

Minutes of the MEETING of the FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE of Bridport Town Council held at Mountfield, Bridport on Wednesday 17 January 2018 at 7.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllr: Maggie Ray (Chairman)

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

Also in attendance: Cllr Dave Rickard

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no speakers in the public forum.

118. APOLOGIES

There no apologies for absence.

119. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13 December 2017 were confirmed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

120. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

121. TOWN PLAN PROJECTS UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported the current position.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

122. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3275.

The Town Clerk and the Leader of the Council reported back on the recent meeting of the West Dorset District Council Programme Board. This included a presentation from the Local Government Resource Centre (LGRC) on how they would be working the Board and town councils to facilitate this project of service/asset transfers.

The District Council had been notified that the Town Council wished to continue the discussions regarding potential asset transfers in Bridport but more time was needed for further work through the Board, with support from LGRC, before a package could be finalised.

RESOLVED: that the latest position on local government reorganisation, as set out in the report, be noted.

123. FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2017/2018 – 3rd REVISION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3269.

RECOMMEND: that the 3rd revision of the estimates for the year 2017/2018 be approved.

124. BUDGET AND ESTIMATES 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3270.

In considering this item, members noted:

- The position of the current year 2017/18 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) and proposed Capital Budget
- The recommended revenue budget (estimates) for next year (2018/19) with a commentary on recommended significant variations from this year
- The recommended fees and charges for 2018/19
- 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 2018/19

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 levels of reserves and continue to earmark reserves to support project delivery through a capital budget
- meet the loss of the West Dorset District Council Tax Support Grant. The Town Council initially received £58,237 in 2013/14, but over five years this was routinely reduced and had now been withdrawn completely
- make provision for inflation on both goods/services and salary budgets. The budget included an additional 3% for most non-staffing budgets and 2% for salaries, which was in line with the recently announced Employers' pay offer. There was also provision within the budget to meet the costs and outcomes of job evaluation
- make provision to continue to deliver Town Plan projects, including revenue costs of community bus and public wifi
- continued support for town events
- 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
- through the delegated services budget, seek to make ongoing revenue provision to meet some of the costs of discretionary services that are likely not to be delivered by the new unitary council and that the Town Council may need to manage e.g. public toilets

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 £26,683. In total, this would raise £596,381 and provide a deficit budget of £10,000.

Option 2: increase the precept by £36,683. In total, this would raise £606,381 and provide a balanced budget.

Option 3: increase the precept by £46,683. In total, this would raise £616,381 and provide a cushion of an additional £10,000 towards future delegated services.

The current Band 'D' Town Council charge was £194.87, resulting in the following annual and weekly increases in Council Tax for a Band 'D' Council Tax Payer:-

	<u>Annual</u>	<u>Weekly</u>	<u>Band 'D'</u>
Option 1	£ 8.80	£0.17	4.51%
Option 2	£12.21	£0.23	6.27%
Option 3	£15.63	£0.30	8.02%

Following consideration of the report, it was RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the draft estimates for 2018/19 be approved as set out in Appendix A.
- (b) that the proposed fees and charges for 2018/19 be approved as set out in Appendix B, with a fundamental review of all charges during the year.
- (c) that the draft capital budget and proposed use of reserves for 2018/19 and future years be approved, as set out in section 4 of the report, with a further report back with more detail to the next meeting of this Committee.
- (d) 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.
- (e) that in terms of the precept, Option 2 be approved, as set out above and in section 10 of the report, which would increase the precept by £36,683 to £606,381 with the annual Band 'D' charge increasing from £194.87 to £207.08 (6.27%).

125. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – NEXT STEPS

The Town Clerk updated members on the latest position.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

126. CEMETERY MANAGEMENT POLICY REVIEW

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council's Cemetery Regulations was to be reviewed and would be reported back to this Committee.

It was asked if a members' site visit could be arranged to the Cemetery.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk report back with revised Cemetery Regulations.

127. CAR PARKS – FOOTBALL CLUB AND PLOTTINGHAM

The Town Surveyor reported that it was hoped to have the new Plottingham car park operational from April 2018. In addition to Pay and Display at the car park, provision would also be made for permits to be issued for the use of the car park.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted and the Town Surveyor be given authority to provide permits at Plottingham Car Park in addition to pay and display charges and also report back on future management of both car parks.

128. DAPTC

The Town Clerk reported on the request from DAPTC for any councillors wishing to be put forward to be one or the Dorset representatives at this year's Royal Garden Party.

RESOLVED: that the details be included in the Members' Bulletin.

129. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT AND APPOINTMENT OF AN INTERNAL AUDITOR FOR 2018/19

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3271.

RECOMMEND: that the existing internal audit arrangements continue for 2018/19.

130. RISK ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT: ANNUAL REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3272.

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

131. SERVICES ADMINISTERED BY THE TOWN SURVEYOR

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Surveyor, ENCL: 3277.

(a) Parks for People

Following feedback on the Expression of Interest, it was proposed to work up a revised project for open space improvements including identifying potential funding sources.

RESOLVED: that Crystal Johnson be retained to work up a revised project and the Town Surveyor be given authority to agree a revised contract for the work, within the agreed budget.

(b) Lengthsman

Litton Cheney Parish Council and the Museum had expressed an interest in using the services of the Lengthsman.

RESOLVED: that the proposed additional users of the Lengthsman service be approved as above.

(c) Updates:

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

- (i) West Bay car parks resurfacing
- (ii) West Bay Methodist Chapel building works

132. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Town Clerk outlined the current position and the proposals to discuss further a request that a community governance review be undertaken in respect of the Vearse Farm site.

RECOMMEND: to receive an update on the latest position and agree that the Town Clerk be given delegated authority to progress this issue, in consultation with Symondsburry Parish Council.

133. DATA PROTECTION

There were no further updates at this time.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

134. COMMUNITY BUS UPDATE

The Town Clerk reported that it was proposed that a special meeting be held to consider the next steps in the project.

RECOMMEND: that the current position on the project be noted and a Special meeting be arranged to agree the next steps.

135. PUBLIC WIFI

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3276.

RESOLVED: that the Town Clerk award the contract for the provision of free public Wi-Fi in West Bay, at the following cost:

- Capital Installation £20,753 to be met from the Capital Programme, inclusive of a grant of £15,000 to leave a Town Council contribution of £5,753.
- Annual maintenance of £5,352 to be met from the Town Plan projects budget.

and the Town Clerk bring forward proposals for installation in Bridport town centre, subject to the successful installation in West Bay.

136. ARTS CENTRE PROJECT FUNDING REQUEST

The Town Clerk reported on the request received for a Youth Project. Bearing in mind the position on the grants budget, he recommended that this be discussed further and

considered again in the new financial year, as part of the Town Council's ongoing support for the Arts Centre.

RESOLVED: that the proposal for further consideration of support for this project be approved as set out above.

137. CHRISTMAS CHEER

The Town Surveyor reported on the 2017 event.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted with thanks to the Town Surveyor and the Christmas Cheer Committee for all their hard work.

138. SECTION 106 ALLOCATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3278.

The Town Surveyor reported on the funds available, currently held by West Dorset District Council, with suggestions as to how the various categories of money outstanding could be used.

RECOMMEND: that the initial proposals for use of Section 106 funding be endorsed, further expressions of interest be sought for use of the funding and the Town Clerk be given delegated authority, in consultation with the Open Spaces Working Group, to submit the funding requests to the District Council.

139. 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 3 February between 9am and 2pm.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

140. EVENTS 2018

The Town Surveyor reported the list of the events now due to take place in 2018.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

141. REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

The following reports were received:

Community Orchard Group - Cllr Gill Massey reported that the Wassailing Day in the Orchard was on Sunday 21 January 2018.

St Vaast la Hougue twinning Association – Cllr Geoffrey Ackerman reported that forthcoming events included a Jumble Sale and a Mardi Gras evening.

Bridport Food Group – Cllr Anne Rickard reported on the latest meeting of the Group.

Chancery House – Cllr Keith Day provided an update.

142. CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence.

143. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor reminded Councillors that Bridport's Citizens' Charter launch would be held in the Town Hall on Wednesday 31 January 2018 from 6.30pm.

144. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Town Clerk presented List 5 of the 2017/18 accounts, in the sum of £214,674.86, which had been authorised for payment since the last meeting. This having been tabled for members' information, was approved and signed by the Chairman.

145. 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."

146. APPOINTMENTS PANEL

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3273.

RECOMMEND:

- (a) that the revised job description for the post of Town Clerk be approved and the post be advertised.
- (b) that the grading and salary for the post be as recommended in the Job Evaluation report (Min 147)
- (c) that with immediate effect, the Town Council's Responsible Financial Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 shall be the Finance and Office Manager and Financial Regulations be amended as required.

147. JOB EVALUATION

Consideration was given to a report of the Town Clerk, ENCL: 3274.

Members discussed other proposals relating to the grading and these would be reported to the Town Council.

RECOMMEND: that the grading for the Town Clerk's post be approved as in report to take effect on the commencement of the new Town Clerk.

148. PROPERTY MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on proposals to look at the letting of one of the rooms on the first floor of Mountfield. It was intended to advertise its availability for rent.

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

149. INSURANCE

The Town Clerk reported on the latest position of an ongoing claim.

RESOLVED: that the update be noted.

The meeting closed at **8.45p.m.**

The next meeting of the Committee will be held on 21 March 2018