

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 9TH APRIL, 2019

Present: Councillors, S Cudlip (Chair) R Arthur, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell, Mrs G Bleasdale, Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, Mrs S Forster, G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy, K Shaw, T Shepherd, B Taylor, R Whitehead, Miss L Willis.

Apologies: Councillors Mrs B E Allen, D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings, Ms R M Gratton, D McKenna, Mrs S Pratt.

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (Town Clerk) Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer) Ms 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.

F25/19 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.

F26/19 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12th MARCH, 2019

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.

F27/19 PAYSHEET NUMBER 12 – MARCH 2018/19

a) Expenditure – March 2019

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 12 – 2018/19 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, Bacs, Online and Debit Card payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £63,160.30 being the total sum authorised under this Paysheet;

A Member queried a payment to Remondis which is the preferred skip hire company used by Seaham Town Council. The query raised was why the Town Council no longer use a local company. It was noted

following a finance review that the local company charges were too expensive. The Member also queried a payment to Mole in the Hole. It was noted that this payment was for drainage repairs.

- (ii) that the BACS authorisation sheet be signed by three Members and the credit transfers be actioned immediately; and
- (iii) there were no transactions made this month from the Clerks Imprest Account.

b) Income – March 2019

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

c) Bank Balances – March 2019

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

F28/19

AUDIT REPORTS

a) Report of Internal Auditor – Annual Report 2018/2019

The Town Council's Internal Auditor was in attendance at the meeting and gave Members an overview of his report.

A Member noted that it was a pleasing report for both Members and Officers and congratulated the Finance Team.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

F29/19

APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

a) Greenscape Community Project

Greenscape Members in attendance at the meeting left the room whilst this item was under discussion.

Greenscape Community Project requested a grant of £700 towards the cost of building a garden storage unit. Members discussed the application and noted that Greenscape had not received any significant grant from the Town Council previously.

RECOMMENDED that a donation of £700.00 be approved.

b) Caring for Craig

Councillor S Cudlip declared an interest and took no further part in the discussion thereon.

Members discussed an application received from Caring for Craig for a donation towards the costs of raising funds for ground floor accommodation and washroom facilities. Members agreed a donation of £1000.00.

Members also stated that the Town Hall could be used free of charge for any fundraising events for this charity.

RECOMMENDED that a donation of £1000.00 and free use of the Town Hall for any fundraising events be approved.

c) Seaham Park Cricket Club

Members were informed that Seaham Park Cricket Club had received a grant of £10k from another organisation but were requesting a further £900 from Seaham Town Council towards half the cost of skip hire. The Cricket Club are intending to use the £10k on clearing up the site to include increasing the current block paved area, seed the remaining area, purchase bleacher seating for spectators of junior games and they are also looking to install a ramp although this may be too expensive, re-site the electronic scoreboard and move the black cabin to a less intrusive area.

Officers informed Members that a grant application form had been sent to the cricket club and would appear on the next possible Finance and General Purposes Committee agenda for further consideration.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

F30/19

SEAHAM MARKET

The Town Clerk informed Members that she had attended a pre-contract meeting with Durham County Council. The Town Clerk had requested that the market date be changed to a Sunday to increase footfall. The Town Clerk was informed by Durham County Council that it couldn't be moved due to the tender stating the market is on a Friday and also a Sunday would clash with the carboot sale.

The market will be launched on Friday, 3rd May under Seaham Town Council and partner groups will be involved. Byron Place are allowing stalls to be placed on their North Plaza and then will go up into Church Street.

There will be a 6 month review period and if the footfall is not good the Town Clerk will again request to move from a Friday. A Member noted that members of the public like to see a good market and he was sure once people saw this footfall would increase.

A Member offered a vote of thanks to the Town Clerk and her staff for the work carried out on this tender.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

F31/19 **TOWN COUNCILS GAZEBO**

A Member requested permission to use the Town Council's gazebo at the car event at the weekend on the Terrace Green to help to raise funds for the Field of Remembrance.

RECOMMENDED that this item be approved.

F32/19 **RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Members discussed the resolution to exclude the press and public request. Some Members felt that the meeting should be conducted in view of the general public for transparency. Some Members disagreed with this opinion and felt that the meeting should be conducted in private as previously the Deputy Town Clerk had been verbally attacked by members of the public.

It was proposed and seconded to hold a vote for the press and public not to be excluded:

For: 8
Against: 0
Abstained: 7

At this point of the meeting the Town Clerk stated that Officers would not participate in discussions for the protection of staff.

Members agreed that they could not make any decisions at this meeting as they needed time to read and digest the reports that had been produced at the meeting.

RECOMMENDED that a Special Parks & Events Committee be arranged to discuss this matter further.

F33/19 **ALLOTMENT AGREEMENTS**

Members agreed to defer this item and re-arrange for the meeting to take place on Friday 12th April, 2019 at 2.30pm. Members agreed to waive the 5 days' notice for meetings.

RECOMMENDED that this item be deferred and a meeting take place on Friday 12th April, 2019.

F34/19

PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED that there are no press opportunities from this meeting.