

**WESTON-SUPER-MARE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON  
MONDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2017**

**Meeting Commenced:** 7.00 pm

**Meeting Concluded:** 7.45 pm

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

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

<b>279</b>	<p><b>To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes</b></p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Lyall with no substitution.</p>
<b>280</b>	<p><b>To receive Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest received.</p>
<b>281</b>	<p><b>To approve the minutes of the Policy &amp; Finance Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017</b></p> <p>The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Mark Canniford</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.</p>
<b>282</b>	<p><b>The minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance</b></p> <p>To note the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure &amp; Governance held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 (approved) and 6<sup>th</sup> November 2017 (unapproved)</p> <p>Both sets of minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew <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></p> <p>1. That the minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> September 2017 be approved.</p>

2.

	That the minutes of the 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2017 be noted.
<b>283</b>	<p><b>Monthly Financial Reports: September and October 2017</b></p> <p><b>a) For Approval</b> Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure</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>
<b>283.1</b>	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for September and October 2017 be approved.</p> <p><b>b) For Noting</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Bank Reconciliations</li> <li>ii. Budgetary Control Report</li> <li>iii. Bank Interest Report</li> <li>iv. Schedule of Receipted Income</li> <li>v. Income Analysis</li> <li>vi. Overspend Month end report</li> <li>vii. Bad debt report</li> </ul> <p>A member felt it was prudent for a figure to build in to the budget to cover the costs of lost fees.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised that standing orders and financial regulations allow the council to write off any outstanding's debts up to the value of £100.00 and that it was a committee decision to bring any bad debts to the attention of the committee.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Richard Nightingale</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p>
<b>283.2</b>	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That reports 5b i – vi for September and October 2017 be noted.</li> <li>2. That report vii Bad debts 1 and 2 be written off by under standing orders and financial regulations and that any bad debts be continued to be reported to the committee.</li> </ul>
<b>284</b>	<p><b>Telephone and Broadband line move from Chess Ltd to Horizon Telecom</b></p> <p>The report of the Finance Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Finance Officer advised that the Council was now in the process of moving the final telephone lines away from Chess Limited to Horizon</p>

	<p>Telecom Limited.</p> <p>This had been a very slow process but the 30 day final notice period (as per Chess Limited terms and conditions) had been given to Chess Telecom, by the Council, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017. This meant that Horizon Telecom had 30 days to request the line transfers from Chess Ltd.</p> <p>Within the move, Horizon had identified areas of the telephone system that required upgrading from ISDN lines, which were being phased out within the next 12 months, to SIP trunking. This would help with better connectivity for the Council's broadband and voice data use going forward and would future proof the telephone system across all the Council sites. With the refurbishment of the Museum all new SIP trunking was installed as part of the overall with new data cabling and telephone lines. The sites that have been identified as needing the upgrades were:</p> <p>Grove House at a cost of £658.00</p> <p>Grove Lodge at a cost of £688.00</p> <p>The Blakehay Theatre at a cost of £366.00</p> <p>All of the associated telephone budgets for 2017/2018, whilst incurring the cost, would be in an overspend position by the year end.</p> <p>The urgency with the request for approval of an overspend was based on the 30 day termination period required to move the telephone lines away from Chess Limited and to finally close the account.</p> <p>Due to the tight timescale associated with the works, approval for the overspend had been given by the Chairman of Policy and Finance and the Town Clerk, in advance of the meeting.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus  <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Fox</p> <p>A vote was taken and <b>carried</b>. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To note and approve the actions taken by the Chairman and Town Clerk to allow the overspend on the telephone budgets 2017 /2018 and the subsequent instruction to Horizon Telecom Limited to carry out the works.</p>
285	<p><b>To approve the Town Council charges for the year 2018/2019</b></p> <p>The charges for the year 2018/2019 were distributed to members at the meeting.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer informed that the Museum charges were still awaited due to staffing problems and would be submitted at the next</p>

	<p>Policy &amp; Finance meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February.</p> <p>The changes to the current charges were as follows:</p> <p>Allotments – TBC – as per Allotment agreement 07.12.16 set by the Allotment Club.</p> <p>Milton Road Cemetery - 3% cpi increase applied.</p> <p>Water Park – Increase admission fee from £2.00 to £2.50</p> <p>Tourism – Tourism committee recommended Increase applied.</p> <p>Blakehay – Prices for noting only, 18/19 charge already set approved with the business plan by full town council = year 2 of 3 year plan.</p> <p>Debate ensued. A member objected strongly to the increase in the admission to the Water Park as felt that residents were being penalised for the council’s shortfalls. In reply the Chairman of Tourism and Leisure Committee informed that the larger percentage of visitors to the Water Park were visitors to the town and not local residents. It had been proven with the previous increase in the admission fee that it made no difference to visitor numbers. The council had succumbed to the demand to staff and provide toilets at the Water Park and the cost needed to be offset.</p> <p>It was suggested that a residents’ discount scheme should be considered.</p> <p>This had been discussed at length in the past and unfortunately it had never been put in place due to the complexity of administering such a scheme and also concern regarding abuse of the discount by childminders.</p> <p>In response to a question regarding statistics for, the calculation of the income target within the budget the Responsible Financial Officer advised that an exercise was undertaken based on the last 3years of trading making a consideration for wet seasons.</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Roger Bailey  <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></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To approve the Town Council charges for the year 2018/2019 as submitted to the Committee (attached with the minutes).</li> <li>2. That the Museum charges be submitted for approval at the Policy &amp; Finance meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2018.</li> </ol>
286	<p><b>To recommend a Draft Budget for 2018/19 to the Council</b></p> <p>The draft budget had been previously circulated to members.</p>

	<p>An amended summary page was made available at the meeting which indicated the total budget required as £1,998.505.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised that the draft budget had been formed on the basis of a national 2% increase in staff salaries. Since the issue of the budget, further information had been released from the local government employers with larger increases to lower scale points. This increase equated overall to approximately an additional £10,000.</p> <p>In addition there had been a recent reduction by North Somerset in the total number of band D households in the parish which equated to 25,700.8. This would reduce precept income by around £25,000.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial presented the budgeted headings via PowerPoint and invited any members to comment.</p> <p><u>Capital Projects</u></p> <p>A member asked for clarity on whether there were plans to rewire the Blakehay at a cost of £150,000 to which the Responsible Financial Officer informed that this had been picked up in the approved Planned Maintenance Schedule.</p> <p>Discussion ensued regarding the need to refurbish a play area in one financial year at a cost of £90,000 considering the financial position. A member informed that the £90,000 was a one off cost for replacement of the Coronation estate play area.</p> <p>Debate ensued regarding the option of sub letting the play areas to charitable/community groups who may be able to seek grant funding.</p> <p><b>286.1</b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Town Clerk look into the possibility of sub letting play areas to community groups.</p> <p><u>Civic Support</u></p> <p>A member pointed out that the proposed figure for Civic Misc together with the proposed figure for Armed Forces Celebrations was an increase of approximately £9,000 of which needed to be addressed.</p> <p>After confirmation that £2,500 of the £3,500 proposed for 100 Year Anniversary was for the contribution to the RBL towards the Remembrance Day screen, it was therefore</p> <p><b>286.2</b> <b>RESOLVED:</b> To remove the contribution of £2,500 to the RBL towards the Remembrance Day screen.</p> <p><u>Museum</u></p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer explained that there was an increase in cost to reflect that the Museum would be open and running for a full year as opposed to August-March (2017/2018). Members were reminded that there was a 7 year financial plan that had previously been approved.</p>
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<p><b>286.3</b></p>	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the Museum needs to be allowed to run for a full year from opening before a further review could be undertaken.</p> <p><u>Cemetery</u></p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer reported that income would be down as the cemetery was running out of graves to sell.</p> <p>A member highlighted that if income was down and running costs were increasing the operation of the cemetery needed to be addressed.</p> <p><u>Toilets</u></p> <p>After clarity was sought on the cleaning figure of £37,968, the Responsible Financial Officer informed that it was the cost for cleaning 6 toilet blocks which included consumables, 365 days a year, 2/3 times per day.</p> <p>A member informed of a scheme that worked very well in other countries and had been adopted in parts of Birmingham, where the council subsidises local businesses to allow people to use their toilets. This had been proven to work and even improve their businesses.</p>
<p><b>286.4</b></p>	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To research the idea of subsidising local businesses to allow the use of their toilets.</p> <p><u>Tourism &amp; Marketing</u></p> <p>Debate ensued regarding the need for a VIC and whether it was an economically sound provision.</p> <p>The Town Clerk aided advised that providing a physical VIC had helped to increase Love Weston membership sales.</p> <p><u>Central Administration</u></p>
<p><b>286.5</b></p>	<p><b>RESOLVED:</b> To remove a typographical error to reflect that the budget figure for Ink Cartridges should reflect £800 rather than £8,000.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer then advised that with the above agreed amendments the required budget and precept for 2018/19 would be as follows:</p> <p>Total budget requirements £1,988,805 (9.9% increase) Band D increase of 12.63 % (£74.98 per household)</p> <p><b>PROPOSED BY:</b> Councillor Michal Kus <b>SECONDED BY:</b> Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A member requested that a named vote took place. Accordingly it was:</p> <p><b>FOR:</b> Councillors Roger Bailey, Peter Crew, Peter Fox, Michal Kus, Richard Nightingale and Clive Webb (6).</p>

<p><b>286.6</b></p>	<p><b>AGAINST:</b> Councillors Mark Canniford, Clive Darke, Catherine Gibbons and Robert Payne (4).</p> <p><b>ABSTENTION:</b> Councillor Lisa Pilgrim</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the draft budget, incorporating the above changes, be recommended to the Town Council for approval on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2018.</p>
<p><b>287</b></p>	<p><b>Cemetery Path repairs</b></p> <p>The quotation report of the council’s surveyor had been circulated to members accompanied by a plan of the path needing repair.</p> <p>The report provided an analysis of the quotes submitted in response to enquiries sent out on 7 November 2017 to three contactors for internal path repairs at the cemetery.</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></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That negotiations are entered into with Nailsea Construction who submitted the lowest quote, to confirm start dates, the extent of the works and Health &amp; Safety proposals.</li> <li>2. The repairs to the potholes in the main path, area C on the attached plan should be undertaken as a matter of priority as there were Health &amp; Safety issues with the use of the main path through the cemetery.</li> <li>3. Section A, should be undertaken as soon as practicably possible and work should be programmed in for March/April 2018 when the weather was better and danger of frost had passed to ensure the best possible finish and time for the surface to cure before being affected by bad weather.</li> <li>4. Area B, could, if budgets were tight, be put on hold until funds became available.</li> </ol>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30 pm</p>

4.

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