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MINUTES of the meeting of the Control Tower Committee
held at St Marys Church Hall, Greenham
on Thursday 30th November 2016 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr Phil Barnett
Cllr Jon Gage
Cllr Gary Puffett
Cllr Meg Thomas
Mr Mitch Thomas (Greenham Business Park)

In attendance: Roger Chester (Clerk), 2 members of the public

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Proposed: Cllr Gary Puffett

Seconded: Mr Mitch Thomas

Resolved: That Cllr Phil Barnett be elected Chairman of the meeting

2. WELCOME

- a) The Chairman noted that Council had increased the committee to 7 councillor members plus any co-opted members, and welcomed Cllrs Gage and Thomas to the committee.

3. OPENING STATEMENTS BY THE CLERK

- a) The Clerk stated that, in his view, Committee membership may need to increase further in order to manage the various workload strands required to bring the project to fruition.
- b) The Clerk recommended that a suitably qualified individual (or main contractor) be appointed to manage the project, noting that funding for project management has not been separately identified in the Schedule of Works submitted with the PWLB loan application.
- c) The Clerk reminded members that the corporate body established to lease the refurbished Control Tower must not be under the control of the Parish Council.
- d) The Clerk pointed out the need to carry out due diligence on the proposed lessee in order to ensure compliance with Financial Regulations, and suggested that consideration be given to a bond to protect the Council from future default.
- e) The Clerk reminded members of the need for careful consideration in drafting the lease including issues such as:
- (1) the operation and maintenance of the interpretive areas;
 - (2) potential conflicts of interest between owner, landlord, and sub-tenants.
- f) The Clerk pointed out that a modest allowance is built into the costs for the establishment of the interpretation areas.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Balu Sudra

5. RESIGNATION

The Clerk reported having received the resignation of committee member Cllr Teresa King.

6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mr Mitch Thomas declared that he is an employee of Greenham Business Park Ltd.

7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Proposed: Cllr Phil Barnett

Seconded: Mr Mitch Thomas

Resolved: a) That the minutes of a meeting of the Control Tower Committee held on 28th July 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.
b) That the minutes of a meeting of the Control Tower Committee held on 27th October 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. PUBLIC SESSION

The Chairman welcomed the two members of the public to the meeting, both of whom have volunteered to assist in progressing the completion of the Control Tower refurbishment project. Each gave a summary of their skills and experience.

9. PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BOARD LOAN

a) It was noted that, at the Council meeting of 9 November 2016, it was Resolved

that the requirements by BALC in connection with the loan application as set out in the agenda be referred to the Control Tower Committee with a request to formulate plans to provide the information required.

b) It was further noted that BALC requires the following:

- (1) Evidence of public support for an increase in the precept;
- (2) Evidence of public support for the project and the associated borrowing;
- (3) A summary of the ways in which the findings in the BDO Audit Report dated January 2016 have been, or will be, addressed.

c) In the Clerk's view, parish residents should be fully consulted regarding the PWLB loan.

d) The Clerk queried whether legal advice had been taken to clarify the provisions in the sale contract/transfer deed dated April 2014 setting out the circumstances in which either Greenham Common Trust or West Berkshire Council may exercise their right to buy back the Control Tower from the Council for a nominal sum.

e) The Clerk asserted that in his view, the terms of the SIB grant have not been fulfilled (though no evidence was provided to the meeting to support his opinion) and that the consequences of this needed to be fully considered.

f) The Clerk once again pointed out the need to ensure that any prospective lessee is able to meet its financial obligations.

g) The Clerk queried whether the Council will incur any building maintenance costs once the building is let, other than curating/maintaining the interpretative materials.

h) The Clerk pointed out that the section within the loan application form dealing with future cashflows is incomplete.

i) The Clerk gave his view of the value of the control tower as a capital asset as £20,000

based on the buy-back provisions in the transfer deed.

- j) The Clerk noted that Council has not formally responded to the recommendations in the BDO Audit Report dated January 2016.

10. CONTROL TOWER REFURBISHMENT PROGRAMME

Mr Mitch Thomas reported that, having inspected the building in order to identify any urgent repairs required to the fabric of the building for the forthcoming winter period, he had noted the following:

- a) The fire detection systems were not in operation;
- b) an external tap had not been turned off;
- c) the external window shutters were all in the open position;
- d) some pointing to external walls and coping was necessary, to prevent water ingress;
- e) Central heating boiler settings and fuel oil level required checking.

Proposed: Cllr Jon Gage

Seconded: Mr Mitch Thomas

Resolved: That a Schedule of Works be prepared for essential winter repair works and tenders be sought for subsequent recommendation to Council

11. ONGOING OPERATIONS

Proposed: Cllr Jon Gage

Seconded: Mr Mitch Thomas

Resolved: That an outline document setting out a draft strategy for the public consultation be presented to the next available meeting of the committee

There being no other business the Chairman declared the meeting closed at 21:20 hrs

Chairman

Date