

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY , 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 Cahill, S Cudlip, Mrs S Forster, R Meir, Miss S Morrison, N R Page, I Paul, K Shaw, G A Shepherd, C Snowball, R Whitehead, 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 14TH JANUARY, 2014

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 10 - 2013/2014

a) Expenditure

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 10 – 2013/2014 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £84,998.52 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 £2,544.51 for Civic Expenditure which includes the sum of £163.29 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) **Great North Air Ambulance Service**

The Committee considered an application from the Great North Air Ambulance Service who sought a grant towards their continued operational costs.

RECOMMENDED The Council make a donation of £100 to the Great North Air Ambulance Service.

b) **Durham Miners' Gala**

Prior to the consideration of the following two items, Councillors R Meir and G A Shepherd both declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered a letter from The Durham Miners Association who sought support in the form of an advertisement in the brochure for the 130th Durham Miners' Gala which was to take place on 12th July, 2014. In discussion Members were advised of the costs for both a half page at £315 and a quarter page advertisement at £160 and a discussion ensued on the current policy of the Town Council to make savings. A Member questioned whether taking a half page, as last year, at the cost of £315 would be appropriate in view of the smaller donation made to the Great North Air Ambulance Service which was a highly valued service. The content of the advertisement was also queried by another Member as the Gala was to take place after the Seaham Carnival. The Town Clerk advised that the advertisement promoted the work of the Town Council.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree to take a half page advertisement at a cost of £315 in the programme for the 130th Durham Miners Gala.

c) **Friends of the Durham Miners' Gala**

The Committee considered a letter from Durham Miners' Association which requested the Town Council's continued support by the renewal of its membership of the Friends of the Durham Miners' Gala with an annual donation of £24.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve the donation of £24 to the Friends of Durham Miners' Gala.

d) Parkside and District Community Association

The Committee considered a letter from Parkside and District Community Association which sought financial support from the Town Council towards their involvement in the April Twinning visit.

RECOMMENDED the Council make a contribution to Parkside and District Community Association of £500 towards the costs of hosting a group of Gerlingen visitors to Seaham in April, 2014.

e) Letter of Thanks

RECOMMENDED the Council note the letter of thanks received from the Greater Durham Citizen's Advice Bureau for the Town Council's donation of £2,500.

6. LOCALISATION OF COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT

The Committee considered a letter from the County Durham Association of Local Councils which detailed the local authorities throughout the country who were not intending to pay this grant to their parish Councils.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

7. 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 Income and Banking, be accepted.

b) Local Audit and Accountability Act

RECOMMENDED the Council note the communication received from Durham County Council in relation to the Local Audit and Accountability Act.

8. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee considered the items previously discussed and agreed that the following items should be notified to the press:

- (i) Donations made to Great North Air Ambulance – item 5 a
- (ii) Donations made to the Durham Miners Association - items 5 b and 5 c
- (iii) The donation recognised by the Greater Durham's CAB – item 5 e.

RECOMMENDED the items detailed above be promoted in the press

9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

The Committee considered the DCLG Minister's latest written statement which, if approved, means that the capping limit is to remain at 2% for principal authorities and that there would be no extension to town and parish councils for 2014/15 but that the Government is prepared to extend the provisions to larger town and parish councils from 2015/16.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.