

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 18 January 2017 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr: Maggie Ray (Chairman)

Cllrs: Geoffrey Ackerman	Gillian Massey
Sandra Brown	Martin Ray
Kelvin Clayton	Anne Rickard
Keith Day	Sarah Williams

Also in attendance: Cllr Dave Rickard.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the public forum.

88. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

89. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 November 2016 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

91. BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 6 December 2016 be received and the following recommendations be approved.

(Min. 29) Payment Approval

RECOMMEND: that Cllrs Gill Massey and Sarah Williams be added to the list of councillors authorised to approve payments. If approved, the updated list to be:

Geoffrey Ackerman
Sandra Brown
Gillian Massey
Martin Ray
Dave Rickard
Sarah Williams

92. TOWN PLAN PROJECTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3163.

RESOLVED: that the Town Plan Monitoring report be noted and a Members' Working Group review and report back on the priority of projects for 2017/18.

93. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3164.

In discussion, it was commented that the issues of democratic engagement and administrative boundaries should be considered, as part of the process of preparing for any new unitary system.

It was also asked if the District Councillors could raise the issue of the voting system for the new Council and whether proportional representative could be considered. The general feeling was that this would be prescribed by legislation but it could be raised.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and a working group of members meet on 19 January for an initial discussion of the local implications of the reorganisation process, as set out in paragraph 3.3.

94. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2016/2017 – 3rd REVISION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3159.

RECOMMEND: that the 3rd revision of the estimates for the year 2016/2017 be approved.

95. BUDGET AND ESTIMATES 2017/18

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3160.

In considering this item, members noted:

- The position of the current year 2016/17 revenue budget estimates
- The position on the Town Council's finances held in reserves (i.e. not for ongoing commitments, but can be used for one-off expenditure)
- The recommended budget (estimates) for next year (2017/2018) with a commentary on recommended significant variations from this year
- The recommended fees and charges for 2017/2018
- Comments of the Budget Working Group
- Medium Term Financial Forecasts
- Summary of Budget Considerations
- Options on the level of precept to fund the budget for 2017/2018

The estimates and projects had been considered at the Best Value and Scrutiny Sub Committee and the Budget Working Group.

The Town Clerk highlighted the considerations for members, which included to:

- present a balanced budget
- maintain appropriate level of reserves
- meet the reductions in the West Dorset District Council Tax Support Grant. In 2016/17, the Town Council received Council Tax Support of £26,004. A final grant of £13,002 will be provided in 2017/18. Overall, the Town Council has seen a reduction in its budget of £58,237 over five years, through the withdrawing of this support

- meet increased costs of service delivery through management of additional services, open spaces etc.
- make provision for other potential service delegations in the light of likely changes to local government in Dorset, if unitary authorities are introduced
- Continue delivery of Town Plan projects
- Maintain grant funding for community projects and support of key organisations through service level agreements – Arts Centre, Museum, Leisure Centre, CAB and Youth & Community Centre.

The Town Clerk drew members' attention to the options on the precept, although it was open to members to consider any level of precept. The options put forward were:

Option 1: increase the precept by £13,909. In total, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, this would raise £562,700 and provide a deficit budget of £10,000.

Option 2: increase the precept by £23,909. In total, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, this would raise £572,700 and provide a balanced budget.

Option 3: increase the precept by £33,909. In total, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, this would raise £582,700 and provide a cushion of an additional £10,000 towards future delegated services.

The current Band 'D' Town Council Charge is £183.22. The three options listed result in the following annual and weekly increases in the Council Tax for a Band 'D' Council Tax Payer:-

	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Band 'D'</u>
Option 1	£ 4.76	£0.09	2.60%
Option 2	£ 8.18	£0.16	4.46%
Option 3	£11.60	£0.22	6.33%

Following consideration of the report, it was RECOMMENDED:

- that the draft estimates for 2017/18 be approved as attached in Appendix A.
- that the proposed fees and charges for 2017/18 be approved as set out in Appendix B, with a fundamental review of all charges during the year.
- that the level and proposals for the use of reserves for 2017/18 be approved as set out in section 4 of the report.
- that the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved as a guide for future years as in Appendix C, noting that each year's budget will be subject to separate approval.
- that in terms of the precept, Option 3 be approved, which would increase the precept by £11.60 and, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, would raise £582,700 broken down as follows:

Precept (funded through the Council Tax): £569,698
 Local Council Tax Support Grant: £ 13,002

The annual Band 'D' charge to increase from £183.22 to £194.82 (6.33%)

(the recommendation (e) above on precept options was carried by 5 votes to 4)

96. MARKET – ADDOPTION OF THE FOOD ACT 1984

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3161.

RECOMMEND: that the Town Council adopt the provisions of Part III of the Food Act 1984 and agree to receive a further report with a market rights policy.

97. WEB SITE

The Town Clerk reported that Watershed PR had redesigned the Town Council's site and this should be live at the end of the month. This was an additional cost of £795.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

98. DAPTC

The Town Clerk reported the increase in subscriptions for 2017/18 from £1039.16 to £1059.94.

RESOLVED: that the subscription for 2017/18 be approved.

99. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2017/18

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3165.

RECOMMEND: that the existing internal audit arrangements continue for 2017/18.

100. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT: ANNUAL REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3166.

RECOMMEND: that the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy Policy Document be approved as attached to the report.

101. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 3168.

(a) Management of 'A' Boards and Sitting Out Licences

RECOMMEND: that in principle the Town Council takes responsibility for the management of 'A' boards and sitting out licences, subject to the details being reported to the next Highways Working Group and approved by the full Council.

(b) Updates:

The Town Surveyor also provided an update on the following issues:

National Association of British Market Authorities – their Roadshow would be visiting Bridport during "Love Your Market" week on Wednesday 24 May 2017.

The Tourist Information Centre refit was ongoing and they would be closing for one day on Monday 23 January 2017.

St Cecilia's Field – information was awaited from the Environment Agency and it was hoped to have the new allotments ready for Spring 2017.

Town Guide – initial discussions had taken place on the Guide and proposals would be brought to the next Market and Business Liaison Group and that Group would be fully involved in the production of the Guide.

102. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

The Town Clerk provided an update.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

103. TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Town Clerk reported on the appointment of two new TIC Assistants, who would be commencing employment at the end of January/early February 2017.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

104. CHRISTMAS CHEER – MANAGEMENT ARRANGMENTS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3167.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council's continued support for the Christmas Cheer event be confirmed, as set out in paragraph 2.1.

105. COMMUNITY FAIR

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council will have a stall at the annual Community Fair in the Town Hall on Saturday 4 February between 9am and 2pm.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

106. TOWN CRIER'S ENGAGEMENTS AND COMPETITION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3162.

RESOLVED: that the activities of the Town Crier over the past year be noted, the Town Hall be made available for the Dorset Town Crier's competition in October 2017 and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to meet any necessary costs of clothing or accessories for the Town Crier, from within existing budgets.

107. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

The following reports were received:

Community Orchard Group - Cllr Gill Massey reported a very successful Wassailing Day in the Orchard on Sunday 15 January, with over 120 people attending.

Millennium Green Trust – Cllr Gill Massey reported that work had started on clearing the raised beds.

Tourism Association – Cllr Martin Ray reported that a new Chairman was to be appointed at the next meeting.

Bridport Food Group – Cllr Anne Rickard reported that the Group was hosting Bridport's "Best Breakfast" this Sunday 22 January, at St Mary's Church House from 9am – 12noon.

108. CORRESPONDENCE

The Committee agreed that, as the Town Council was supporting the Green Fortnight from 24 March to 9 April 2017, the Town Hall could be made available for the launch. If Transition Town Bridport sought donations, then part of that could be used towards the room hire, although the Town Clerk had discretion to waive the fee bearing in mind that the Town Council was supporting the event.

109. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Clerk reported that on Sunday 5 February at 11.00am the Town Mayor, accompanied by the mace bearers, would be attending the 800th Anniversary of St. Mary's Church, in the presence of the Bishop of Salisbury.

The Leader of the Council reported on the Mayoral Quiz to be held on Saturday 4 February. It was hoped to have a Town Council team for the event.

The Town Mayor's list of engagements was to be reported at the next Council meeting on Tuesday 24 January 2017.

110. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 4 of the 2016/17 accounts, in the sum of £191,695.77, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Chairman.

111. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: "That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it is advisable in the public interest that the public be temporarily excluded and they are instructed to withdraw."

112. INSURANCE

The Town Clerk reported on an ongoing claim.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

113. PROPERTY MATTERS – MOUNTFIELD UPDATES

The Town Clerk reported that he hoped the vacant rooms would be let very soon.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

114. STAFFING

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3169.

RESOLVED: that the proposed changes to the conditions for existing Town Council staff be approved as in paragraph 1.5 of the report, subject to the details being confirmed as part of the Annual Staffing Review, to be reported in March 2017.

The meeting closed at **8.35p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 22 March 2017