

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL
Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee
held on Monday 11th December 2017

DRAFT
Not to be used

PRESENT

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

Cllr D Robinson – Committee Vice Chairman
Cllr R Carter – Vice Chairman of Council
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr H White

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk

Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

29. PUBLIC SESSION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

30. APOLOGIES

None

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

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

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

32. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11TH SEPTEMBER 2017

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Carter and AGREED (8 in favour, 1 abstention) that the Minutes be APPROVED and SIGNED.

33. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

33.1 Posthumous Recognition – Mr Dave Butler has gratefully agreed to accept the posthumous award of Freedom of the Town to Cllr Esme Butler, which will be presented to him on Friday 25th May 2018 at the Mayor Making ceremony.

33.2 Blandford Youth Centre – A confirmation email was sent to District Cllr Kerby on 30th October 2017 informing him of the council resolution that the Town Council approved the draft Service Level Agreement at £15,000 a year between 1st September 2017 and 31st March 2019. This will be on a pro rata basis for the 2017/18 financial year and will be calculated once the centre is open and the agreement is signed. He has been asked for an opening date and we are awaiting the return of a signed copy of the service level agreement prior to any payments being made.

33.3 Property Fund – The RFO has received the quarterly dividend at £6,949.31, less the management fee of £751.81. This is the largest quarterly dividend to date and the total income received now is just over £96,000.

33. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (CONT)

- 33.4 Budget – As per the Autumn Treasury budget, the business rates revaluation will now take place every 3 years rather than every 5 years, starting the next revaluation currently due in 2022. Business Rates will now be calculated using CPI (Consumer Price Index) rather than RPI (Retail Price Index) as CPI usually runs at a lower rate.
- 33.5 External Auditor – The Town Council has had formal notification that the external auditor appointed to BFTC is PKF Littlejohn LLP. The annual return will now be known as “Annual Governance and Accountability Return”. The new Annual Governance and Accountability Return will be sent out by PKF Littlejohn LLP at the end of this financial year. The return can be completed either electronically or be printed off and completed manually. The first year, the RFO will print out and complete manually and will assess if this is something that can be completed electronically going forward if it complies with the Town Council’s Financial Regulations.
- 33.6 Energy Supply – Councillors may be aware from the news that a merger is planned between Npower and SSE domestic energy supply business. This will create a new business which is 34% owned by Npower and SSE will plan to own its stake at 66% at the point when the new business is listed on the stock exchange. The Town Council’s current electricity supply is Npower through LASER. LASER has advised that the merger is not expected to finalise until late 2018/early 2019 and they do not expect any short-term changes for LASER customers. Npower have advised LASER that they will keep them informed of the merger’s progress and they will let us know of any planned changes that may cause an impact. The RFO will do a full report when we know if there will be any changes.
- 33.7 RFO Meetings – For Councillors who may not be aware, the Town Clerk and the Swanage Town Clerk set up RFO meetings in Dorset a few years ago. The RFO attends these meetings and she has contributed a great deal to the group, which includes sharing several templates she has created, such as her standard asset accruals spreadsheet and fixed asset registers.

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

- 34.1 Administration Budget for the year to 17th November 2017
The paper was noted (see Appendix A).
- 34.2 Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 17th November 2017
The paper was noted (see Appendix B).
- 35.3 Reserve Accounts as at 22nd November 2017
The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

36. REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION:

- 36.1 To receive and retrospectively approve the list of cheque payments 010485 – 010546 (sheets 757-765) totalling £242,535.74

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

The list of cheque payments 010485 – 010546 (sheets 757-765) totalling £242,535.74 are received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

36. **REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION: (cont)**

- 36.2 To receive and retrospectively approve direct debit payments for the period 1st August 2017 to 31st October 2017 (sheets 139-141) totalling £87,239.72

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

The direct debit payments for the period 1st August 2017 to 31st October 2017 (sheets 139-141) totalling £87,239.72 are received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 36.3 To receive and retrospectively approve BACS payments BACS 175 to BACS 182 totalling £30,168.94

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

The BACS payments list BACS 175 to BACS 182 totalling £30,168.94 are received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 36.4 To receive and retrospectively approve CHAPS payments CHAPS 001 (Transfer Precept monies to Santander Business Reserve Account – BFTC) £290,848.00

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

The CHAPS payment CHAPS 001 of £290,848.00 is received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 36.5 Retrospective approval of the Investment Account for the period of 13th August 2017 to 23rd November 2017

The paper was tabled (see Appendix D).

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

The investment account for the period of 13th August 2017 to 23rd November 2017 is retrospectively approved as per Appendix D.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

- 36.6 Report by Chairman on Bank Reconciliation and Petty Cash Checks

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.

- 36.7 Bank Reconciliation to 31st October 2017

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

37. **TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

38. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Carter, SECONDED by Cllr Robinson 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.

38.1 To receive a report regarding the Town Council's salaries budget

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

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

The Committee puts the recommendation at Appendix G on hold until a review of the office staffing level and responsibilities has been completed as result of a resignation received today. The Town Clerk will consider the options and report back to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council and the Chairman of Finance & Staffing.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

38.2 To receive the Payroll budget (staff grading) for the year 2018/19

The paper was tabled (see Appendix H).

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

The payroll budget (staff grading) for the year 2018/19 is agreed and Cllr White brought to the Committee's attention that going up a scale point is not a pay increase.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

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

The public and press are welcomed back into the meeting.

39. CONSIDERATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2018/19

39.1 Consideration of the proposed revenue budget for the Finance & Staffing Committee for 2018/19

The paper was tabled (see Appendix I).

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

The proposed revenue budget was accepted.

39.2 Recommendations from Committees

**39.2.1 Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 13th November 2017
Minute No. 40.1 – Revenue Budget**

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

The Revenue Budget for 2018/2019 is approved at £81,573.

39. CONSIDERATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2018/19 (cont)

Minute No. 40.2 – Earmarked Reserves

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

The proposed Earmarked Reserves budget for 2017/2018 is approved at £26,600:

- £0 Allotments
- £10,000 PPM
- £1,000 Chapel
- £1,000 Workshop
- £1,000 Cemetery Wall
- £500 DDA
- £500 Play area fencing and surfacing
- £0 Larksmead outdoor fitness
- £0 Seat replacement
- £0 Tree survey
- £100 Health & safety memorials
- £5,000 Woodhouse Gardens Wall Repairs;
- £7,000 Langton fencing
- £500 for Contingency

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

Minute No. 40.3 – Earmarked Reserves

The proposed Reserves Accounts budget for 2018/2019 is approved with no recommendations, apart from transferring the balance of the Cemetery Field budget line (£141.31) to the Cemetery Wall budget line.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

39.2.2 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 20th November 2017

Minute No. 43.3 – Revenue Budget, Earmarked Reserves, Reserve Account

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Mieville, SECONDED by Cllr Jackie Stayt and AGREED unanimously that

The Revenue Budget for 2018/2019 is approved at £18,457;

The proposed Earmarked Reserves budget for 2018/2019 is approved at £16,600, which includes:

- £500 Town Maps
- £2,500 DCC Highways
- £1,500 Dog Warden
- £3,600 Christmas Town Decorations
(includes £1,600 for small Christmas trees)
- £2,000 Tourism
- £0 Twinning
- £3,500 Town Improvements
- £2,500 New Benches
- £500 Contingency

The proposed Reserves Accounts budget for 2018/2019 is approved, subject to the inclusion of £10,000 for The Old Bath House, Town Pump and Churchyard Wall budget line and £3,500 for the CCTV budget line.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

39. CONSIDERATION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET FOR 2018/19 (cont)

39.3 Consideration of the overall budget for the year 2018/19 and recommendation of the precept for 2018/19 (paper attached – please note this is a draft document awaiting figures to complete the overall budget)

The paper was tabled (see Appendix I).

Councillors have considered the draft budget and resolved that a final decision would be deferred until Monday 29th January 2018, when it is expected that officers will have the figures from NDDC.

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

The draft budget is finalised in January, subject to receipt of the necessary figures from NDDC. The Town Clerk and the RFO are to review budget lines in the meantime for additional savings.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

The Meeting closed at 8:15pm.

SIGNED: **DATED:**