

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council
Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee
held in the Council Chamber, Cowbridge Town Hall,
on Tuesday 4th October 2005 at 7.00pm.

Present: Chairman – Councillor J R Harris
Vice-chairman – Councillor G A Cox
Mayor - Councillor Mrs G Baty
Deputy Mayor – Councillor Mrs L Adams
Councillors – Mrs S M Cox, W H Evans, L E Taylor, A Thomas
and Mrs M Y Williams MBE.

In Attendance:
Town Clerk - Mr. Andrew Davies

Item 1: Apologies for Absence
All members present.

Item 2: Declaration of Interests.
Councillor Mrs S M Cox – any matter relating to Cowbridge Charter Trust.

Item 3: Receipts & Payments Account/sundries/Accounts to be paid
Receipts and Payment Accounts for period 1st April 2005 to 30th September 2005 and the statements of bank balances as at 30th September 2005 were circulated to members and read.
Recommended that these accounts be approved.
A list of accounts to be settled from 21st September – 4th October 2005 was circulated to members and read.

Item 4: Matters arising from the Committee meeting held on 6th September 2005.
Councillor G A Cox referred to item 4 in respect of the footpath past the bridge garage development from High Street into the Limes and confirmed that that matter is in hand and being investigated by the Planning Department at the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Item 5: Matters arising from the Full Council meeting held on 20th September 2005.
Councillor Mrs G Baty referred to item 11 in respect of the Article 33 Funding and advised Members that there is no longer any funding available through this means. However, funding is soon to become available from a different source known as the ‘Active Citizens Fund’. This has a maximum limit of £5,000 and also has a match-funding requirement. The application made for Article 33 Funding falls within the categories that this new funding is available for and has to be made through an officer of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.
Proposed by Councillor Mrs G Baty, seconded by Councillor G A Cox that a similar application is made for new ‘information boards’ through the Active Citizens Fund based on the funding available.
Recommended as proposed.

Item 6:

Grant Aid.

6.1

Letter received from Cowbridge Allotments Association applying for funding towards the purchase of a new shed for the use of storage of machinery. Each member currently has the use of shed i.e. 9 allotments for a block of 9 sheds.

Members discussed the application and it was noted from the plan provided that an additional two sheds are sited on the other side of the footpath, a separate section of the allotments. Whilst members have no objection to the proposed addition of one shed to the block of nine they agreed that it should be established that all sheds are being utilised first before proceeding further with the application for financial assistance.

It was confirmed, that the only revenue raised from the allotments by the Town Council is a 'peppercorn rent' of £5.

6.2

Letter of thanks received from Cowbridge in Bloom acknowledging the contribution made by the Town Council towards the costs of the baskets on the lampposts and flower boxes.

Noted.

6.3

Letter of application for financial assistance received from Charlotte Richards, a local student studying at Cambridge University. The basis of the application is to provide funding towards her research for her dissertation involving study into gender issues in China.

Whilst it was agreed by members that the Town Council would be unable to assist Miss Richards, they agreed that a letter should be sent to wish her well and admiring her on her efforts as well as advising her on the Charitable Trusts to whom she may wish to apply within the area.

6.4

Letter of Application for financial assistance received from Cardiff County and The Vale of Glamorgan U14's Cricket Tour to South Africa for a contribution towards the tour, which involved two local Cowbridge boys, Michael Lloyd and Nick Davies.

This application has already been discussed and agreed in principal at the Committee meeting held on 8th March this year but deferred to a date closer to the tour.

Proposed by Councillor A Thomas, seconded by Councillor W H Evans, that a payment of £200.00 be made to the towards the costs of the Cardiff County and Vale of Glamorgan U14's cricket tour to South Africa in February 2006.

Resolved that in pursuance of the power conferred by section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section, the Committee approves the payment of the sum of £200.00 towards the costs of Cardiff County and Vale of Glamorgan U14's cricket tour to South Africa in February 2006.

6.5

Item 7:

Correspondence.

7.1

Information received from the Glamorgan Gem Ltd regarding advertising support for the Food & Drink Festival at the end of October. The Town Council is invited to place an advertisement in the Gem in the same manner as last year.

Noted.

Members agreed that last year was a special occasion as it was the first year the festival had taken place and that specific reference was made to its future success. Members therefore **recommended** that no notice should be placed in respect of this year's festival.

Item 7:

Correspondence. (continued)

7.2

Letter received from Mrs Hazel Coates from Holy Cross Church concerning the forthcoming Christmas Tree Festival to taking place in December. The letter acknowledged the support pledged by the Town Council and sought clarification as to the exact nature that the support would take.

Councillor Harris reminded Members that the Town Council has pledged the sum of £50.00 towards the lighting and decoration of the large tree and that this information should be conveyed to the church as soon as a meeting, yet to be arranged, has clarified the exact location of the tree and any permanent fixtures to remain for annual use.

Item 8:

Staffing – National Agreement on Salaries and Conditions of Service

8.1

Councillor J R Harris advised Members that he has received a request from the Town Clerk for the weekly hours worked by Mrs Jackie Griffin to be increased. The basis of this request is to accommodate an increase in workload within the office, particularly involving planning applications and hiring of the Town Hall, as well as the time now required to deal with an increased number of callers to the office. The increase of hours would allow for a period of ‘working time’ whilst the office is closed and free from callers. Mrs Griffin currently works twenty hours per week and the Town Clerk considers an increase of five hours per week to be necessary to allow a reasonable level of administration service to be maintained. The five hours would be worked on a flexible basis in order to allow for daily needs as well as any additional work required for Civic functions or occasions such as the Heritage Open Day and Christmas.

Proposed by Councillor G A Cox, seconded by Councillor Mrs G Baty that Mrs Griffin’s hours be increased to twenty five hours per week, with effect from 1st November and that the additional five hours are worked on a flexible basis as agreed between the Town Clerk and Mrs Griffin.

Resolved as proposed.

Members also considered the present opening hours for the public and agreed that these might be varied dependant on demand. It was agreed that the number of callers be monitored during the first 30 minutes of the day i.e. between 9am and 9.30am.

Item 9:

Any Other Business.

9.1

Councillor Mrs S M Cox referred to the presentation by members of Holy Cross Church before the last Town Council Meeting and the notes circulated as the result of a previous exploratory meeting involving some members of the Leisure and Amenities Committee. The notes made reference to ownership of the ‘boilerhouse’, which the church is now considering might be theirs. Councillor Mrs Cox referred to the plan, which accompanied the transfer documents relating to the ‘closure’ of the churchyard and its transfer to the then ‘Borough Council’. The boilerhouse is clearly shown as a separate building but does not indicate it as belonging to the church and neither is there any reference made to it in the transfer document itself. It is therefore deemed as being part of the churchyard, which was transferred into the ownership of the ‘Borough Council’ in 1925 under the Welsh Churches Act.

9.2

Councillor Mrs G Baty referred to the lack of a litterbin between the Cross Inn and Three Fields. Councillor G A Cox noted the matter.

Councillor Mrs Baty then referred to entrance to the footpath leading down to Llanblethian from Church Hill. This has become very overgrown and understood it to be the responsibility of the owners of the adjacent house to ‘make good’ after carrying out recent work.

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Item 9: Any Other Business (continued)

9.4 The Town Clerk advised members that an initial meeting was held this week to discuss arrangements for 'Father Christmas' and the switching on of the lights. This year both events will be staged on Sunday 27 November and the reason for this is that the Friday night 'switch on' became so popular that safety became an issue. By holding the event on one day, policing and stewarding will be easier to carry out and greater numbers will be available.

9.5 Councillor Mrs S M Cox made reference to the presentation given by the Birch Grove Woodlands Group to Members of the Council and advised Members that she was aware of some interest being given by local residents who would be looking for any support that the Town Council might be willing to give. Councillor J R Harris agreed that if a formal approach is made to the Council that the appropriate Committee could then consider the matter. Councillor Mrs Baty advised members that at the Leisure and Amenities Committee it was proposed that notices could be displayed on the Town Council notice boards.

Item 10: Date and Time of next Meeting.

Tuesday 8th November 2005 at 7.00pm.

Councillor J R Harris
Chairman.