

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10th JANUARY, 2017

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

Apologies: Councillors B Allen, Mrs B E Allen

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 29TH NOVEMBER, 2016

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 - 2016/17

a) Expenditure

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 9 – 2016/17 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £99,545.22 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 £2,163.30 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. SEAHAM TOWN HALL – BOOKINGS

The Committee considered the schedule of bookings for the Town Hall for December, 2016.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the bookings made at Seaham Town Hall for December, 2016.

6. BUDGET SUB-COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the reports dated 15th and 30th November and also the report of the 13th December, 2016. A Member stated that the Sub-Committee have looked at every item on the budget sheets and should be commended for the amount of work completed. It was also noted that Town Council staff should be commended on the amount of work that has been carried out on the compiling of the reports.

RECOMMENDED the reports of the Budget Sub-Committee meetings held on 15th and 30th November and 13th December, 2016 previously circulated to Councillors to aid in the budget setting process, be adopted.

7. REVISED BUDGET FOR 2016/17 AND PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2017/18

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.

It was noted that a further £5,000 needed to be added to the Cost Centre 401 Grounds Maintenance for the landscaping or art features at Dawdon and Parkside which had not been included in the budget by the Deputy Town Clerk.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that the Council accept the information and include the £5,000 in the final figures.
- (ii) the Council approve the budgets for 2017/2018 and the revised budgets for 2016/2017.

8. THE PRECEPT

A 2% increase was proposed which would incur a minimal increase of 0.06p per week for Band A properties and 0.09p per week for Band D properties. In the next financial year the Town Council are proposing to expand their services by offering extra events, especially over the main holiday periods, across various venues in the town. There is also a requirement to maintain existing services which is the reason the Town Council have endeavoured to keep the charge to taxpayers to a realistic and reasonable level.

In discussion, the possibility of the Town Council losing the Local Council Tax Support Grant from Durham County Council was noted and also that provision has continued to be made in the event this grant is lost.

The percentage of properties within the various Council Tax bands in Seaham based upon the most recent information held was noted as:

Band A	circa	77%
Band B	circa	11.25%
Band C	circa	6.4%
Band D	circa	3.5%

RECOMMENDED that the Council hereby agree to precept upon Durham County Council for the sum of £1,045,504 in respect of their requirements for the next financial year, namely 2017/18 to levy a 2% increase to taxpayers and authority be granted for the precept notice to be signed by the Mayor and Town Clerk.

8. AUDIT ISSUES

a) Internal Audit Report – Risk Management

RECOMMENDED that this item be deferred to the next meeting.

9. RISK ASSESSMENTS – FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES ISSUES

The Council was reminded of the requirement as part of the corporate governance processes 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. The Committee noted the process followed in assessing the risks.

RECOMMENDED the Council formally agree to accept the risk assessments covering the various items now reported.

10. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

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