

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 6<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2018**

Present: Councillors S Cudlip (Chair) and R Arthur, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Ms R M Gratton, G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy, A Shepherd, B Taylor, Miss L Willis.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, E Bell, Mrs S Forster, Mrs S Pratt, K Shaw.

*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 9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY, 2018**

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 – JANUARY 2017/18**

**a) Expenditure – January 2018**

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 10 – 2017/18 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, Bacs, Online and Debit Card payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £84,455.34 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 £300.00 for Civic Expenditure and authority be granted for this to be signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer.

**b) Income – January 2018**

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

c) **Bank Balances – January 2018**

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

4. **APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS**

a) **Mr Stephen Hobday – 2018 Solitude Run**

Members discussed the request from Mr Hobday requesting financial support towards Mr Hobday taking part in the 2018 Solitude Run. Members agreed a donation of £100 should be given to Mr Hobday towards the costs of his taking part in the event.

RECOMMENDED that £100 should be donated to Mr Hobday towards the costs of his taking part in the 2018 Solitude Run.

b) **Friends of Durham Miners Gala**

Members discussed the request from the Friends of Durham Miners Gala requesting financial support towards the cost of hiring a PA system and a large screen which will reach all of the crowds at this year's Miners Gala event. Members agreed a donation of £50 should be paid to Friends of Durham Miners Gala.

RECOMMENDED that a donation of £50 be paid to Friends of Durham Miners Gala.

c) **Haswell and District Mencap**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the letter received from Haswell and District Mencap thanking the Town Council for their generous donation of £500.

d) **Great North Air Ambulance**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the letter received from the Great North Air Ambulance thanking the Town Council for their generous donation of £500.

5. **AUDIT ISSUES**

a) **Internal Audit Report – Creditors – Full Assurance**

A Member questioned whether Mr Fletcher the Town Council's Auditor was independent to the Council. It was noted that Mr Fletcher is in fact independent. Mr Fletcher has a 5 year plan for the Town Council and attends this Committee once per year to update Members or can attend at other times if Councillors wish to speak with him. It was noted that Mr

Fletcher will be invited to the April Finance and General Purposes Committee. A Member questioned whether it would have been appropriate to invite Mr Fletcher to discuss the Oldfields situation. It was noted that Mr Fletcher can be questioned about Oldfields when he attends in April.

A Member suggested that Members should email the Deputy Town Clerk with a list of questions they have for the Internal Auditor so the Deputy Town Clerk can pull these together prior to the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) Members note a full assurance was given for the Creditors audit report.
- (ii) Members note that the Internal Auditor will be invited to attend the April meeting and any questions they may wish to raise should be emailed to the Deputy Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

**6. QUARTERLY BUDETARY REVIEW FOR QUARTER ENDED DECEMBER 2017**

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the budgetary review statement for the quarter ended December, 2017.

**7. COSTS RELATING TO THE PHOTOCOPIER**

Officers had compared the costs of leasing or buying outright a photocopier. The Finance Officer stated that it was in fact less expensive to purchase a photocopier outright. The current contract is due for renewal in June 2019 and prior to that Officers will again look at both options and report the amounts involved in order to give Members the opportunity to discuss which is the best option.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

**8. ADDITIONAL SEASONAL WORKER**

It was noted that this item had been discussed and agreed at the Parks and Events Committee held on the 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2018.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

**9. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL TOWN HALL WORKING PARTY MEETINGS HELD ON THE 15<sup>TH</sup> & 22<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY, 2018**

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the minutes from the above meetings where the recommendations made by the Working Party were ratified at the Full Council meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018.

**10. OLDFIELDS AND PROPOSED LIQUIDATION**

The Deputy Town Clerk shared correspondence with Members which he had

received from Leonard Curtis. It was noted that the original projected cost for the Town Council to raise a petition to put Oldfields into liquidation had arisen to £3,100. Members agreed that a Town Hall Working Party meeting should be arranged to discuss this further.

RECOMMENDED that a meeting of the Town Hall Working Party should be arranged to discuss this matter further.

**11. RAMSIDE CATERING – ZERO HOUR CONTRACTS**

It was noted that employees of Ramside Catering were not paid less than the minimum wage but that Ramside do offer zero hour contracts to members of their staff. It was noted that this was due to the type of business it is whereby staff are only required when there is a function for them to work.

A Member stated that he wanted it noted that he was in total opposition to any employer offering zero hour contracts.

Members noted that Ramside Catering had now provided sufficient information to the Town Council.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

**12. CATERING AT MAYORAL EVENTS**

Due to the change in catering providers the Mayor was seeking permission to look to continue the previous agreement held with Oldfields with Ramside Catering, whereby Civic events could be catered for by the Town Council on the basis that the cost was below £200 and practical. At previous events food requirements have been sourced by local providers.

RECOMMENDED that this agreement be carried forward to save costs.

**13. PRESS OPPORTUNITIES**

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