

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 8TH APRIL, 2014**

Present: Councillor Mrs B E Allen (Chair) and Councillors B Allen, Mrs M R Baird, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Snr, B Burn Jnr, S Cudlip, Miss S Morrison, N R Page, G A Shepherd, C Snowball, R Whitehead, K Younger

Apologies: Councillors R Arthur, Mrs H Cahill, R Meir, I Paul

**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 11TH MARCH, 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 12 - 2013/2014**

**a) Expenditure**

The Committee included the expenditure incurred by the Town Council during the last month and the Finance Officer responded to queries raised. In discussion the Deputy Town Clerk was asked whether comparisons with other local suppliers of planting materials were undertaken on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 12 – 2013/2014 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £155,846.44 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 £2,219.56 for Civic Expenditure which includes the sum of £293.91 for petty cash, and authority be granted for this to be signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.
- (v) The Deputy Town Clerk to review the suppliers used for planting materials to ensure that the Town Council continued to get value for money.

**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) Seaham Division Girl Guides**

The Committee considered an application from the Seaham Division Girl Guides who sought a grant towards their celebration day to be held on 28th June, 2014 at Christ Church, Seaham.

RECOMMENDED the Council grant an award of £250 to the Seaham Division Girl Guides.

**b) Letters of thanks**

RECOMMENDED the letter from the Great North Air Ambulance which thanked the Town Council for its recent donation of £100, be noted.

**6. BUDGET STRATEGY – MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Committee considered the amendments prepared for discussion by the Town Clerk in relation to the Medium Term Financial Plan, a copy of which had been previously circulated. The amendments concerned the Town Council's level of reserves and also contributions towards any future revenue commitments and capital projects. In addition the risk management paragraph now included a reference to the new Town Hall under financial hazards.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council approve the proposed changes in relation to the Town Council's level of reserves and contributions towards future revenue commitments and capital projects
- (ii) The Council approve the inclusion of the additional financial hazard as detailed on the Risk Assessment Proforma.
- (iii) Subject to the approval of these amendments, the Council accept the Medium Term Financial Plan.

**7. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

The Committee considered the items previously discussed and agreed that the support given by the Council to Seaham Division Girl Guides and the Great North Air Ambulance detailed in item numbers 5a and 5b, be notified to the press.

RECOMMENDED the above items be promoted in the press.

**8. RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the following item, the formal resolution be hereby passed to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1961.

**9. SEAHAM TOWN HALL PROJECT SUPPORT**

The Committee considered an e-mail from Mr P Tighe, Quantity Surveyor, acting on behalf of the Town Council in relation to the New Town Hall project which clarified his agreement with the Council. A Member provided an update with regard to the current position of this project.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported and await notification of a Special Meeting of the Council when all Members would be invited to attend to discuss the project with both the Architect and Quantity Surveyor.