

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER, 2017**

Present: Councillors Mrs S Forster (Chair) and Mrs B E Allen, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Mrs R Gratton, G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy, D McKenna, Mrs S Pratt, K Shaw, A Shepherd, B Taylor, R Whitehead, Miss L Willis.

Apologies: Councillors R Arthur, S Cudlip

*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 5<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 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.

**3. PAYSHEET NUMBER 6 – SEPTEMBER 2017/18**

**a) Expenditure –September 2017**

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 6 – 2017/18 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, Bacs, Online and Debit Card payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £78,108.00 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; and
- (iii) that the Clerk's Imprest Account be reimbursed the sum of £1,255.97 for Civic Expenditure and authority be granted for this to be signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.

A Member raised a question about the costs of hiring crowd barriers for

events and whether it would be more viable for the Town Council to purchase their own to save on costs in the long term. The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the Town Council have purchased crowd barriers previously. There is an issue with storage of the barriers and they do deteriorate after a time and need to be replaced. More and more barriers need to be used due to vehicle and people separation requirements. It is simpler to have a company to drop them off when required and remove them when events are finished.

An issue was also raised with regards to the hiring costs related to the photocopier. It was questioned whether it would be cheaper to purchase a photocopier outright rather than to rent. It was noted that this had been looked into recently and it was more cost effective to rent than to buy due to how quickly technology changes and also with renting there is a contract in place for an engineer to be called out to either fix or replace the copier. However, it was agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk would look into this again to compare costs.

RECOMMENDED the Deputy Town Clerk to compare prices for renting and purchasing a photocopier.

**b) Income – September 2017**

RECOMMENDED the summary sheet showing the range of income received by the Council during the current month be accepted.

**c) Bank Balances – September 2017**

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

**4. APPLICATION FOR GRANT**

**a) Free the Way**

Pursuant to the last meeting Members agreed that more detailed information was required to establish exactly how many residents of Seaham benefit from this organisation. Following a telephone conversation held with Free the Way it was noted that 35 of the 60 people attending the project were residents of Seaham.

A Member stated that he was very supportive of the initiative as once the centre had opened the crime rates in Seaham had reduced. It was noted that as the grant was for furniture it would have a long term benefit to the people using the facility. Another Member noted that there had been a lot on social media of late about discarded needles in Seaham. All Members agreed that the grant should be paid.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the grant to the Free the Way Project of £532.80

**b) St Benedicts Hospice - Light Up A Life Programme**

Councillor Mrs Sonia Forster declared an interest and took no further part in the voting thereon.

A request was made from St Benedicts Hospice for the Town Council to purchase advertising space in their 'Light Up A Life' Programme in December at a cost of £255.00 + VAT. Members agreed this was a worthwhile cause.

RECOMMENDED the Town Council purchase advertising space at a cost of £255.00 + VAT.

**5. SEAHAM TOWN HALL – BOOKINGS**

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

A Member questioned whether Officers had checked to see if any further performances from theatre groups this year were due to be held at the same time as any Council meetings. Officers noted that there were 3 possible clashes of times and suggested that Council meetings be brought forward to 5.30pm on these three occasions. It was agreed to vote to see if the new times would be acceptable. It was noted that 12 Members voted for this change. The Deputy Town Clerk will speak to Oldfields with regards to the booking of theatre groups on Council meeting nights.

RECOMMENDED the Council note the bookings made at Seaham Town Hall. It was agreed to bring forward three Council meetings to start at 5.30pm and the Deputy Town Clerk to speak to Oldfields with regards to group bookings on Council meeting nights.

**6. SEAHAM TOWN HALL WORKING PARTY MINUTES HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2017**

A Member questioned whether a complaint received regarding Oldfields into the Town Council had been resolved by Oldfields.

RECOMMENDED the Deputy Town Clerk to discuss this with Oldfields and to report back.

**7. QUARTERLY BUDGETARY REVIEW FOR QUARTER ENDED SEPTEMBER, 2017**

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the statement now presented for the quarter ended September, 2017.

8. **PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

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