

**MINUTES** of the Meeting of **BUDGET & POLICY COMMITTEE** held on **TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> APRIL, 2024** at **6.30pm** in **THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, DRAKE ROAD, TAVISTOCK**

**PRESENT**

Councillor P Ward (Chairman)

Councillor U Mann (Vice Chairman)

Councillors Ms M Ewings, A Hutton, Mrs A Johnson

**IN ATTENDANCE** Town Clerk, General Manager, Assistant to the Town Clerk

**379. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no Apologies for Absence received, as all members of the Committee were present.

**380. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED THAT the Minutes of the Meeting of the Budget & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (Appendix 1).

**381. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest made at this point in the Meeting, however please see Minute No. 382 below.

**ITEMS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

**382. GRANTS POLICY & ASSOCIATED ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received and considered the Notes of the Meetings of the Grants Panel held on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024, together with the associated documentation (Appendices 2-6).

The proposed changes to the Grants Policy and Application Form were outlined, with particular reference being made to:

- that the Grants Panel's aim was to encourage smaller applications (up to £500) from smaller groups, who it was felt would benefit most from modest grant payments;
- whether a two-tiered application process might lead to additional work for the facilitating Officer;
- that the revised Application Form seemed to be an improvement, and should assist those organisations applying for Grants of up to £500;
- how any potential oversubscription was planned to be dealt with and associated options such as reducing all awards pro rata,

prioritising those with most support over others etc aligned to a statement from the Chair of the Panel explaining the reason for proceeding as proposed;

- that if there were no oversubscription, that all applications meeting the Council's criteria could receive the amount requested, up to a maximum of £ 2,500;
- a suggestion to increase the Council's Budget allocation should an oversubscription occur and all Grant applications received met the Council's criteria and were deemed worthy of some support.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council, approve and adopt:

- a) the revised Grant Application Form, as appended;
- b) the revised 2024 Grants Policy as detailed on the drafted Grant Application Form;
- c) Assessment of Grant Applications received;
  - Grant Applications of £500 or less to be assessed against Q's 1-8, and 13 & 14 only, thereby introducing a more simplified application process for smaller sums;
  - Grant Applications of between £501 - £2,500 (the maximum) to be assessed against all Q's within the Application Form;
  - a maximum Grant of £2,500 to be introduced, with the exception of the Citizen's Advice Bureau which would continue to receive 20% of the overall Grants Budget, subject to the organisation being able to demonstrate that the residents of Tavistock were still benefitting from the service provided;
  - the Grants Panel will receive copies of the Grant Applications received and will make an initial assessment individually to ascertain if they meet the necessary criteria as outlined in the Grants Policy. The Panel will meet to discuss and agree suggested allocations, with recommendations then being forwarded to the following Budget & Policy Committee Meeting
- d) Allocation of available funding:
  - if any Applications are received which do not meet the criteria, then these will be disregarded and not receive Grant funding;
  - for all Applications received, which are eligible for a Grant, if the total requested does not exceed the available Budget, then all applicants will receive the amount requested;
  - for all Applications received, which are eligible for a Grant, if the total amount requested exceeds the available Budget then a consistent % reduction will be made to each

Application to bring the overall funding below the upper Budget level.

Noted That Councillor U Mann Declared an Interest in respect of the above item (Minute No. 381 above refers), by virtue of an employment relationship and left the room during consideration thereof.

### **383. COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS & ENGAGEMENT**

The Committee received and considered the Report of the General Manager (Appendix 7).

During the ensuing discussion, particular reference was made to:

- The substantial level of engagement with community groups and organisations Tavistock Town Council was already involved in, as demonstrated by the Report, and the extent to which that was/was not more widely recognised;
- how the Town Council could better inform the community of the work it undertook on its behalf;
- communication vis engagement, vis outreach;
- the changed communications 'landscape' post Covid;
- how the Town Council could engage with the members of the community not currently involved in/associated with the various community organisations in the town, and who could be disengaged from the Council;
- the practice of some Mayors, who had proactively interacted with a range of youth and other groups in the town, raising awareness of the Town Council and what it undertook throughout the community, alongside attending those events to which they were invited. These activities were initiated and delivered by the Mayors themselves so did not require organisational resource;
- potential for councillors to identify groups/sectors in the community which were not actively involved with the Council. This could include, but was not limited to, nursing homes, schools and colleges, youth groups (i.e. Scouts, Brownies, Guides etc);
- appearance and functionality of the Council's website, associated sector requirements;
- the other offers of websites which were instead designed to promote the town (such as VISIT Tavistock) and the complementary potential for collaboration between the BID Co, THT and the Council on same;
- potential for designated Councillors to attend at events eg in Butchers' Hall to raise the community's awareness of the work the Council undertook, and enhance links with local residents;

- past practice for the attendance of all Members at the Grants Presentation Event affording access to the groups and organisations in attendance;
- the opportunities and challenges posed by a proactive approach to communications.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council establish a Working Group of up to 5 Councillors, reporting back through the Budget and Policy Committee, to undertake:

- a) a community mapping exercise, including of those interests and individuals not represented by/through organised groups to:
  - i. identify gaps in communication/engagement by the Council;
  - ii. review how councillors can better communicate/engage with the community.
  
- b) By 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2024, identify any changes in functionality as might be considered for inclusion in the upcoming website replacement/procurement exercise.

Noted That the General Manager was thanked for a comprehensive Report.

### **384. HEARINGS PANEL & ASSOCIATED ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received and considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 8) in respect of the above.

It was reported that the Terms of Reference for the Council's current Policy required review, and this was being undertaken at this time in order to progress a flexible working request which had recently been received.

By way of background it was reported that:

- a Hearing Panel would be constituted from 3 members of the Budget & Policy Committee;
- any Appeals Panel would be constituted of 3 Councillors from the remaining members of the Budget & Policy Committee, together with office holders on other Committees;
- only members of a Hearings Panel would receive paperwork on cases coming before it so as to preserve the independence of any potential appeals process. Notwithstanding their name, the two panels were constituted as sub-committees with delegated authority to determine matters within their remit.

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse and adopt the Tavistock Town Council Hearings and Appeals Panel Composition and Terms of Reference as submitted.

### **ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

#### **385. HERITAGE MEETINGS**

i) Tavistock Heritage Alliance – Notes of the Meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (Appendix 9) were received.

#### Noted That;

- clarification was provided with regard to the differences between the two fora; and
- the General Manager undertook to provide the following documents, shortly:
  - Notes of the Tavistock Heritage Alliance Meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2024; and
  - Notes of the Tavistock Heritage Quarter Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2024.

### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **386. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and having regard to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted it was: -

**RESOLVED THAT** the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business.

### **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

#### **387. TRESPASS & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

It was reported that:

- a multi-agency meeting had taken place recently with regard to a rough sleeper on Council land whose behaviour had caused concern and had refused to leave, despite offers of assistance from various agencies;
- in the circumstances arrangements were in hand for a Community Protection Warning (CPW) to be issued and associated proceedings by the Council to secure the premises;
- there appeared to be an increasing incidence of this and related types of anti-social behaviour;

- whether reference should be made in the service risk register to such matters.

## **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS CIRCULATED FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

### **388. NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN – CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

(**CONFIDENTIAL** – by virtue of relating to matters of a legal, financial, staffing or contractual nature affecting persons other than the Council)

The Committee considered the Briefing Note of the Town Clerk (Appendix 10).

RECOMMENDED THAT Tavistock Town Council endorse the engagement of Stuart Todd Associates, as outlined in Appendix 2 of the Briefing Note in the sum of £5845.70 + VAT.

**Addendum** – at the close of the Meeting the General Manager reported discussions with a community group regarding the potential that the Council could assist them with provision of premises for short to medium term storage and related activities. Various venues had been considered alongside such heads of terms as might apply. In particular the possibility (subject to the outcome of the Member visit to inspect properties in that location) of using No1 Market Road was mooted, together with the consensus arising that the option was worthy of further investigation.

Noted that the Mayor, Councillor A Hutton, took no part in the discussion on the above item.

The Meeting closed at 8.02pm.

Signed:

Dated:

CHAIRMAN