

**RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Resources Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 15 June 2021 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Mallon (Chairman)  
Councillors: Colegrave, Dalton, Garrett, Hussain, Kilsby, Phillips, Richards and Strangwood.

Alternate

Members: Councillor Powell for Councillor Reeves.

Officers: Mark Recchia (Town Clerk) and Mark Hassall (Deputy Town Clerk/RFO)

**R.4/21 Apologies for absence**  
Councillor Reeves.

**R.5/21 Declarations of Interest**  
Councillor Phillips declared a personal interest as a Trustee of Tooley's Boatyard Trust in respect of Minute R.9/21, and remained in the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.

**R.6/21 Minutes of the last Meeting**

**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meetings held on 04 February 2020 and 18 May 2021 be approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

**R.7/21 Budget Monitoring Report – Income & Expenditure**

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk/RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget for the financial year.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast.

Variances on General Services Committee estimates were principally:

- ◆ Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted equally by seasonality and awaiting May invoicing, across Parks, Football pitches and Horton View.
- ◆ Timing of capital expenditure on MUGA refurbishment, Stanbridge (completed) and Hillview, which should be completed shortly. Retention funds were being held to clear snagging issues to enable Peoples Park toilets to be opened for use
- ◆ Increased advertising on Bus Shelters was being funded by a grant received from the Controlling Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

Underspends on Resources Committee were also principally:

- ◆ Reduced professional fees and legal support costs.
- ◆ Reduced Central Administration costs including salaries and computer software.
- ◆ Town Hall expenditure remained muted in line with a gradual opening up agenda,
- ◆ Other services to the Public included timing of invoicing for contributions to CDC for CCTV scheme in 19/20 & 20/21.
- ◆ Other Costs & Income included COMF grant income, which had been received to facilitate measures to enhance safe return to post pandemic activity.

The Deputy Town Clerk & RFO responded to various questions from Members.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

**R.8/21 Internal Audit Report 2020/21**

The Council had appointed Auditing Solutions Ltd as its internal auditors. The Internal Auditor's work was undertaken on 7th November 2020, 22nd January 2021 and 29 April 2021. The Auditor had completed his review and concluded that, on the basis of the programme of work undertaken, the Council had maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements during the year. In the areas examined, no major issues or concerns had been identified and it was considered that the Clerk and staff continued to operate generally effective control procedures in each relevant area. The areas of review included:

- Accounting records and bank reconciliations,
- Corporate Governance,
- Review of Expenditure,
- Assessment and Management of Risk,
- Precept Determination and Budgetary Control,
- Review of Income,
- Petty Cash,
- Staff Salaries,
- Fixed Asset Registers
- Investment & Loans
- Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Internal Auditors had also completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, having concluded that, in all significant respects, the control objectives set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Council receive and note the Internal Audit Report.

**R.9/21 Events Programme**

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Events Manager providing an overview of Banbury Town Council's proposed Events Programme, taking into consideration current restrictions, uncertainty and the national picture of events.

Members were advised that Banbury Town Council had a full calendar of annual events in normal circumstances. Over the last 15 months this had been badly affected, as had events generally, by the Coronavirus pandemic. Restrictions, new personnel, changed working environments and continued uncertainty continued to have a bearing on the events world and for the Council. Nevertheless, Officers were working with partners and third parties to try to bring some events to the Banbury Community. These broadly fell into three categories:

- ◆ Civic events
- ◆ Community events
- ◆ Events organised by others with the assistance of BTC

Civic Events

Banbury Town Council had a number of annual civic events which would be marked in some way despite the COVID situation. Armed Forces Day was currently being planned with the input of local Reserve and cadet Forces and the RBL for the 26<sup>th</sup> June. Battle of Britain and Remembrance Sunday in 2020 were both marked in accordance with the restrictions at the time and planned similarly for 2021.

The recent announcement extending the Covid restrictions to 19 July now meant that Cadet forces would not be able to participate in Armed Forces Day so a scaled back event would now be necessary if it still went ahead. The planned “drum head” service in the Market Place would not now happen, and it was likely that the parade element would also need to be cancelled. However, it was hoped that various stalls and a display of military vehicles could take place alongside the normal weekly market, with a fly past involving a spitfire and hurricane.

### Community Events

2020 had seen most events fall by the wayside. In 2021 A Taste of Spring, Film Friday and Banbury & District Show had so far not taken place due to COVID restrictions. Following the announcement by the Government on the 14<sup>th</sup> June that the planned further relaxation of restrictions on the 21<sup>st</sup> June would not now take place for at least a further 4 weeks, the Committee discussed whether or not to cancel events planned for July. Town Mayors Sunday would fall within the extended period of restrictions, being an early July event. This had not taken place in 2020 and was now unlikely to be possible again this year. Banbury Music Mix set for 23<sup>rd</sup> July, was an evening event, in the town centre, with licencing/drinking issues which would have to be considered in line with restrictions/reputational risk. Given the recent announcement postponing the ending of restrictions this event would also have to be postponed again to next year.

Banbury Food & Drink Festival was pencilled in for August with a number of traders already getting in touch. The feedback from them was mixed on Council run events over the country. Given the continued uncertainty and the lead in times for this event, officers felt that it should be cancelled. However, there had been a suggestion of a local food festival dressed as a “Welcome Back Banbury” celebration, to take place in late September. Local pubs, clubs, restaurants, cafés and food & drink retailers could be approached to celebrate the eventual opening up of the Town. Potentially the BID would be in support and help get their relevant levy payers involved. The idea being that all food and drink outlets would have a weekend of special offers and special menus and welcome Banbury and the outlying areas in to the Town Centre to break bread and take drink to celebrate Banbury opening up.

Teddy Bears Picnic (People’s Park) and Motown Magic (Market Place) were planned as late summer events last year but were not annual events and should be cancelled.

Tooley’s Boat Yard and the BID were keen for some form of scaled back Canal Day event to go ahead for the first time since 2018. However, with considerable change to the footprint of the event space for 50 stalls where the new Premier Inn stands was no longer available. Tooley’s were working on an event for the 3<sup>rd</sup> October with or without the support of BTC. It was also noted that the Women’s Cycling Tour event was coming to Banbury in early October and the Town Council would be involved in this. There had also been a suggestion to celebrate transport in general and perhaps invite local F1/ Racing teams, Train and Coach operators and Cycle/ Motorcycle clubs to get involved in a Day of Transport celebration.

BTC and Castle Quay were also currently working on a new Xmas lighting scheme for the Town Centre and CQ. The BID were working with us to update the light projections for this year. The projections would also return for Remembrance Sunday. The Switch On event for the Xmas Lights was always held on the last Sunday of November and would go ahead as normal, subject to any restrictions in place at the time.

Third Party Events on BTC Land

Banbury Town Council had been approached by a number of third party operators who wanted to organise/host events in BTC parks. These included the annual Banbury Playdays in People's Park and PDP, a production by Cherwell Theatre Company in People's Park, Hatwell's Fair in PDP, Park Run in Spiceball Park, and a possible Emergency Services Day in Spiceball Park and Castle Quay in September. Where the rules allowed these would go ahead.

Members' attention was also drawn to the need to start planning for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration in 2022. It was suggested that a small working group be formed to oversee this and report back to the Committee.

Finally, the Town Clerk reminded Members that whilst he had delegated authority over the operational management of events, if greater elected member input was sought then there was a small Working Group already set up that could meet to look at the programme at relatively short notice, given that the next meeting of the Committee was not scheduled until September.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a small Civic Working Group comprising the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor, High Steward, with the Chairman of Resources and General Services Committees as ex-officio members, be established to begin planning for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations and report back to this Committee; and
- (3) the Events Working Group meet as soon as possible to look at the programme in more detail.

**R.10/21 Confidential Business Exclusion**

It was proposed by the Chairman and was RESOLVED that, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**SUMMARY of items discussed during confidential session**

**R.11/21 Bus Shelter Agreement**

The Committee considered a report of the Town Clerk seeking Member approval to vary a Bus Shelter Equipment Agreement with Clear Channel UK Ltd.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that Banbury Town Council was formed in 2000 and by virtue of its Creation Order, became responsible for bus shelter provision in the town. An Agreement was entered into in 2001 with More Group UK Ltd (“Adshel”), part of Clear Channel International Ltd, under which the Council granted to Clear Channel certain rights to erect bus shelters in Banbury and a right to display advertising material on such bus shelters. The current term of the Agreement was due to expire on 31 October 2022.

Out of home advertising was currently undergoing a substantial transformation. Some of these changes had resulted because of the Pandemic and requests from councils across the UK to ensure important messaging regarding Covid 19 were visible. Changes had also occurred in supply chains for out of home street furniture, a proposed change in Business Rates on Street Furniture by the Government’s Valuation Office and market demand. As such, Clear Channel were looking to make a Deed of Variation to all of their Local Authority contracts.

The Town Clerk explained that whilst there were no objections in principle to parts of this request, one of the new clauses (10A) could have financial implications and the extent of these was unclear. Members suggested that the Council seek legal advice on the potential impact of this Clause and that the Town Clerk refer back to Clear Channel for further clarification, and report back to the next meeting. In the meantime the possibility of working with other suppliers or bringing the service entirely in-house could usefully be explored.

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk seek legal advice and further clarification from the company regarding the potential financial implications of proposed new Clause 10A and explore the possibility of working with other suppliers or bringing the service entirely in-house, and report back to the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 8pm