

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee
held on Monday 9th December 2019 at 7:00pm in the Corn Exchange



PRESENT

Cllr S Hitchings – Committee Chairman
Cllr L Hitchings – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr C Stevens
Cllr H Mieville

Cllr L Lindsay – Chairman of Council
Cllr H White
Cllr R Carter
Cllr A Cross

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

Nic Nicol (Town Team)
Operations Manager

SITTING IN

Cllr R Holmes

26. PUBLIC SESSION

- 26.1 Cllr Carter thanked the staff involved in the organising of the Tree Lighting event and Carol Service held on Friday evening, and the local organisations for the parts they played.
- 26.2 Cllr Carter thanked Cllrs Lindsay and White for meeting with him to discuss the response to the Dorset Council Plan consultation prior to the Committee meeting. He will collate the views from Councillors and send the response to all before submitting.
- 26.3 Cllr Mieville thanked the judges involved in the Christmas window competition judging held over the weekend, particularly the Mayor's Scout and Guide.
- 26.4 As a new Councillor, Cllr Cross asked Nic Nicol what the Town Team does and he explained their involvement in the High St Fund bid and explained that there are funding streams available to this organisation, which are not available to town/parish councils. In addition, the Town Council's remit covers the parish of Blandford Forum whereas the Town Team focusses on the surrounding areas too.
- 26.5 The Committee Chairman explained that the Committee Vice Chairman had given apologies for the meeting due to his father's illness and it was agreed that Cllr Lindsay would act as Vice Chairman.

27. APOLOGIES

Cllr P Osborne – Committee Vice Chairman

28. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

- 28.1 Agenda Item No. 12 & 16.2
Cllr Carter declared an interest as the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Group.
- 28.2 Agenda Item No. 13.1 – Age UK Grant Application
Cllr Lindsay declared an interest as a Trustee for Age Concern and confirmed that she would leave the room during discussion and voting.

Cllr Stevens declared an interest as a Town Council representative to Age UK.

Cllr Cross declared a personal interest in this agenda item due to his friendship with the applicant, representing Age Concern. It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED unanimously that Cllr Cross can stay in the room during discussion and voting regarding the grant application for Age Concern.

28. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS (cont)

28.3 Agenda Item No. 15.3 – Budget 2020/21

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

A dispensation is granted to all Councillors, except Cllr L Hitchings and Cllr Cross (as they do not live in Blandford Forum), to enable them to participate in discussion and vote on the setting of the council tax.

29. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9TH SEPTEMBER 2019

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (6 in favour, 2 abstentions) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

30. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

30.1 Precepts in Dorset – The Town Clerk summarised the draft precepts across the county in percentage terms, which was discussed at the SLCC branch meeting held in Dorchester on Thursday.

30.2 Councillor Allowances – The Town Clerk advised that the Dorset Council has distributed a report on allowances and mileage claims, which will be distributed to all Councillors.

30.3 TicketSource – A Mayor's Charity account has now been set up to keep funds separate from the Town Council. One existing event has been set up under the Town Council's account and the funds will be transferred to the Mayor's Charity account via a cheque payment.

31. ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR THE FOLLOWING:

31.1 Administration Budget for the year to 22nd November 2019

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

31.2 Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 22nd November 2019

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

31.3 Reserves Accounts as at 25th November 2019

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

32. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION

32.1 To receive and retrospectively approve the list of cheque payments 010959 – 011026 (Sheets 835-847) totalling £260,369.44

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that

The list of cheque payments 010959 – 011026 (Sheets 835-847) totalling £260,369.44 are received and retrospectively approved.

32.2 To receive and retrospectively approve direct debit payments for the period 1st August 2019 to 31st October 2019 (sheets 163-165) totalling £89,642.18

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

The direct debit payments for the period 1st August 2019 to 31st October 2019 (sheets 163-165) totalling £89,642.18 are received and retrospectively approved.

32.3 To receive and retrospectively approve BACS payments BACS 238 to BACS 247 totalling £49,743.95

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED unanimously that

32. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION (CONT)

BACS payments BACS 238 to BACS 247 totalling £49,743.95 are received and retrospectively approved.

32.4 To receive and retrospectively approve CHAPS payments CHAPS 011 to CHAPS 012 (Transfer Precept monies to Santander Notice Accounts – BFTC) totalling £393,372.00

It was PROPOSED by Cllr S Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

CHAPS payments CHAPS 011 to CHAPS 012 totalling £393,372.00 are received and retrospectively approved.

32.5 Retrospective approval of the Investment Account for the period 5th August 2019 – 25th November 2019

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that

The Investment Account for the period 5th August 2019 to 25th November 2019 is approved retrospectively.

32.6 Report by Chairman on Bank Reconciliation and Petty Cash check

Cllr S Hitchings carried out a petty cash check and confirmed that the monthly bank reconciliation had been undertaken during the period and everything was found to be in order.

32.7 Bank Reconciliation to 31st October 2019

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

33. TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

34. TO CONSIDER THE APPOINTMENT OF THE INTERNAL AUDITOR

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that

The Committee appoints Company A as the Internal Auditor for a period of five years based on 3 x 7.5 hour days, and with the long-term five year contract (giving a 2.5% saving on the hourly scale rate, which they anticipate rising by £1.50 per scale hour over each of the next five years), the cost to the council would be £951.32 plus VAT for 2020/21, £988.38 for 2021/22, £1,025.44 for 2022/23, £1,065.51 for 2023/24 and £1,099.57 for 2024/25 giving a five year total of £5,127.22 plus VAT. The long-term contract could be terminated at any time by either party giving three months' notice and would give an approximate saving of £116.72 across the five years. The number of days required is based on historical performance and generally proves fairly accurate. In the event that additional work arises, this will be invoiced at the quoted rates. If less work is needed the Town Council will be charged proportionately less.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

35. TO RECEIVE A REPORT REGARDING VIREMENT FROM GENERAL RESERVES TO COVER EXPENDITURE IN 2019/20

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

35. TO RECEIVE A REPORT REGARDING VIREMENT FROM GENERAL RESERVES TO COVER EXPENDITURE IN 2019/20 (CONT)

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION** is made to full Council that

To vire £6,683 from the Interest Earnt on Earmarked Investments budget line (Code 1001), £3,350 from the Interest Earnt on Capital Investments budget line (Code 1010) and £20,923 from Interest Earnt on the Property Fund budget line (Code 1002) to General Reserves (Code 1500) and keeping the cost of £3,018 from the expenditure to the General Reserve and to vire the committed funds from General Reserve to Corn Exchange Refurbishment budget line (Code 1105).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

36. TO RECEIVE A REPORT REGARDING VIREMENT FROM UNDERSPEND OF CIVIC DAY 2018/19 AND MAYORAL ALLOWANCE 2018/19

The paper was noted (see Appendix I).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION** is made to full Council that

£105.77 is vired from the Civic Budget line (2018/19 – Code 0060) and £1,790.00 from the Mayoral Allowance budget line (2018/19 – Code 0060) to General Reserves (Code 1500).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

37. TO CONSIDER A REPORT REQUESTING RETROSPECTIVE APPROVAL TO INCREASE EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FOR THE BLANDFORD+ NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The paper was noted (see Appendix J).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 non-vote) that

The Committee approves expenditure authority of up to £6,625.78 from 2019/20 B+NP budget line (1013) for the purposes outlined in the report at Appendix J and approves, in principle, that funding may be requested from General Reserves should the referendum take place in this financial year, with detailed amounts being subject to further consideration and Committee approval.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

7:35pm – Cllr Lindsay left the room.

38. TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS (CURRENT AVAILABLE BALANCE IS £11,552.22, WHICH INCLUDES £1,825 FROM 218/19 UNDERSPEND)

38.1 Age Concern – Applied in 2017-18 and awarded £1000

The paper was noted (see Appendix K).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED (7 in favour, 1 non-vote) that a **RECOMMENDATION** is made to full Council that

A grant of £1,000.00 is awarded to Age Concern (Expenditure Authority: General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011, S1-8).

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

7:45pm – Cllr Lindsay returned to the meeting.

38. TO CONSIDER GRANT APPLICATIONS (CURRENT AVAILABLE BALANCE IS £11,552.22, WHICH INCLUDES £1,825 FROM 218/19 UNDERSPEND) (CONT)

38.2 Blandford Fashion Museum – Current SLA £2,000 per Annum

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Stevens and AGREED (5 in favour, 3 against) that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that**

The Blandford Fashion Museum is advised to approach the Town Team for assistance with grant applications in the first instance and to apply again to the Town Council if this is not a successful route.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

38.3 To consider extending the free venue hire for the Town Team meetings for 2020/21 – ongoing free venue hire approved per year

The paper was noted (see Appendix M).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Cross, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that**

Free venue hire for the Town Team meetings 2020/21 is approved.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

7:58pm – Nic Nicol left the meeting.

39. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

39.1 To receive the Payroll budget (staff grading) for the year 2020/21

The paper was tabled (see Appendix N).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that

The staff grading for 2020/21 is approved as per the tabled document. This was then signed and dated by the Committee Chairman, as requested by the Internal Auditor.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

The public and press were welcomed back into the meeting for the following items;

40. CONSIDERATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2020/21

40.1 Consideration of the proposed revenue budget for the Finance & Staffing Committee for 2020/21

The paper was noted (see Appendix O).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr L Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED unanimously that

The proposed revenue budget was accepted.

40. CONSIDERATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2020/21 (CONT)

40.2 Recommendations from Committees

The paper was noted (see Appendix P) and the Committee noted the recommendations from both the Recreation & Amenities Committee and the Town & General Purposes Committee.

The Chairman and Acting Vice Chairman thanked the staff involved in producing the draft budget.

40.3 Consideration of the overall budget for the year 2020/21 and recommendation of the precept for 2020/21

The paper was noted (see Appendix Q).

A discussion was held on the overall budget, which moved to the summary sheet and the Committee Chairman talked through each budget line. Councillors discussed the new information/quotations for the skate park and asked the Town Clerk to write to Blandford St Mary parish council to determine if its Councillors would be minded to support the improvement project.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Cross and AGREED unanimously that a **RECOMMENDATION is made to full council that**

The draft budget (with a 1.19% increase) is finalised at a Town Council meeting, subject to receipt of the necessary housing figures from the Dorset Council.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

41. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED unanimously that

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial

41.1 Town Clerk's Report

Two members of staff, a caretaker and a groundsman, who switched roles on a temporary basis for 18 months have both agreed they would like to remain in those roles and contracts have therefore been issued.

41.2 Staffing Matters (referred from September 2019)

The paper was noted (see Appendix R).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr L Hitchings and AGREED unanimously that

The Project Coordinator is awarded a one-off payment of £1,000 from the Salaries budget for the additional workload regarding the management of the Neighbourhood Plan.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

The Meeting closed at 9:16pm.

SIGNED: DATED: