

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 8.48 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors Clive Webb (Chairman), Roger Bailey, Peter Crew, Mark Canniford, Clive Darke, Peter Fox, Michal Kus, Mike Lyall, Richard Nightingale, Robert Payne, Lisa Pilgrim and Richard Tucker (S).

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Malcolm L Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Samantha Bishop (Committee Officer), Helen Morton (Finance Officer), Tricia Brabham (Communications Officer) and Sarah Robinson (Weston & Somerset Mercury).

<b>226.</b>	<b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b>  Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Catherine Gibbons who was substituted by Councillor Richard Tucker.
<b>227.</b>	<b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b>  There were no declarations of interest received.
<b>228.</b>	<b>To approve the minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016</b>  The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Mike Lyall <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Clive Darke  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> . Accordingly it was:  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.
<b>229.</b>	<b>To note the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016</b>  As a result of the committee's request for 'approved' minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance to come back to the committee for noting, the minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.  A vote was taken and <b>carried</b> . Accordingly it was:  <b>RESOLVED:</b> That both sets of minutes be noted.
<b>230.</b>	<b>Monthly Financial Reports</b>  The financial reports had been previously circulated with the agenda.  <b>Monthly Financial Reports:</b>

	<p><b>a) For Approval</b></p> <p>i. Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for September and October 2016</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Richard Nightingale</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the expenditure be approved.</p> <p><b>b) For Noting</b></p> <p>i. Bank Reconciliations for September and October 2016  ii. Budgetary Control Report September and October for 2016  iii. Bank Interest Report for September and October 2016  iv. Schedule of Receipted Income for September and October 2016  v. Income Analysis for 2015/16  vi. Overspend Month end overspend report for September and October 2016  vii. Bad Debt report for September and October</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the reports 5b i – vii be noted.</p>
<p><b>231.</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Town Meeting</b></p> <p>The recommendations from the Events Working Party referred from the Town Council meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2016 had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that the Local Government Act 1974 required the council to hold an Annual Town Council meeting between March and the first week of June. He had consulted other clerks on the matter and they had reported similar issues around attendance. Historically the council had tried to encourage associated organisations to attend the meeting which could be seen as celebratory.</p> <p>On behalf of the Chairman of the Events Working Party a fellow member of the working party introduced the recommendations. The recommendation had been arrived at, due to the fact that the Annual Town Meeting was the most poorly attended meeting by councillors and this was not likely to change. The attendance figures were inflated by the fact that grant recipients were invited and there was no genuine attendance by members of the public. It did not have the desired effect and was a waste of officer and councillors time which was the reasoning behind the recommendation to hold it before the commencement of a regular Town Council meeting.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Richard Nightingale</p>

	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve and adopt the recommendation of the Events Working Party to hold the Annual Town Meeting at 6.30 pm before a full Town Council meeting within the legal timeframe of 1<sup>st</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> June; and to identify a separate event for organisations, charities and grant recipients to display their work and for Mayor’s Awards.</p>
<p>232.</p>	<p><b>Blue Plaque Scheme</b></p> <p>The reference from the Community Services Committee and report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The report requested members to approve the use of the Community Events budget to allow the purchase and installation for the first Blue Plaque to be done within the 2016/2017 financial year. (Paulo Radmilovic at the Imperial Public House).</p> <p>The Town Clerk reported that the Community Services Committee felt strongly that the council should have a Blue Plaque Scheme and had delegated the scheme to the Museum Working Party to pursue. However, there was no budget for the scheme. The scheme had attracted a lot of media attention and could become a tourist attraction. It was not an expensive scheme and would cost approximately £400.00 per plaque.</p> <p>A member questioned the ownership of the plaque if it was situated on a private building. The Town Clerk informed that the council would have a legal agreement with any owners to confirm that the Town Council retained ownership of the plaque.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding legal costs, the Town Clerk advised that this should not exceed £200 - £300 as a one off cost which would be sourced from the legal fees budget.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer clarified that the funding for the blue plaque scheme had been included within the Community Services budget for 2017/2018.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Richard Tucker  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To approve the use of the Community Events budget to allow the purchase and installation for the first Blue Plaque for up to £500.00 within the 2016/2017 financial year. (Paulo Radmilovic at the Imperial Public House).</p>
<p>233.</p>	<p><b>To approve the contract for a Franking Machine</b></p> <p>The report of the Officer Manager had been previously circulated to members and was available at the meeting.</p> <p>The report gave the background on the Council’s current situation that it had</p>

	<p>taken out a 5 year contract for a franking machine from Pitney Bowes back in August 2007 and it had been on a rolling agreement since August 2012. Commencing January 2017 all analogue franking machines would become obsolete and would need to be replaced with digital machines. In addition, all machines would need the new Mailmark system. This would leave the council with a short timescale to replace its franking machine.</p> <p>Three regional companies had been invited to quote for a 'like for like' machine based on the volumes the council generated (approximately 500 items per month) with an annual postage budget of £4,500.</p> <p>The council currently pays 53p for a standard 1<sup>st</sup> class item saving 11p (1<sup>st</sup> class stamp 64p) and 40p for a 2<sup>nd</sup> class item saving 14p (2<sup>nd</sup> class stamp 54p).</p> <p>Two of the three companies had submitted quotes as detailed in the report and members were requested to select and approve a supplier and contract for a Franking Machine to be installed January 2017.</p> <p>Councillor Mark Canniford declared a personal interest as an owner of a Post Office and would refrain from the vote, however felt his knowledge would aid debate. He advised the committee to compare the annual postage cost savings of having a franking machine with the cost of leasing a franking machine.</p> <p>A member questioned the figures quoted for the two contract leases and why they were so large. The Office Manager confirmed that the quotes were based on the volumes the council generated.</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To refer the approval for the contract of a Franking Machine to the Expenditure &amp; Governance Working Party on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2016.</p>
<p><b>234.</b></p>	<p><b>Lightening Conductors</b></p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer providing quotations for works at the following sites had been previously circulated.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Grove House</li> <li>ii. Grove Park</li> <li>iii. Blakehay Theatre</li> <li>iv. Museum</li> <li>v. Cemetery Chapel</li> </ul> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised that if the committee wanted to do them in priority order then the heritage buildings were the Cemetery Chapd and the Museum.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding the affect on insurance premiums the Responsible Financial Officer reported that she had clarified that there would be no discounts.</p> <p>The cheapest of the three quotes was from a local company who had quoted specifically to the council's requirements and it was felt that the competition</p>

	<p>quotes had not properly understood the specifications hence the differences in price.</p> <p>Debate ensued. In response to a question asked regarding whether the Museum could be considered as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund project the Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that she had checked the possibility but unfortunately this would have to come from the council's planned maintenance (PPM) budget. The Council had fully maintain and repair leases with North Somerset Council on Grove House and Lodge. It would be sensible for the Council to have a long term plan to address this when finances were available and recommended the third quote for approval.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer informed that the council's 5 year planned maintenance schedule was due for renewal in 2017 where this could be incorporated.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Clive Webb</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> Subject to the Responsible Financial Officer consulting Equiptest UK (Quote 3) regarding the cost of a contract over a 5 year period, that the Council approve the phased installation of lightening protection as deemed necessary by the risk assessment. Works to be allocated to the council PPM budget.</p>
<p>235.</p>	<p><b>Blakehay refurbishment quotations for work</b></p> <p>The report of S J Surveyors had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The report recommended that negotiations were entered into with Chedvale Construction who submitted the lowest quote, to confirm start dates, the extent of the works and Health &amp; Safety proposals.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer directed members to 1.0 of the report where the quotes were displayed.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That negotiations be entered into with Chedvale Construction who submitted the lowest quote, to confirm start dates, the extent of the works and Health &amp; Safety proposals.</p> <p>Further debate ensued over the method of repairing the upper studio windows and why they were not being replaced. Planning permission would need to be sought to replace the windows as the building was in a conservation area.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer welcomed members to view the full report at any time.</p>

<p><b>236.</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the Budget for the year 2017/2018</b></p> <p>The draft budget 2017/18 had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised that the budget was in the same basic format as previous years but had been modified in some areas, hopefully making it more user-friendly.</p> <p>The Museum Café figures would need to change as the café budget was showing a loss. The Responsible Financial Officer informed the meeting that a catering expert had been employed and a report would be submitted to the Museum Working party on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and revised figures would be reported to the Town Council meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017.</p> <p>A full analysis on re charges had been undertaken this year and had been re apportioned throughout the service areas.</p> <p><u>Museum</u></p> <p>The provided budget was in line with the 7 year revenue projections provided to Policy &amp; Finance and previously by Town Council. A number of one off purchases had been included which would not be required in future years.</p> <p>A member queried the NNDR costs at £21,000 considering the Museum was closed and not charging. The Responsible Financial Officer informed that this had been explored. Further work on the education income and temporary exhibitions which would be reported to Town Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2016.</p> <p>The following specific changes were noted.</p> <p><u>Civic Support</u></p> <p>There had been a slight increase in the civic staffing costs and the Town Clerk advised that the increase had been discussed and resolved by the Personnel Committee. This might have to be reviewed following the recommendations from the Events Working Party.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer informed that she was looking at changing banks after a meeting with the current bank manager regarding the bank charges was not well received.</p> <p><u>Planned Maintenance</u></p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer reported that the planned maintenance budget needed to be increased to deal with the reactive maintenance for the toilets.</p> <p><u>Street Furniture</u></p> <p>The figure of £4,118 was for the removal of the old Welcome to Weston signs and installation of the new signs.</p>

Toilets

There had been a reduction in NNDR Costs.

Central Administration

A member queried how the training budget was determined and the Responsible Financial Officer informed that this was through individual staff appraisals. The training proposals were approved by the Personnel Committee and then included into the budget process.

Members felt that more control over the training budget was needed and questioned some of the training requests.

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee had stated the view that more training should be done in house but has been out voted on this.

In answer to a question the Responsible Financial Officer advised that the council had spent £5,000 on training at period 8.

Tourism & Marketing

The Chairman of the Tourism and Leisure Committee requested some amendments to the budget.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Michal Kus

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- i) To reduce the Advertising budget from £39,350 to £30,000
- ii) Remove the Tourism Grants budget -£2,000
- iii) Increase the Tourism & Website income from £10,000 - £12,500

Community Services

The Chairman of the Community Services Committee requested some amendments to the budget.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Roger Bailey

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Richard Nightingale

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- i) To reduce the Weston In Bloom budget from £21,000 to £19,000.
- ii) To increase the Community Events budget from £5,500 to £6,500 to include Christmas Lights.

An amendment was proposed in respect of the Democratic Representation budget as follows.

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Michal Kus

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Peter Crew

A vote was taken and **carried**. Accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED:** To reduce the training budget from £2,195 to £1,500.

On behalf of Councillor Catherine Gibbons, a fellow member of the Labour group proposed four budget amendments, circulated to members at the meeting, to increase the overall budget by 4% as follows:

**PROPOSED BY:** Councillor Richard Tucker

**SECONDED BY:** Councillor Michael Lyall

1. Create a Town Council Community Transport fund to support residents to retain access to the town, to health facilities as well as shopping and leisure £10,000.

A vote was taken and the Proposal was **lost**.

2. Increase the Town Council grant to “Somewhere to Go” in order to allow it to open every day rather than only three times per week.

An **amendment** was proposed to refer the proposal to the Community Services Committee. A vote was taken and it was

**RESOLVED:** To refer the proposal to the Community Services Committee.

3. Increase Town Council support of Citizens Advice North Somerset Council (CANS) to £20,000.

Debate ensued. It was suggested that £10,000 was an adequate contribution and that in light of the decision to move the current location of CANS then it would not be the best time to review the grant.

A member informed the meeting of a document received from North Somerset Council which showed a ward by ward breakdown of the nature of the enquiries dealt with by CANS. The Town Clerk was trying to obtain a full copy of the document from CANS.

A vote was taken and the Proposal was **lost**.

4. Set up an ear-marked reserve to sponsor more ambitious community projects such as a much needed community building in the centre of town.

An **amendment** was proposed to refer the proposal to the Community Services Committee. A vote was taken and it was:

**RESOLVED:** To refer the proposal to the Community Services Committee.

A member requested that for the purpose of the budget the Museum Café be cost neutral. The Responsible Financial Officer agreed with this suggestion and it was approved by the entire Committee.



	<p>The Responsible Financial Officer then advised that with the above agreed amendments the required budget and precept for 2017/18 would be as follows:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Total budget requirements</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,808,122</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Less grant NSC</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£123,527</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Precept</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,684,595</td> </tr> </table> <p>The substantive budget motion was then:</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the draft budget, incorporating the above changes, be recommended to the Town Council for approval on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017; noting the figures above excluded the changes required to the Museum Café budget which would be presented to Council for consideration and inclusion in the final approved budget and precept requirements for 2017/18.</p>	Total budget requirements	£1,808,122	Less grant NSC	£123,527	Precept	£1,684,595
Total budget requirements	£1,808,122						
Less grant NSC	£123,527						
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<p><b>237.</b></p>	<p><b>To approve the Town Council charges for 2017/2018</b></p> <p>The charges for 2017/2018 had been previously circulated with the agenda (appended).</p> <p>It was queried why the difference on resident and non-resident charges at the Blakehay Theatre had been removed. The Responsible Financial Officer informed that it had already been agreed as part of the Business Review of the Theatre to remove the differential charges.</p> <p>The Town Clerk added that there was no point in having the differential charge as almost all bookings had always been made in the name of residents.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Town Council charges for 2017/2018 be approved.</p>						
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.48 pm</p>						

Signed..... Dated.....  
Chairman