

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 16 January 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr: C.M. Ray

Cllrs: G.J. Ackerman	Mrs M.J. Ray
Miss S.A. Brown (from 7.24)	D.R. Tett
Ms G.E. Massey	Ms A-M.A. Vincent (from 7.10)
J.T. May	

Also in attendance: Cllr: D.G. Rickard.

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the Public Forum.

93. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

94. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 November 2012 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

95. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Miss S.A. Brown declared an indirect interest in minute 115, as a member of the Friends of Bridport Millennium Green.

Cllr D.R. Tett declared an interest in minute 115, as a trustee and the town council representative on the Millennium Green Trust. In accordance with paragraph 12 of the Code, he did not vote on that item.

96. CODE OF CONDUCT DISPENSATION REQUESTS

The Town Clerk reported that dispensations had been granted for members present, to allow them to participate in the budget item on the agenda.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

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

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Sub Committee held on 11 December 2012 be received and noted.

98. TOWN HALL HERITAGE AND CONSERVATION PROJECT

The Town Clerk stated that the evaluation of the project will be provided at the next meeting of this Committee. This would include a full budget report.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

99. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR

The Town Surveyor provided updates, ENCL: 2638, on the following projects:

- (a) Mountfield – the new top floor tenants had moved into the building. A lot of diseased laurel had also been removed from around the grounds of the building.
- (b) Christmas Festival – the wash up meeting for the 2012 event, organised by the new committee, would take place on Tuesday 22 January 2013. The event had been a great success.
- (c) Street Lighting – listed building applications were due to be submitted shortly for eleven wall mounted street lights in both East Street and West Street.
- (d) Water Sports Centre, West Bay – the freehold transfer was ongoing and the planning application was due to be re-submitted soon.
- (e) MUGA – a second funding application to Inspired Facilities would be submitted shortly and the freehold transfer was ongoing.
- (f) St Mary's Play Area – as reported at the last meeting, it was hoped to install two new pieces of equipment in the play area.
- (g) Borough Gardens – work was continuing in partnership with the new community group. Members commented on the level of dog fouling at the Borough Gardens. It was noted that the dog warden service was to be considered by the District Council's Efficiency Scrutiny Committee on 22 January. It was asked if the Borough Gardens could be raised at that Committee, to ask if it could be added to the future programme for the dog warden service.
- (h) Skateboard Park – following the recent meeting with young people, proposals for improvements at the skateboard park were being considered and would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.
- (i) Cycle Racks – additional cycle racks were to be installed by the County Council.

The Town Surveyor also reported that a thank you letter had been received from Bridport Football Club, following the contribution and advice given towards the replacement clubhouse roof.

The updates were noted.

100. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2012/2013 – 3rd REVISION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2631.

RECOMMEND: that the 3rd revision of the estimates for the year 2012/2013 be approved.

101. **BUDGET AND ESTIMATES 2013/2014**

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2632.

In considering this item members noted:

- the position on the current year's budget
- the level of reserves
- the projects programmed for next year, taken from the draft Town Plan
- the proposed amendments to the budget
- the fees and charges for next year.

This followed discussion of the estimates and projects at the Best Value, Scrutiny and Town Plan Sub Committee.

A detailed discussion also took place in respect of the imminent and potential ongoing impact of the Localisation of Council Tax Support Grant Scheme. The Town Clerk stated that the Government had introduced this new scheme, which required billing authorities (West Dorset District Council) to determine local schemes for Council Tax benefit. The impact of the changes meant that the tax base was reduced. The Government was providing a grant to principal councils to compensate for the reduction in the tax base, at a rate of 90% of the scheme costs, but it was not grant aiding local councils. The billing authorities had been encouraged by the Government to pass on a "fair share" of the grant to the local councils. It did appear that the Town Council had been adversely affected by the new scheme and its grant did not meet the financial consequences of the reduced tax base for Bridport. The Town Clerk reported an advice note from the Society of Local Council Clerks, which referred to the voluntary nature of the grant and the potential volatility in budget setting from now on, bearing in mind also the possible future restrictions, if local councils were brought within the referendum regime.

Following representations from local District Councillors on this matter, the Town Clerk was to meet with the Director of Resources at West Dorset, to discuss the impact of the new scheme on Bridport. This meeting was due to be held on 23 January and the outcome would be reported to the Council meeting on 29 January.

The Town Clerk drew members' attention to the options on the precept, drawing to their attention that the total funding required for any of the three suggested options included the grant as referred to above. It was open to members to consider any level of precept.

Members felt that option 2 should be put forward. This would increase the overall precept by £40,944 to £486,461 (including the Council Tax Support Grant) and produce a balanced budget. This was moved and seconded, put to the vote and declared to be carried.

Therefore, it was RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the use of reserves as set out in section 4 of the report be approved for 2013/14,

- (b) that the draft estimates for 2013/14 as set out in Appendix A be approved to deliver the projects in Appendix C,
- (c) that the proposed fees and charges set out in Appendix B to the report be approved for 2013/14, and
- (d) that in terms of the precept, Option 2 in the report be approved, which would increase the precept by £40,944 and, including the Local Tax Support Grant, this would raise £486,461 broken down as follows:

Precept (funded through the Council Tax): £428,224
Local Council Tax Support Grant: £ 58,237

The annual Band D charge to increase from £132.94 to £148.80.

102. APPRENTICESHIPS

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2639.

RESOLVED: that, subject to approval of the Town Council's budget provision for 2013/14, the Town Council participate in the apprenticeship scheme and accepts the offer of grant funding from the District Council, to allow for one placement for 12 months, on the terms as set out in the report. The Town Clerk to be given delegated authority to identify the work area for the apprenticeship and enter into the agreement with Dorset County Council.

103. ASKER MEADOWS AND NEW ZEALAND – UPDATE

The Town Surveyor reported that he had met with residents of South Mill Lane, to gauge their views on the area. A large variety of opinions were aired and a working group will be set up to further consider this matter.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

104. BLAP UPDATE

Councillors considered a report of the Community Planning Officer, ENCL: 2633.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

105. OUTSIDE BODIES GUIDANCE

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2634.

RECOMMEND: that the guidance note for members appointed to serve on outside bodies be approved.

106. YOUTH COUNCIL WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2628.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

107. WDDC – LAND DISPOSAL UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that the legal transfers of land at Asker Meadows, New Zealand, the Salt House and former Toilet Block West Bay, Bridport FC and St Cecilia's were ongoing.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

108. DAPTC UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that the subscription to the Local Council Review was due for renewal and it was agreed to reduce the order to one copy.

RESOLVED: that the reduced order for the Local Council Review be approved.

109. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

The following updates were received from members of outside bodies:

Cllr Miss S.A. Brown provided feedback on the Jurassic Coast Communities Forum meeting held on 14 December 2012, at the Town Hall.

Cllr Ms G.E. Massey provided feedback on the successful wassailing event held in the Community Orchard on Sunday 13 January, attended by over 100 people.

The updates were noted.

110. SPIRIT OF BRIDPORT

The Town Clerk reported on payments made recently, as part of the approved expenditure qualifying for a grant under the Chalk and Cheese funding, for which the Town Council was acting as the accountable body. A claim was to be made to receive the funding under the grant, in this financial year.

It was also reported that the Spirit of Bridport Community Event was to be held at the Town Hall on Saturday 2 February 2013, between 9am and 1pm.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

111. TOWN CRIER'S REPORT

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2630, on the activities of the Town Crier.

RESOLVED: that the local charity, WAWA, be the recipient of the money raised by the Town Crier.

112. CCTV 2013/2014

The Town Clerk reported that, as part of the preparation of their budget for 2013/14, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council was consulting on options for the monitoring service it provides for CCTV, including for Bridport. He intended to make a response on behalf of the Town Council, to say that it would wish to be consulted before any changes were made to the monitoring of the Bridport system. The local

CCTV system was funded by the Town Council and the District Council and he understood that the funding from West Dorset District Council was likely to be in place for the coming year, but the level of monitoring of the service was under review.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to make a response on the consultation on the CCTV monitoring service provided by Weymouth and Portland Borough Council.

113. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2636.

RECOMMEND: that the existing internal audit arrangements continue for 2013/14.

114. REVIEW OF RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2635.

RECOMMEND: that the Risk Assessment and Management Strategy policy document be approved.

115. MILLENNIUM GREEN – NEW NORTHERN FOOTPATH UPDATE AND ADDITIONAL LAND TRANSFERS

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2629.

RECOMMEND: that the latest position be noted and approval be given to the additional maintenance liabilities for the Town Council in respect of land on the south side of Coneygar Lane, subject to the transfer of the land to the Millennium Green Trust being approved and the appropriate amendment to the management agreement. The maintenance liabilities to be agreed, to enable the Trust to form a new footpath leading to Coneygar Hill.

116. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no issues to report.

117. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor suggested that a letter be sent to Bridport, Tasmania enquiring as to their situation following the recent bad weather conditions. This was generally supported.

The Deputy Town Mayor said that he had recently attended the funeral of Mrs Barbara Austin, a former Mayor of Lyme Regis.

The Town Clerk reported that, following their successful summer exhibition on Bridport's sporting heritage, he had met with representatives of the Bridport Heritage Forum to discuss their proposals to hold an exhibition in 2014, to mark the 100 year anniversary of the Great War. He would report in more detail to the next meeting of this Committee, to outline potential support from the Town Council.

118. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 4 of the 2012/13 accounts, in the sum of £119,273.66 which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Chairman.

119. 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:

120. PROPERTY MATTERS

The Town Clerk updated members on the current position with the Town Council's leases.

121. STAFFING MATTERS

Councillors considered a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 2640.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to progress the matters set out in the report.

The meeting closed at **8.55 p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 27 March 2013