

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10TH FEBRUARY, 2015

Present: Councillor Mrs S Forster (Chair) and Councillors Mrs M R Baird, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, B Burn Snr, R Meir, N R Page, K Shaw, C Snowball, R Whitehead

Apologies: Councillors B Burn Jnr, Mrs H Cahill, I Paul, B Taylor, K Younger

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

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 13TH JANUARY, 2015

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 - 2014/2015

a) Expenditure

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 10 – 2014/2015 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £173,655.04 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 -£23.02 for Civic Expenditure, 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) **Durham Miners' Gala**

Prior to the consideration of this item, Councillor R Meir 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 131st Durham Miners' Gala which was to take place on 11th July, 2015. In discussion Members were advised of the costs for both a half page at £325 and a quarter page advertisement at £165.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree to take a quarter page advertisement at a cost of £165 in the programme for the 131st Durham Miners Gala.

6. **SEAHAM TOWN HALL - BOOKINGS**

The Committee considered a schedule, a copy of which was circulated, which detailed the bookings received for the Town Hall in respect of the period January to March, 2015. A meeting of the Town Hall Working Party had taken place recently with representatives of Oldfields in attendance. The meeting was inquorate and one of the Elected Members who had been present at the meeting provided a brief overview of issues discussed. A copy of the report of the meeting would be provided to Members at a future date.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council note the information now reported.
- (ii) A copy of the report of the meeting of the Town Hall Working Party be provided to Members for approval at the next meeting of this Committee.

7. **AUDIT ISSUES**

a) **Internal Audit Report – Creditors (Accounts Payable)**

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.

b) Budgetary Control

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

c) Main Accounting

RECOMMENDED the report published by the Internal Auditor in relation to the work undertaken in examining the Town Council's Main Accounting arrangements, be accepted.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

a) Seaham Town Hall

The Council was reminded of the requirement as part of the corporate governance arrangements, for risk assessments to be undertaken in relation to various activities. At regular intervals Members had been provided with reports on progress made in this area and the Committee was advised of the process involved in carrying out initial assessments made of risks in a range of finance and general purposes activities. At a previous meeting it was deemed appropriate to revise the scoring in relation to Seaham Town Hall in light of the current situation with KORU.

RECOMMENDED the Council formally agree to accept the revised risk assessment covering Seaham Town Hall.

9. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Committee considered the items previously discussed and agreed that the wide use by the local community of Seaham Town Hall as detailed in item number 6 be notified to the press.

RECOMMENDED the use to date of Seaham Town Hall be promoted in the press

10. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT

The Committee considered the communication received from CDALC in relation to the Local Government Finance Settlement, a copy of which had been previously circulated.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the information now reported.

11. 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.

12. KORU

The Committee was updated with regard to the current situation that exists with KORU and the adjudication process.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) The Council note the information now reported.
- (ii) A letter of thanks be sent to the Quantity Surveyor for his support throughout the project.

13. 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. The Committee was also advised of a request received from Dawdon Welfare Park Bowls Club to only use and be charged for one of the bowling greens.

- Parks and Recreation Services covering sports lettings, allotment and garage rents, grazing land rents, cemetery fees and charges;
- Arts, Information and Finance Services covering photocopying charges, hire of Function Suite/Meeting Room facility 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, 2015, and
- (ii) In respect of the Sports User Rebate Scheme, the Council agree the continuance of the scheme at the rates detailed.
- (iii) Dawdon Welfare Park be charged for utilisation of one bowling green in the coming season.
- (iv) The bowling greens at Dawdon Welfare Park both be maintained with one being maintained as a stand-by facility.

- v) The potential for the stand-by green to be utilised as a putting green be considered.