

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 1st DECEMBER, 2020

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

Officers: Paul Fletcher (Deputy 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.

F146/20 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.

F147/20 ACCEPTANCE OF AMENDMENT

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the amendment to the standing orders to incorporate the new regulations from the Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, to conduct virtual Council meetings.

F148/20 PAYSHEET NUMBER 8 – NOVEMBER 2020

Members discussed the costs of the Seaham Today magazine and a Member questioned whether staff had contacted local businesses for advertising. It was noted that the publisher seeks out the advertising and the Town Council does not receive any income from this. It was originally stated that the advertising costs were to offset the costs of the publication to keep the costs down to the Town Council. A further Member questioned whether it would be possible for the Town Council to produce a magazine themselves.

A Member requested that the publisher be contacted to see how much is charged for the different sizes of advertisement.

A Member noted that the magazine should be expanded for both residents and businesses and they could be given the opportunity to write articles also to promote their businesses or events.

A Member noted that the Town Council now have a fixed cost of £2k per quarter for the magazine. The last publication had 45-50% of pages made up of advertising which would be a significant amount of income to the publisher. The Member believed that if the Town Council ran the magazine themselves the actual delivery costs would be a low cost as there are so many items delivered to every household. The Member noted that he was disappointed that the advertising contained within the magazine was very low for actual Seaham businesses. The Member suggested that there should be a re-examination of the magazine carried out by the Town Council.

RECOMMENDED that:

- (i) the Finance Officer requests a breakdown of costs from the publisher for advertising.
- (ii) Paysheet 8-November 20 was noted and members endorsed the action taken.
- (iii) Members note the income received into the Councils bank account.
- (iv) Members note the information provided regarding the bank balances held by the Council at the month end.

F149/20

APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

a) Seaham High School

Members discussed a grant application received from Seaham High School of £1000.00 towards the cost of creating guitar and ukulele orchestras. A Member suggested that the High School contacts the AAP to try and access funding from County Councillors Neighbourhood Budgets.

RECOMMENDED that the school is requested to contact the AAP to apply to the County Councillors Neighbourhood Budget.

b) Seaham High School

Members discussed a grant application received from Seaham High School of £2,249.00 to purchase virtual reality headsets for the Geography Department. A Member suggested that the High School contacts the AAP to try and access funding from County Councillors Neighbourhood Budget.

RECOMMENDED that the school is requested to contact the AAP to apply to the County Councillors Neighbourhood Budgets.

F150/20

PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED that there were no press opportunities arising from this meeting.