in the past they have always given the lowest quotation. Once the Council has reviewed the TIC/Tourism business plan, it can then look at the most appropriate options for the future.</p> <p>It was therefore <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the quotation from VU Online to produce the 2016 Totnes Guide be approved.</p>
14	To discuss the letter from a resident of Smithfields regarding the land in the Cemetery.	<p>The Committee discussed this request from a resident to purchase some land which forms part of the Cemetery. Councillor Harper explained that he had made a site visit and spoken to the residents who live either side of the plot. Although the entrance is not used regularly it was felt that this is an important emergency entrance or entrance for larger vehicles and for this reason it was <b>RECOMMENDED</b> that the Council should not sell or lease it at this time.</p>

15	To set the regular time and date of future meetings.	The next meeting will be at <b>10am on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> July</b> and future meeting dates will be decided thereafter.
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MAYOR