



# ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

14 JUNE 2010

The purpose of this Report is to provide Members with information on some of the limitations of the current facilities for the efficient administration of the work of both the Town Council and the Winter Gardens and request support for changes to them.

**No. DETAIL**

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**1) PRINTING, COPYING, SCANNING**

- a) The only scanning and output devices available to those responsible for administration are the small inkjet printers attached to several of the PCs.
  - b) These are slow, expensive, limited in functionality, restricted to the A4 paper size and unsuitable for larger quantities.
  - c) The production of papers for Town Council meetings (currently produced on a chargeable basis by Brading Town Council), printing of posters and leaflets to advertise events, printing of larger documents required in paper form for study or circulation purposes, scanning and/or copying of multiple sheets, quality scanning of documents, production of A3 sized posters and automatic impositions of A4 or A5 pages to a document produced by folding A3 sheets are examples of outputs for which the current arrangements are completely unsuitable.
  - d) Modern photocopiers achieve all of these outputs routinely once staff are trained in their functionality and are neither as expensive nor prone to breakdown as they used to be.
  - e) We have discussed our administrative requirements with Sandham Office Services, based in Sandown, who operate within a contract arrangement with the Isle of Wight Council which results in cheaper pricing structures for both machines and supplies.
  - f) They have supplied their current charges for a Ricoh MPC2800 machine similar to that used by Brading Town Council among others with proven quality and delivery standards.
  - g) The cost of a machine – with Cabinet – over a 4-year term is £158.27 plus VAT per quarter. The copy cost (click charge) is then 0.42 for each black and white printed sheet (either A4 or A3) and 4.12 per sheet for colour.
  - h) These costs are inclusive of all Parts, Labour and Consumables, including all toner (black and colour) and service response times of less than 4 hours to calls.
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**2) COMPUTERS**

- a) The Winter Gardens has seven computers, but they are not networked, are not accessible one from the other, do not have either a central and safe file store or embedded and consistent directory and folder filing structures.
  - b) The resulting inefficiencies are time-consuming, require duplication, or even triplication, of activities and readily result in errors affecting both staff and customers. Additionally, more records than is either wise or desirable exist only in paper form.
  - c) One of the obvious examples of these restrictions is the need to have at least two diaries for both internal meetings and external bookings – one for downstairs staff and one for those on the first floor. This creates the risk of double bookings whenever events are only entered to one of the diaries and restricts access by staff to a range of essential information.
  - d) Another illustration of the limitations of the present arrangements is that sales and banking information is entered by bar managers on a daily basis on one of the downstairs computers but is only available to the administrators on the floor above by paper copy or pen drive, either of which have to be delivered or collected manually. Meanwhile, sales information for shows and events is kept on another computer altogether to which the same access limitations apply.
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- e) Councillor Chris Bonney is currently developing advice for the management on the system enhancements necessary to provide networked facilities, central storage device and wireless broadband access throughout the Winter Gardens, including for public availability.
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### 3) TELEPHONES

- a) The Winter Gardens has six phones. All are stand-alone with, consequently, none of the basic facilities to transfer calls internally, forward calls from phone onto others or enable intercom functions between staff.
  - b) The results range from customers being inconvenienced through staff having to move between rooms and floors with messages to the absence of communication and the failure of messages to be passed on and phones to even be answered.
  - c) Telephone systems – these days at relatively low cost – providing as many individual numbers as an organisation may need but with a commonality that routinely provides all the currently absent functions with a resultant substantial increase in both internal efficiency and increased customer satisfaction are now commonplace.
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### 4) PRINTED STATIONERY

- a) The Winter Gardens lacks the range of printed stationery that facilities accurate records, expected audit trails, compliance with financial regulations and message handling.
  - b) There are no printed books of multi-copy numbered purchase orders, invoices or receipts and no adequate message pads.
  - c) With the exception of the message pads, the absence of the rest represents a failure to comply with current financial regulations and seriously diminishes the organisation's ability to control expenditure and income.
  - d) Messages are generally written either on any piece of paper that comes to hand or from pre-printed books of slips so small that they are very easily misplaced or lost and provide little room to record related information.
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### 5) RECOMMENDATIONS

- a) This catalogue of issues is a consequence of serious underinvestment over a number of years in administrative functions and processes and of a failure to recognise the relevance for efficiency and economy of both modern technologies and good business administrative practice.
  - b) Such systems as do exist largely collapsed or were abandoned under the pressures of significant commercial operations. The issues must be addressed in order to facilitate the continuing growth in Winter Gardens activities and services to which the Town Council is clearly committed.
  - c) Adoption and implementation of the following recommendations would address the immediate issues.
  - d) *Printing, Copying, Scanning*: accept the Sandham quotation for a Ricoh MPC2800 on a leased basis over a 4-year period at the price of £158.27p per quarter and, for this purpose only, agree to over-ride the requirement of financial regulation 5 that contracts of £2,000 - £5,000 have 3 written quotations in view of their status as the Isle of Wight Council's preferred supplier and the need to add this facility as rapidly as possible.
  - e) *Computers*: the identified enhancements be implemented given that initial indications are that a total of £500 would cover the cost and that under financial regulation 4.3: *The Clerk is empowered to purchase goods or services or undertake small emergency works up to £2000.*
  - f) *Telephones*: the Town Clerk be authorised to explore options for an upgraded telephone system and report to the next Town Council meeting accordingly.
  - g) *Printed Stationery*: the Town Clerk uses the authority provided for him under financial regulation 4.3 to secure the design and print of appropriate official stationery.
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