

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 20 January 2016 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT Cllr: Mrs M.J. Ray (Chairman)

Cllrs: G.J. Ackerman	Ms G.E. Massey
Miss S.A. Brown	C.M. Ray
K.A. Day	Mrs E.A. Rickard
	Ms S.J. Williams

Also present: Cllrs D.G. Rickard.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the public forum.

89. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

90. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 November 2015 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman:

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

92. CODE OF CONDUCT DISPENSATION REQUESTS

The Town Clerk reported on the requirements in relation to consideration of the budget.

93. BEST VALUE AND SCRUTINY AND BRIDPORT AND WEST BAY TOWN PLAN SUB COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 8 December 2015 be received and the following recommendations be approved: -

(Min. 30) Town Council Grants to Smaller Bodies 2015/16

RESOLVED:

(a) that the following grants be approved under the Power of General Competence:

	£
Chancery House Day Centre – replacement wheelchairs	270
Transition Town Bridport – Go, Grow and Glow need further support to continue with the work	500
Bridport Women’s Institute – Replacement door and render wall	500
Gig Club – Board out the loft space in the boat house to store equipment.	250

The Living Tree – Arts and crafts workshops	250
West Bay Community Forum – Extend planting throughout West Bay.	250

(b) that the following grants be earmarked in the budget and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to release the funding, subject to receiving more information as below (the Town Clerk reported that the required information had been received):

Opera Circus – A five day youth art workshop – it was asked if more detail could be provided on the event.	500
Bridport Youth Football Club – Hire of pitches, training equipment and insurance. Need more information on the constitution of the group.	250
Total of all Small Grants	2,770

(c) that the following application be not supported at this time, as it was considered that it did not meet the criteria: Doppleganger Productions £500 for a WWI Production at the Town Hall, but that the proposal to charge a reduced rate for the hire of the Town Hall (at the community rate) be supported.

(Min. 31) Grants to Larger Organisations

RESOLVED: that the current Service Level Agreements be extended for a further three years from 1 April 2016. The annual funding levels being:

Arts Centre	Leisure Centre	CAB	Museum	TOTAL
£6,000	£4,000	£5,000	£3,500	£18,500

94. TOWN PLAN

The Town Clerk presented the draft Plan, including revised Objectives, now referred to as Priorities and the updated list of short term projects that were scheduled for delivery before April 2017. It was proposed to hold a workshop for all members to look in particular at the Vision and Priorities in the Plan, but also the updated projects. It was hoped this could be held in early February.

RECOMMEND: that the draft Town Plan be received and endorsed, subject to further discussion at a Members' Workshop to be held in early February.

95. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2015/2016 – 3rd REVISION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3043.

RECOMMEND: that the 3rd revision of the estimates for the year 2015/2016 be approved.

96. BUDGET AND ESTIMATES 2016/17

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3044.

In considering this item, members noted:

- The position of the current year 2015/16 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 for next year (2016/2017) with a commentary on recommended significant variations from this year
- The recommended fees and charges for 2016/2017
- Comments of the Budget and Service Review Group
- Medium Term Financial Forecasts
- Summary of Budget Considerations
- Options on the level of precept to fund the budget for 2016/2017

The estimates and projects had been considered at the Best Value, Scrutiny and Town Plan Sub Committee and the Budget and Service Review Working Group.

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

- present a balanced budget
- maintain appropriate level of reserves, whilst continuing to deliver priority projects
- meet the reductions in the West Dorset District Council Tax Support Grant. In 2015/16, the Town Council received Council Tax Support of £39,006. The grant for 2016/17 will be £26,004. A final grant of £13,002 will be provided in 2017/18.
- meet the reduction in West Dorset District Council funding for community planning. Funding of £17,576 in 2015/16 reducing to £6,000 for 2016/17.
- maintain and re-focus support for community planning, whilst also allowing for increased officer project management support for Neighbourhood Plan, Coastal Community Team etc.
- provide funding for youth services in the light of Dorset County Council's decision to withdraw funding.
- make provision for other potential service delegations e.g. issues such as provision of public toilets, funding CCTV etc. and ensure that the Town Council is able to consider support for other services that may be affected by future changes in local government funding.
- increase income generation opportunities

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 £35,063. In total, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, this would raise £554,656 and provide a balanced budget and a Band 'D' council tax increase of 7.11%.

Option 2: increase the precept by £49,336. In total, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, this would raise £568,929 and provide of an additional £14,273 towards future delegated services and a Band 'D' council tax increase of 10%.

The current Band 'D' Town Council Charge is £168.78. The two 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>
Option 1	£12.00	£0.23
Option 2	£16.88	£0.32

Members commented on the challenges facing the Town Council, as summarised in the report, and it was felt that additional funds should be made available for delegated services. Members supported a further option as follows:

Option 3: increase the precept by £42,200. In total, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, this would raise £561,793 and provide an additional £7,137 towards future delegated services and a Band 'D' council tax increase of 8.55%.

	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Weekly</u>
Option 3	£14.44	£0.28

It was therefore RECOMMENDED to:

- (a) approve the draft estimates for 2016/17 as attached in Appendix A.
- (b) approve the proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix B, with a fundamental review of all charges in 2016/17.
- (c) agree the level and proposals for the use of reserves for 2016/17 as set out in section 4 of the report.
- (d) approve the Medium Term Financial Plan as a guide for future years as in Appendix C, noting that each year's budget will be subject to separate approval.
- (e) that in terms of the precept, a new Option 3 be approved, which would increase the precept by £42,200 and, including the Local Council Tax Support Grant, would raise £561,793 broken down as follows:

Precept (funded through the Council Tax): £535,789
Local Council Tax Support Grant: £ 26,004

The annual Band 'D' charge to increase from £168.78 to £183.22 (8.55%).

97. BUDGET AND SERVICE REVIEW WORKING GROUP UPDATE, INCLUDING DISTRICT COUNCIL SERVICE REVIEWS FOR TIC, BLAP AND THE MARKET LICENCE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3048.

RECOMMEND:

- (a) that the discussions with the District Council on the Town Council management of the Tourist Information Centre continue, with final details of any transfer of management responsibility to be confirmed, with details of the transitional funding, in March 2016.
- (b) that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the BLAP Chair, to agree the new service level agreement in respect of the grant for community planning, to commence from 1 April 2016.

(c) that the Town Clerk formally asks the District Council to review the licence agreement and fee to manage the market, in light of the service review process.

98. WEST BAY PLAY AREA – PROJECT UPDATE

The Town Surveyor reported on the current position and a full funding breakdown would be provided at the next meeting of this Committee. It was noted that it was hoped to commence work in March 2016.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

99. STAFFING CHANGES 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3051.

RESOLVED: that the following posts be approved: -

Project Manager SCP 31 (fixed term for two years)

Clerical Officer SCP 16

Groundsman SCP 13

and the Town Clerk be given authority to finalise the job descriptions and recruit to these posts, noting that the Clerical Officer post would be ring fenced in the first instance to existing office staff, with the Community Planning Officer post being removed from the establishment and the office apprentice contract coming to an end.

100. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE SURVEYOR

Councillors considered a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 3049.

Updates were provided on the following: -

(i) Reusable Market Bags

RESOLVED: that the production of new market bags be approved, at a cost of no more than £7,000 to be met from existing budgets, with the design being agreed in consultation with the Market and Business Liaison Working Group. It is anticipated that at least half of the costs will be recouped from sales.

(ii) Parking – Plottingham and Asker Meadows

RESOLVED: that the planning application submitted to West Dorset District Council for the provision of 27 spaces on the hard standing at Plottingham and the application being prepared for the temporary use of the show field at Asker Meadows for parking on specified busy summer days, be noted and endorsed.

(iii) Solar Thermal Hot Water System – Mountfield

RESOLVED: that the system be installed at a cost of no more than £5,000, to be met from existing budgets.

(iv) Resurfacing – Plottingham

RESOLVED: that the request by the Sea Cadets to resurface part of the area that they lease within the Plottingham compound, at their own expense, be approved.

101. WEB SITE PROPOSALS

The Town Clerk reported that as one of the Town Plan projects, he was to discuss with the Market and Business Liaison Working Group a specification for a new web site to cover the Bridport and West Bay site and the Town Council's own site. He would then seek proposals and quotes and report back to this Committee in March.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk progress new web site proposals, in consultation with the Market and Business Liaison Working Group and report back to this Committee, to seek approval to develop the new site.

102. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported on the latest position on the Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

103. COASTAL COMMUNITIES TEAM UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that the CCT Economic Plan would be published by the end of the month.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

104. PROPOSALS TO MARK THE QUEEN'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

The Town Surveyor reported on proposals for a bonfire to be erected on Coneygar Hill, to mark the occasion on 21 April 2016.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and the proposals supported.

105. DAPTC – SUBSCRIPTION AND OTHER ISSUES

Consideration was given to ENCL: 3045.

RESOLVED:

(a) that the subscription for 2016/17 be approved at £1,039.16.

(b) that all councillors be asked if they wish to be nominated for one of the four DAPTC places available to attend the Royal Garden Party 2016.

106. LAND TRANSFERS – ST CECILIA'S AND FLAXHAYES

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3053.

RECOMMEND: that freehold ownership of land at St Cecilia's Field, Pymore and at Flaxhayes be transferred from West Dorset District Council to the Town Council.

107. CHRISTMAS CHEER 2015

The Town Surveyor reported that the event had been very successful indeed and he thanked all the Committee for their work.

Cllr Mrs E.A. Rickard, the Council's representative on the Cheer Committee, thanked the Town Surveyor for all his hard work.

RESOLVED: that the updated be noted.

108. COMMUNITY FAIR

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council will have a stall at the annual Community Fair in the Town Hall on 6 February between 9am and 2pm. Any member able to help out, was asked to contact the office.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

109. TOWN CRIER

Councillors considered and welcomed the proposals for a Town Crier's Competition to be held in Bridport.

RESOLVED: that a proposed Town Crier's competition be supported, to be arranged for the Spring/Summer of 2017.

110. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2016/17

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3046.

RECOMMEND: that the existing internal audit arrangements continue for 2016/17.

111. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT: ANNUAL REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3047.

RECOMMEND: that the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy policy document be approved, as attached to the report.

112. EVENTS 2016

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3052.

The Administrative Officer was thanked for all her hard work in maintaining the list of events.

RESOLVED: that the list of events for 2016 be noted.

113. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Ms G.E. Massey, on behalf of the Bridport Community Orchard Group, reported a very successful Wassailing Day in the Orchard on 17 January, attended by the Town Mayor and the High Sheriff.

Cllr Mrs M.J. Ray reported on recent work undertaken by the Borough Gardens Group.

Cllr Mrs E.A. Rickard reported that the Bridport Food Group had met earlier that week. She had been unable to attend, but would report back when she had the details of the meeting.

114. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items reported.

115. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor's list of engagements was to be reported at the next Council meeting on 26 January.

116. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 4 of the 2015/16 accounts, in the sum of £148,432.69 which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Chairman.

117. PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960

RESOLVED: that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was agreed that in the public interest the public be temporarily excluded, whilst the Committee considered the following matters:

118. PROPERTY MATTERS – MOUNTFIELD UPDATES

The Town Clerk reported on the latest position with tenants in Mountfield.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

119. STAFFING MATTERS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3050. He outlined the staffing implications and costs.

RESOLVED: that the recommendations set out in the report and the reported costs be approved.

The meeting closed at **8.50p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 23 March 2016