

MINUTES OF THE COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON

THURSDAY 10th SEPTEMBER 2020 AT 7.00pm – REMOTELY VIA ZOOM

Present:

Cllr. Power (Chair)
Cllr. Bowman (Vice-Chair)
Cllr. Alecock
Cllr. Bristow
Cllr. Busuttil
Cllr. Leaman
Cllr. Shipp

In attendance: Mr M Knight (Town Manager).

1. APOLOGIES AND ACCEPTANCE FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Littlechild.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. Alecock – West Suffolk District Council.
Cllr. Shipp – West Suffolk District Council.

3. TO CONFIRM THE CHAIR OF THIS COMMITTEE

Cllr. Power reported that due to new commitments he felt that he would be unable to continue as Chair of this committee and would prefer to concentrate on the other two committees which he now Chairs. Although he would be happy to continue as Vice Chair. Cllr. Power then proposed Cllr. Bowman as the new Chair of this Committee. Cllr. Bowman accepted this nomination, seconded by Cllr. Alecock. All in favour. Cllr. Bowman was therefore elected to be chair of this committee.

Signed:

Date:

The then vacant position of vice-chair of this committee was then discussed. Cllr. Bristow proposed Cllr. Power to be vice-chair of this committee, seconded by Cllr. Alecock.

It was so **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Power was elected to be the Vice-Chair of this committee. All in favour.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

5. TO CONFIRM AND RECOMMEND TO THE FULL TOWN COUNCIL THE TERMS OF REFERENCE PERTAINING TO THIS COMMITTEE

The document was discussed and it was suggested that item (d) concerning liaison with the Council Communication Group be removed due to the group no longer existing. Also that the second paragraph on page 2 of the document concerning all methods of communications be moved in to the specifics section at the end of the document. Finally, that under the 'Specific Events' section a fourth item be added 'Any other events'.

It was then **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Full Council the document with the suggested changes. Proposed by Cllr. Bowman, seconded by Cllr. Shipp, all in favour.

6. GENERAL MATTERS

6.1 Update from Town Manager regarding Action Sheet

The Action Sheet was **NOTED**. It was decided that a numbering system should be used in the future.

It was also **AGREED** that St. Mary's Church should be contacted to see how they are planning to celebrate the 800 year anniversary of the church in light of developments concerning the Covid-19 health crisis.

6.2 To decide whether or not to hold the Merry Mildenhall event and in what form

It was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Full Council that due to the ongoing Covid-19 health crisis that the event would not go ahead in the current form. This to include the market, Santa's Grotto, involvement with local groups and the arrival of the sleigh. Proposed by Cllr. Power, seconded by Cllr. Bristow, all in favour.

It was also proposed that the Council approach St. Mary's Church and Kings Church to find out how they were intending to celebrate Christmas and to see if the Council could get involved in any way.

It was also suggested that the turning on of the Christmas lights could be live streamed in order to involve people.

6.3 To approve the quote for the Christmas Tree

The quote for £1,300 for the 23ft tree was **ACCEPTED** and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** this to the Full Council. Proposed by Cllr. Alecock, seconded by Cllr. Bristow, all in favour.

6.4 To discuss the possibility of employing a tree decorating service

The quote was discussed and Cllr. Bowman reported on past problems with the tree decorating and the decorations around the town centre in general.

It was **AGREED** that due to the almost complete recommended cancellation of the Merry Mildenhall event that the monies saved here could be used to invest in the future with a really good tree for 2020 which would be properly decorated. It was proposed that these monies could also be used for investing in the current lighting stock for future events. This to also involve other assets which the Council own and are used for Merry Mildenhall.

The Market Cross and other buildings were also considered for more lights and decorations, and it was then **AGREED** that further contact should be made with the company to explore what could be done on a wider scale for 2020. This to be done in good time for the Full Council so a report can be given. Cllr. Bowman volunteered to meet with contractors in the first instance.

6.5 To discuss and recommend to the Full Council the quotes regarding the Council Regalia

Cllr. Shipp queried the nature of the 'Past Mayor' pendants which Cllr. Bowman explained.

The quote for £5,301.24 was **ACCEPTED** and it was **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** this to the Full Council. Proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Alecock, all in favour.

6.6 To discuss a report regarding the future of the Mildenhall Messenger

The feasibility report from the Town Manager was presented and much discussion took place regarding the items within it. Cllr. Bowman also gave an update on the history of the item and reported that the Mildenhall Community Partnership had agreed to carry on producing the Messenger until the end of this financial year. Cllr. Bowman then opened the item up for general discussion.

Cllr. Alecock voiced his concerns regarding the potential drain on resources at the office and also problems with distribution and the number of copies per edition to be produced.

Cllr. Bowman also reported that she agreed with the report and could not support the training of staff and purchase of InDesign software to allow this work to be done in house. Cllr. Bowman also volunteered to act as editor going forward.

The Town Manager suggested that the Chair of this Committee also be the editor, in order to make this role specific rather than person specific.

Cllr. Shipp also agreed with this and that in his opinion the work should rest with the contractor. Furthermore there was no staff resource to do this, was not a corporate priority and the costs of training and hourly rates made it prohibitive.

Cllr. Power asked what the ownership of the brand (Mildenhall Messenger) was. This was not known.

Cllr. Bowman however reported that the Messenger belongs to the Mildenhall Community Partnership, but that the Town Council had partially funded the production historically due to needing a forum to communicate the work of the Council. This did however stop for a few years whilst an electronic magazine was explored. She also hoped that by taking this publication on that more ideas and articles could be produced and cited a children's story writing competition, marketing of the Jubilee Centre and events held in it. The frequency of the publication could also be changed to suit need.

Cllr. Leaman echoed the concern about staffing levels and workload and the help that was needed with distribution. He also stated that social media should also be explored as an option for communications.

Cllr. Shipp voiced his preference for a paper copy, but agreed that distribution was key in order to make the whole venture worthwhile as not everyone uses social media. He also voiced concerns regarding the advertising revenue.

Cllr. Bristow also voiced concerns over the method and logistics of distribution.

Cllr. Bowman summed up the progress made so far in as much that there was an agreement that the Council office staff should not be trained and produce the magazine themselves, but that a commercial partner should be approached. Furthermore that there was a general sense in the committee to work with the Community Partnership and a commercial partnership, in line with local government rules and financial regulations regarding transparency. This was **AGREED**.

It was then **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Full Council that work begin to bring the Mildenhall Messenger under the administration of the Town Council. This to be working

with a commercial partner and for the Town Manager to immediately begin working towards this end in consultation with the Chair of the Committee. Proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Alecock, all in favour.

7. FINANCE MATTERS

7.1 To discuss the budgetary requirements of this committee

The proposal was discussed and it was **AGREED** that the committee needed oversight over it's own budget. The budget codes were **ACCEPTED** and it was then **RECOMMENDED** to the Full Council that the budget proposal be **APPROVED** and considered in the upcoming 2021/2 budget setting process. Proposed by Cllr. Shipp, seconded by Cllr. Alecock, all in favour.

8. EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION

Cllr. Leaman reported that the civic leadership titles on the website need to be changed.

Cllr. Busuttill reported that the new mayor@email address was up and running, and that a Council Twitter account would be forthcoming in the near future.

9. TO SET THE DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

This was set for Thursday 5th November 2020 at 7pm.

The meeting then closed at 8.50pm.