

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1ST JULY, 2014

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

Apologies: Councillors Mrs H Cahill, C Snowball, 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 JUNE, 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 3 - 2014/2015

a) Expenditure

The Committee considered the expenditure for Paysheet 3 and a number of queries were raised in relation to the new Town Hall project with a request that information be provided to Members at the next meeting of this Committee. Expenditure queries in relation to other items on Paysheet 3 were raised and the Town Clerk was asked to provide responses at the next meeting.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 3 – 2014/2015 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £345,209.87 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 £1,698.10 for Civic Expenditure which includes the sum of £172.60 for petty cash, and authority be granted for this to be signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.

- (v) In respect of the new Town Hall, a simplified report be provided to the next meeting of this Committee to show where funding had come from, together with a detailed breakdown of expenditure, including whether other items such as furniture were additional to the original project cost or otherwise, to enable Members to have an overview of the whole project.
- (vi) Responses to other expenditure queries raised in relation to Paysheet 3 be provided at the next meeting of this Committee.

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. AUGUST RECESS PAYSHEET

RECOMMENDED in accordance with usual practice, formal authority be granted to constitute an August Recess Paysheet Sub-Committee comprising the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee and two additional Councillors, and they be authorised to agree and issue the August Recess Paysheet subject to details being reported for information purposes to the September meeting.

6. QUARTERLY BUDGETARY REVIEW FOR QUARTER ENDED 30TH JUNE, 2014

The Committee considered the quarterly budgetary review for the quarter ended 30th June, 2014. A Member raised a number of queries and asked for a separate statement to be provided at the next meeting of this Committee to clarify the situation.

RECOMMENDED the Council accept the budgetary review statements for the quarter ended 30th June, 2014 subject to an additional statement to clarify the position being provided at the next meeting of this Committee.

7. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

a) Seaham Triathlon

The Committee considered an application from Mr Barry Taylor who sought a grant towards the Seaham Triathlon to be held on 20th July, 2014.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve a £250 donation towards the Seaham Triathlon to take place on 20th July, 2014.

b) Haswell and District Mencap

The application from Haswell and District Mencap was initially considered at the last meeting of this Committee when more specific information on the services provided to Seaham residents was requested. The Committee viewed the response received from the organisation and noted that 17% of their beneficiaries reside in Seaham and 30% of services users for the day care live in Seaham

RECOMMENDED the Council approve a £200 donation towards Haswell and District Mencap.

c) Vane Tempest Theatre Group

The Committee considered an application from the Vane Tempest Theatre Group for support in the form of an advertisement in the programme for their production of 'The Bitter Taste of Coal' which was to be staged within the new Town Hall in July, 2014 together with the costs involved.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree to sponsor a half page advertisement at a cost of £40 in the programme for this Group's production of The Bitter Taste of Coal.

d) Eastlea Community Centre

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillors E Bell and Mrs J A Bell declared an interest and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

The Committee considered an application from Eastlea Community Centre who sought a grant towards the restoration of their raised flower beds within their community garden area.

RECOMMENDED the Council approve a £250 donation to the Eastlea Community Centre.

8. INSURANCE RENEWAL

The Committee considered the renewal document for the Town Council for 2014/15 which included cover for the new Town Hall.

RECOMMENDED authority be granted for the renewal fee of circa £61,000 to be paid to Zurich Municipal in respect of the renewal of insurance cover for the Town Council.

9. EXTRACT FROM NALC FINANCE AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – JUNE, 2014

The Committee considered a communication from Steve Ragg of CDALC together with the latest update from the NALC Chief Executive which detailed the decisions taken by the Finance Committee, Executive Committee and the Improvement and Development Board in relation to the strategy for the future delivery of services.

RECOMMENDED this item is deferred for consideration to the next meeting.

10. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee considered the items previously discussed and agreed that the awards provided by the Council to the various groups detailed in item numbers 6a, 6b, 6c and 6d should be notified to the press.

RECOMMENDED the donations provided by the Council to Seaham Triathlon, Haswell and District Mencap, the Vane Tempest Theatre Group and Eastlea Community Centre be promoted in the press.