

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON  
30TH MAY, 2017**

Present: Councillors R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell,  
Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace,  
S P Colborn, S Cudlip, D Cummings,  
Mrs V Cummings, Mrs S Forster,  
Ms R M Gratton, G N Hepworth,  
Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, T Shepherd,  
B Taylor, R Whitehead, Miss L Willis.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, Mrs S Pratt

**1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

A nomination was made for Councillor S Cudlip to be appointed Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year which was seconded. No other nominations were received and a vote was not requested. A Member questioned whether it was healthy to have the same Chair every year. It was stated that this is looked at every year and it is important to have a Chair who has good experience and expertise in finance. Councillor Cudlip has not always been a Member of the Finance Committee and other Members have previously been Chairs of this Committee. It was reiterated that this time next year when new Councillors have had training and have gained experience of how the Town Council operates then it can be looked at possibly changing some of the roles to other Councillors to offer development in those roles.

It was also stated that the Finance Committee along with the Trustees of Dawdon and Seaham Park's run hand in hand as all three are interlinked. The accounts for the Charity's are all part of Seaham Town Council's accounts and there is very little change across the year in the Charity's accounts.

RECOMMENDED Councillor S Cudlip be appointed as Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year.

**2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR OF FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE FOR THE ENSUING YEAR**

Councillor Mrs S Forster was nominated and seconded to become the Vice-Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year. Following a vote it was noted 16 votes for and 1 abstention.

RECOMMENDED Councillor Mrs S Forster be appointed Vice-Chair of this Committee for the ensuing year.

*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.*

**3. 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.

**4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 2ND MAY, 2017**

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.

**5. PAYSHEET NUMBER 2 - 2017/18**

**a) Expenditure**

The Chair requested that if Members have any queries with regards to the accounts they should contact the Finance Officer prior to the meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 2 – 2017/18 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, BACS and cheque payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £72,853.90 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 £2,356.44 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.

**6. BANK BALANCES**

RECOMMENDED the report of the Finance Officer a copy of which was circulated, be approved.

**7. APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS**

**a) 3P/Horizon P.P.S.**

The Chair welcomed Ms Claire Kitson to the meeting to inform Members of her grant request.

Ms Kitson stated that there are three pots of funding which are coming to the region through Europe. They come via the key colleges which are Durham, Gateshead and Middlesbrough. The three pots of funding are:

SSR – which is funding for the short term unemployed (less than 6 months) to try and get them back into work quickly;

SSW – aimed at people already in employment;

SME – small medium enterprises, small businesses that can't reinvest in training for apprenticeships etc.

Ms Kitson's focus is on the SSR funding for unemployed people and Ms Kitson is working with a number of companies who are using her experience and her networks in the region to get people into work. Ms Kitson is working with recruitment agencies across the region.

Ms Kitson stated that a group was ran last week in Newcastle with 24 candidates. 16 are now working in a call centre and 4 are working in manufacturing at a company in Wallsend. She noted that not everyone will be successful but one person has been referred for extra support in literacy.

Ms Kitson stated she wants to hire the room at the Town Hall as she has lived in Seaham and Murton all of her life and stated if the courses are running in Durham, Middlesbrough or Newcastle it is difficult to get Seaham residents to these venues for training. If there are jobs available she wants people from Seaham to have those jobs. She carried out an exercise on Facebook to see how much interest there would be if she could get a venue in Seaham. She has had a response from 15 people from Seaham, Murton and the surrounding villages showing an interest. She noted that SSR funding is tight and they only make £50 per candidate. Ms Kitson noted that she can't facilitate this course in Seaham without a suitable venue and support. If people of Seaham are employed this will bring money into the local economy.

At this point Members were invited to ask any questions and the following comments were made:

- (i) A Member stated that their main query was that this is Seaham Town Council and it was mentioned that there are 15 people from different villages, how many of those 15 people are actually from Seaham and how many from the local villages?

*Ms Kitson stated that out of the 15 people there was 1 from Hawthorn, 2 from Murton and the balance was Seaham.*

- (ii) Anything that can get people into work is a good thing. How long will the use of the room be needed and what type of facilities do you require?

*Ms Kitson informed Members that it is for 3 weeks but not 3 consecutive weeks. Each cohort will have 15 people and it is 9.00am-4.30pm Monday – Thursday and finish at 12.00 on Friday. The qualification they will receive is a BIT Level 2 (Business Improvement Techniques) and then they will be taken to a Level 3 module on visual management. A large room would be required as there will be 30 people attending each week, 15 will be the minimum. There will be two teams and they will make small cars as part of the exercise so the course will be very interactive. Ms Kitson stated she is looking for the room venue, support with tea and coffee and sandwiches at lunch time.*

- (iii) East Durham Trust has a scheme by if you are going to work they will get you to work free of charge. The scheme appears to be working very well.

*Ms Kitson stated that she is linked to East Durham Trust and she has seen this but she was unsure whether they would take people to Newcastle everyday. Ms Kitson will look into this further.*

The Chair stated that Ms Kitson has spoken to Oldfields to discuss room sizes and room availability and also the cost to the Town Council. For three weeks room hire the costs will be £2531.25. Ms Kitson's scheme wouldn't necessarily fall into the category of receiving a discount for Seaham community groups.

Oldfields providing tea/coffee £900 or Seaham Town Council staff can provide for £100.

Oldfields providing a buffet £1800.

Total costings would amount to £4400.00

- (iv) A Member stated does that mean potentially we could get 90 people back into work?

*Yes that is the aim although not all 90 would be suitable for all of the jobs.*

- (v) A Member questioned whether people attending the course could provide their own lunches?

*Ms Kitson stated yes that would be possible.*

- (vi) A Member questioned whether Ms Kitson had looked at any other venues in Seaham such as church halls or Aces Internet Café?

*Ms Kitson stated she had contacted the Glebe Centre at Murton but they are a charitable organisation and therefore couldn't support her. They offered a discounted rate but they are not for profit themselves.*

*Caterpillar at Peterlee wanted £400 per week. Ms Kitson also stated that she is bringing large companies to the venue to meet some of the candidates so it needs to look professional.*

(vii) If you are successful when do you plan to start the venture?

*Either 2 weeks in June and 1 in July or 1 in June and 2 in July.*

The Chair thanked Ms Kitson for attending and informed her that the Town Council will respond to her request in due course. Ms Kitson then left the meeting.

Members discussed the request from Ms Kitson. A Member noted that it was imperative that there was a higher ratio of Seaham residents in attendance as the Town Council are here to support the local electorate and not to support neighbouring villages.

A resolution was proposed to offer the Town Hall with tea and coffee provided by Seaham Town Council staff to Ms Kitson for the three weeks she requests on the proviso that 80% of the people attending the course are Seaham residents.

Members voted 17 for.

A resolution was proposed that Ms Kitson provides lunches for the courses.

Members voted 17 for.

RECOMMENDED that Ms Kitson is offered the Town Hall for the 3 weeks she requests with the proviso that 80% of people attending the courses are Seaham residents and that Ms Kitson is informed that she will be responsible for providing lunches.

## **8. SEAHAM TOWN HALL – BOOKINGS**

The Committee considered the schedule of bookings for the Town Hall for May, 2017.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the bookings made at Seaham Town Hall for May, 2017.

## **9. REPORT OF THE TOWN HALL WORKING PARTY**

The Committee considered the minutes of the last meeting of the Town Hall Working Party held on 25<sup>th</sup> April, 2017, a copy of which had been circulated separately.

RECOMMENDED the Council agree the recommendations made by the Town Hall Working Party as detailed in the report.

**10. ANNUAL RETURN – FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/17**

The Committee was advised that under the Limited Assurance Audit Regime the Council's statutory accounts be produced in the form of an Annual Return which must be approved prior to the end of the month of June following the financial year to which it relates. The Committee considered a copy of the completed Annual Return which reflects the information contained in the Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31st March 2017 (Not subject to Audit). Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return which reflects the information contained in the Financial Statements were considered for official approval and signing.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) That the Council formally approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement for Seaham Town Council, of the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31st March 2017.
- (ii) That the Council formally approve Section 2, Accounting Statements for Seaham Town Council, of the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31st March 2017.

**11. ID BADGES**

Members agreed that Councillors and staff should have ID Badges. These should be worn if Members are visiting members of the public.

It was stated to all Councillors for issues such as housing, roads and highways Town Councillors should refer these issues to County Councillors as this is the remit of the County Council and not the Town Council.

RECOMMENDED that ID badges are purchased for all Councillors and staff.

**12. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

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