

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 11TH FEBRUARY, 2020

Present: Councillors S Cudlip (Chair) and, Mrs G Bleasdale, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, S P Colborn, Mrs S Forster, Ms R M Gratton, Mrs L Kennedy, T Shepherd, B Taylor.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur, Mrs K Brace, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, G N Hepworth, D McKenna, K Shaw, Miss L Willis.

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (Town Clerk), Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer), Miss A Rountree (Minute Taker).

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.

As the Chair and Vice-Chair had made their apologies Councillor S Cudlip was nominated to Chair the meeting.

(S Cudlip in the Chair)

F108/20 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. Such interests must be submitted to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

F109/20 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 14TH JANUARY, 2020

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting were approved and signed by the Chairman at the Full Council meeting held on 28th January, 2020.

F110/20 PAYSHEET NUMBER 10 – JANUARY 2019/20

a) Expenditure – January, 2020

A Member requested information regarding the chemical weed spray used by the Parks Department and whether this was toxic. The Finance Officer stated that she would request this information from the Parks Department and respond to the Member in due course.

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 10 – 2019/20 be approved, it being noted that the Bacs, Direct Debits, Online and Debit Card payments amount to £185,164.02 being the total sum authorised under this Paysheet; and
- (ii) that the BACS authorisation sheet be signed by three Members and the credit transfers be actioned immediately.

b) **Income – January, 2020**

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

c) **Bank Balances – January, 2020**

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

F111/20 **APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS**

a) **Mr Stephen Hobday**

Members discussed a grant application received from Mr Stephen Hobday for him to take part in the Gerlingen Solitude Run. Members agreed to award Mr Hobday £75.00.

RECOMMENDED that a grant of £75 be awarded towards the cost of taking part in the Solitude Run in Gerlingen.

b) **Thank you letter from St Hild and St Helen Church**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the thank you letter from St Hild and St Helen Church for the donation of £350 for the foodbank.

F112/20 **TOWN HALL BOOKINGS – JANUARY 2020**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information provided.

F113/20 **AUDIT REPORTS**

a) **Internal Audit Report – Accounts Payable – Full Assurance**

Members congratulated Officers for their hard work.

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the report.

F114/20 **BUDGET REVIEW – ENDED JANUARY 2020**

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the report.

F115/20 **FEES AND CHARGES REPORT**

The Finance Officer reported on the fees and charges for 2020/2021. It was suggested that cemetery fees be increased by 3% and allotments/grazing by 5% which would equate to an increase of £1 per year.

The Finance Officer stated that the sports fees had been reviewed by Officers and they had noticed that there was an unfairness on the amounts charged between the different grounds and suggested that the fees at Seaham Town Park are reduced as they are disproportionately higher than other grounds within the town. However, this would not include Seaham Red Star Football Club's fees.

A Member noted that the fees at Seaham Park Cricket Club had gone up slightly, but Dawdon Cricket Club were to receive a larger increase. The Finance Officer stated that Members had agreed previously, approximately 3.5/4 years ago that Dawdon paid half price fees due to their facilities, however when the refurbishment works were completed that the fees would be increased to the same as Seaham Park Cricket Club.

Officers suggested that no increase is made for the Town Hall meeting room bookings as the prices are still at a good level in comparison to other facilities.

RECOMMENDED that Members approve the Fees and Charges Report.

F116/20 **RISK ASSESSMENTS**

A Member stated that there had been no mention of any changes to the Mayors Ball and questioned whether due to the changes that this would be a risk. The Town Clerk stated that the Mayors Pride of Seaham Charity Evening was still a Civic event and would incorporate the awards to residents. Members agreed to discuss this matter further at the Twinning Committee.

RECOMMENDED that further discussions take place at the Twinning Committee.

F117/20 **GRANTS POLICY AND ROLLING ANNUAL FUNDING**

The Town Clerk stated that she had discussed the Grants Policy in detail with the Finance Officer and Members had been furnished with a copy of the policy. The Finance Officer noted that there are currently 3 organisations who receive yearly grants and if any other organisation applied then this would be brought to Council for approval. It was also noted that the yearly

budget for grants would be equally divided over the 12 month period to avoid the budget being exhausted in the first few months of the new financial year.

A Member requested that for future agendas that it is mentioned whether the individual/organisation have had funding previously and whether they have applied in the same financial year. This item to be shown on the grants application form highlighting previous grant awards.

RECOMMENDED that future agenda's state any previous funding and whether they have received a grant in the current financial year.

F118/20

PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED that there are no press opportunities from this meeting.