

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 14TH JANUARY, 2014

Present: Councillor Mrs S Forster (Chair) and Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, Mrs M R Baird, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn (Snr), B Burn (Jnr), Mrs H J Cahill, S Cudlip, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, I Paul, K Shaw, G A Shepherd, C Snowball, R Whitehead and K Younger.

1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER, 2013

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

3. PAYSHEET NUMBER 9 - 2013/2014

a) Expenditure

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 9 – 2013/2014 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £104,704.09 being the total sum authorised under this Paysheet;
- (ii) that the BACS authorisation sheet be signed by three Members and the credit transfers be actioned immediately;
- (iii) that the cheques relating to suppliers not being paid by BACS be signed by three Members and the payments be released immediately; and
- (iv) that the Clerk's Imprest Account be reimbursed the sum of £5,853.87 for Civic Expenditure which includes the sum of £168.47 for petty cash, and authority be granted for this to be signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.

b) Income

RECOMMENDED the summary sheet showing the range of income received by the Council during the current month be accepted.

4. **BANK BALANCES**

RECOMMENDED the report of the Finance Officer a copy of which was circulated, be approved.

5. **APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS**

a) **Greater Durham Citizens Advice Bureau**

The Committee considered an application from the Greater Durham Citizens Advice Bureau who sought a grant towards the services they provide within Seaham.

RECOMMENDED a grant of £2,500 be given to the Greater Durham Citizens Advice Bureau on the understanding that a letter be sent to the Bureau to ensure that this money is ring-fenced for Seaham only.

b) **Seaham Coast Under 9's FC**

The Committee considered an application from the above Club who sought a grant towards their operational costs in providing training in football skills for youngsters in Seaham.

RECOMMENDED a start-up grant of £250 be awarded to the Seaham Coast Under 9's FC.

5. **QUARTERLY BUDGETARY REVIEW FOR QUARTER ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 2013**

RECOMMENDED the budgetary review statement for the quarter ended 31st December, 2013, a copy of which had been previously circulated, be accepted.

6. **DCLG LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE STATEMENT**

The Committee considered a communication from the County Durham Association of Local Councils with attached DCLG Local Government Finance Statement.

RECOMMENDED the information be noted.

7. **COUNCIL TAX BASES AND LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT**

The Committee considered a communication from the County Durham Association of Local Councils with regard to the above issue.

RECOMMENDED the information be noted.

8. **FEES AND CHARGES**

The Committee considered the joint report of the Parks Manager and Finance Officer, a copy of which had been previously circulated, which contained proposals on the level of fees and charges for the following services to be levied during the next financial year.

- Parks and Recreation Services covering sports lettings, allotment and garage rents, grazing land rents, cemetery fees and charges;
- Arts, Information and Finance Services covering fax and photocopying charges, hire of Civic Suite and sale of Civic items

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council accept the proposals within the report and authority be granted for the proposed fees and charges in respect of all the services outlined, to be implemented from 1st April, 2014, and
- (ii) In respect of the Sports User Rebate Scheme, the Council agree the continuance of the scheme.

9. **AUDIT ISSUES**

a) **Internal audit report**

RECOMMENDED the report published by the Internal Auditor in relation to the work undertaken in examining the Town Council's Capital Expenditure controls, be accepted on the understanding that a further area of activity along a similar line of work be undertaken by the Internal Auditor to provide a proper reassurance for the Council. The Internal Auditor's schedule of work for the Council is rescheduled and a similar area of activity is undertaken by the Internal Auditor around the end of April or early May before these works are due to be signed off.

b) **Internal audit report**

RECOMMENDED the report published by the Internal Auditor in relation to the work undertaken in examining the Town Council's Creditors (Accounts Payable) controls, be accepted.

c) **Internal audit report**

RECOMMENDED the report published by the Internal Auditor in relation to the work undertaken in examining the Town Council's Cemeteries income controls, be accepted.

d) Internal audit report

RECOMMENDED the report published by the Internal Auditor in relation to the work undertaken in examining the Town Council's Corporate Governance Arrangements, be accepted.

10. REVISED BUDGET FOR 2013/14 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2014/15

The Committee reviewed the estimates for all services, a copy of which had been previously circulated. These outlined revised budgets for the current financial year and the proposed estimates for the next financial year covering all income and expenditure issues.

RESOLVED the Council approve the budgets for 2013/2014 and the revised budgets for 2014/2015.

11. SETTING THE PRECEPT

RECOMMENDED that the Council hereby agree to precept upon Durham County Council for the sum of £905,947 in respect of their requirements for the next financial year, namely 2014/15 to levy a 4% increase to taxpayers and authority be granted for the precept notice to be signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk.

12. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED the Council note that no press opportunities existed from this meeting.

13. DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S CHAIRMAN'S MEDAL

The Town Clerk advised Members that the County Council were looking for nominations for the Chairman's Medal. The closing date for nominations is 14th February and nominations forms are available should any Member require one.

RECOMMENDED the information be noted.

14. AAP MEETING

Correspondence had been received from the AAP regarding a meeting to take place on Friday, 14th January. The meeting will actually take place on Friday, 17th January, 2014.

RECOMMENDED this information be noted.