



Ordinary meeting, 13 February 2017, 7.00pm at St Helens Community Centre

Present: Councillors: J Bacon, J Coleman, V Duckett, J Robertson, N Ryan, I Thomson;

Clerk: P Baxter;

Public: Three.

## Minutes

Action

Cllr Ryan, Vice Chair, took the Chair for the first item:

### 003/2017 Election of Chairman-

Cllr Robertson proposed, seconded Cllr Duckett, that he be Chairman.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

The Declaration of Acceptance of Office was signed and Cllr Robertson took the Chair.

### 004/2017 Election of Vice Chair-

This item not heard as no vacancy arose.

### 005/2017 Apologies-

Cllr Campbell.

### 006/2017 Declarations of interests and requests for dispensation-

a) No new declarations were made;

b) The Clerk reported that all Members present had submitted requests for dispensation to participate in the later item to set the Council Tax precept. Cllr Thomson proposed, seconded Cllr Coleman, that all requests be granted.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

### 007/2017 Minutes-

Cllr Bacon proposed, seconded Cllr Ryan, that the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2016 be approved.

**Resolved** - Unanimous

Cllr Ryan proposed, seconded Cllr Thomson, that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2017 be approved.

**Resolved (2-0)** – For: Cllrs Ryan and Thomson; Abstained (not present at meeting): Cllrs Bacon, Coleman, Duckett, Robertson.

### 008/2017 Public participation-

Mr Williams complained about the format of public participation as set out on this meeting's agenda. The Chairman undertook that the Council would review how it engages with the public at its meetings.

### 009/2017 Nominations to Planning Committee-

Cllr Coleman proposed, seconded Cllr Thomson, and Cllr Duckett proposed, seconded Cllr Coleman that they be nominated to the Planning Committee.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

### 010/2017 Public toilets provision-

a) The Clerk reported on his contact with IW Council, confirming that it is that Council's intention to cease the provision of public toilets as it is not a statutory requirement. Unless another appropriate body takes on the provision, toilets will be progressively closed on a case by case basis. In the absence of a timetable for such closures, and as this Council is required to set a budget and the Council Tax precept at this meeting, it is necessary to establish a policy provision on interim arrangements in order that prudent financial plans can be made.

b) Cllr Ryan proposed, seconded Cllr Bacon, that the current 'Tenancy at Will' management agreement with IW Council continue until 31 March 2018, or earlier termination as required.

**Resolved (4-0)** – For: Cllrs Bacon, Coleman, Robertson, Ryan; Abstained: Cllrs Duckett, Thomson.

c) The matter of continuing current cleaning arrangements was deferred to the next meeting pending clarification of the current service.

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### 011/2017 Grounds maintenance contract 2017-2019-

- a) The Clerk reported that three tenders had been received, from the four invitations to bid. The Clerk presented the analysis table circulated, and summarised the findings.
- b) Cllr Ryan proposed, Cllr Bacon seconded, that Contractor A be the preferred contractor subject to any pre-contract enquiries necessary for the (financial) three-year period 2017-2019 inclusive.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

### 012/2017 Finance-

- a) The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) presented a draft budget for 2017-18, noting that a balanced and lawful budget can be set whilst maintaining the Band D equivalent value of £52.24 that would produce a £29,860 precept. The budget would include a reduced Council Tax Support Grant and a cost-recovery grant of £1000 from IW Council, the latter towards the expense of grass cutting on The Greens. Concern was expressed for the new provision of a 'grants' budget, and for the lack of expenditure outturn forecasts for the current year. The RFO clarified the opportunities that having a grants budget would bring, that virements between budgets can be made during the year, and that the current difficulties in accessing bank information arising during the handover process from his predecessor precluded accurate financial reporting at this time. The RFO also noted the current size of reserves, which he judged to be sufficiently robust to offset risk. Cllr Ryan proposed, seconded by Cllr Bacon, that the draft budget for 2017/18 be approved.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

- b) Cllr Ryan proposed, Cllr Thomson seconded, that a precept demand of £29,860 be made for 2017-18.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

- c) The RFO reported his concern that only two members of the Council remained as bank signatories. Cllr Bacon proposed, Cllr Ryan seconded, that Cllrs Coleman, Duckett and Robertson become authorised bank cheque and electronic transaction signatories.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

- d) The RFO presented the following invoices for authorisation:

Chq No	Payee	Amount £
300075	Island Roads (bin emptying)	248.40
300076	PC Consultants (laptop software instal)	27.60
300077	St Helens Sports Assoc (room hire, EP Team)	12.00
300078	P Baxter (expenses)	176.84

Cllr Ryan proposed, seconded Cllr Bacon, that all invoices be authorised.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

- e) The Clerk sought approval for the Council to fund his annual subscription to the Society of Local Council Clerks. Cllr Ryan proposed, seconded Cllr Thomson, that the annual subscription be reimbursed when paid.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

### 013/2017 Grant nomination and request-

- a) The Clerk referred to circulated correspondence from the IW Foundation, set up by Island Roads, that seeks to make grants to eligible community groups. The Council is asked to nominate a suitable Group for consideration. The Clerk undertook to research whether the Primary School PTA might be eligible and to refer the matter back to the next meeting.
- b) The Clerk referred to circulated correspondence from The Wave Project, seeking a grant to assist their funding. Cllr Bacon, seconded Cllr Duckett proposed that the Council do not make a grant.

**Resolved (5-1)** – For: Cllrs: Bacon, Duckett, Robertson, Ryan, Thomson; Against: Cllr Coleman.

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**014/2017 Emergency Planning-**

Cllr Thomson summarised the recent meeting of the Emergency Planning Team that had reviewed the Emergency Plan, adopted radio call-signs and procedures and having considered battery charging requirements the Team had decided to adopt the use of dry-cell batteries. Members had also that evening familiarised themselves with equipment storage arrangements. Cllr Thomson clarified the membership of the Team and further meetings would be held as required. The Chairman thanked Cllr Thomson and the Team for their work on behalf of the community.

**015/2017 Police & Crime Commissioner Rural Crime Survey-**

The Clerk referred to circulated correspondence from the Police & Crime Commissioner, with a survey to inform his Rural Crime Strategy. The Chairman noted the difficulty in establishing a consensus response from the Council in the time available. It was **agreed** that Members would provide their views to the Chairman who would produce a considered response for submission.

**016/2017 Maintenance-**

a) Cllr Robertson proposed that the Hurst vouchers be used to a limit of £80 for the purchase of paint and materials for the refurbishment of the anchor feature at Nelsons Quay. Cllr Thomson proposed that the limit be £150, which the Chairman agreed would amend his proposal. Cllr Thomson proposed, Cllr Ryan seconded, that up to £150 value of Hurst vouchers be spent.

**Resolved** – Unanimous. Cllr Thomson undertook to research the materials required.

b) The following defects were noted:

- The Nelsons Quay lamp cover (currently with F W Marsh) – the Clerk undertook to enquire;
- A dog waste bin had its lid missing – the Clerk undertook to investigate solutions;
- The bench at Duver Road, identified by Island Roads as in an inappropriate position, requires moving – agreed that this would form an item at the next meeting.

**017/2017 Rights of way-**

Cllr Robertson withdrew this item pending further clarification of the terms of a proposed letter of support for a right of way to be established on the Embankment Road nature reserve.

Cllr Bacon left meeting at 8.30pm

**018/2017 Website-**

a) The Clerk reported on the current performance of the Council’s third-party provided website, the editing of which has been unsatisfactory for technical fault reasons. The overall user experience is limited, and the fixed template design precludes a flexible approach to content management. The Clerk recommended that an in-house webspace build project be commenced, with annual costs at approximately half those currently incurred, seeking to re-use the Council’s current web address and giving notice to the current provider once the Council was satisfied with the content of the new site.

b) Cllr Robertson, seconded Cllr Duckett, proposed that the Clerk’s recommendation be adopted.

**Resolved** – Unanimous.

**019/2017 Member matters-**

a) No questions deposited.

b) The following agenda items were agreed for the next meeting of the Council:

- Public toilets cleaning arrangements (Clerk)
- Duver Road bench removal (Cllr Thomson)
- Horticultural improvements (Cllr Thomson)
- S.106 funding capacity (Cllr Thomson, Clerk to research)
- Siting of 2017 Christmas Tree (Cllr Coleman)
- Village Fayre organisation (Cllr Ryan)

c) The Clerk clarified how funding for defibrillator training may be managed, and that the Parish Plan Working Group would be convened very shortly.

**020/2017 Date of next meeting-** the date of the next meeting, scheduled for 13 March 2017 was confirmed.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

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