

**WESTON-SUPER- MARE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD AT GROVE HOUSE ON
MONDAY 22nd FEBRUARY 2016**

Meeting Commenced: 7.05 pm

Meeting Concluded: 8.25 pm

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Malcolm L Nicholson (Town Clerk), Sarah Pearse (Responsible Financial Officer), Tricia Brabham (Committee Officer) and Sarah Robinson (Weston, Worle & Somerset Mercury).

297	To receive Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes All Committee Members were in attendance so there were no apologies for absence received.
298	To receive Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest received.
299	To approve the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 22nd February 2016 The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda. PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michael Kus SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey RESOLVED: That the minutes be approved and signed by the Chairman.
300	To note the minutes of the Working Party to Review Expenditure & Governance 18th January 2016 The minutes had been previously circulated with the agenda. RESOLVED: That the draft minutes be noted.
301	Monthly Financial Reports:- The financial reports had been previously circulated with the agenda. a) For Approval i) Schedule of Unapproved Expenditure for December 2015 and January 2016 PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michael Kus SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew RESOLVED: That the reports be approved.

	<p>b) For Noting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Bank Reconciliations for December 2015 and January 2016 ii) Budgetary Control Report for December 2015 and January 2016 iii) Bank Interest Report for December 2015 and January 2016 iv) Schedule of Receipted Income for December 2015 and January 2016 v) Income Analysis for 2015/2016 vi) Month end overspend report, period January 2016 <p>RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.</p>						
<p>302</p>	<p>Actual Precept Requirement</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The RFO informed members that the precept requirement for 2016/17 that had previously been agreed at Town Council on the 25th January 2016 should read £1,642,507 not £1,624,507.</p> <p>Debate ensued.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michal Kus SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the grant and precept request be approved. The request being:</p> <table data-bbox="405 1272 1085 1415"> <tr> <td>Budget Requirement for 2016/17</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,807,424</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NSC council tax grant (advised by NSC)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£ 170,334</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Precept requirement 2016/17 (increase of 14.23%)</td> <td style="text-align: right;">£1,637,090</td> </tr> </table> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michal Kus SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the reports be approved.</p>	Budget Requirement for 2016/17	£1,807,424	NSC council tax grant (advised by NSC)	£ 170,334	Precept requirement 2016/17 (increase of 14.23%)	£1,637,090
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Precept requirement 2016/17 (increase of 14.23%)	£1,637,090						
<p>303</p>	<p>Cemetery Charges for non-residents of Weston-super-Mare</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed members that the Town Council had been approached by a gentleman who was unhappy to pay double charges for non-residents of Weston-super-Mare for an interment for his father and mother in law. A full copy of his letter had been made available to councillors in confidence to protect sensitive, personal information. His father and mother in law had purchased graves in 1990 when they lived in Weston-super-Mare. They moved to Devon in 2010, where his father in law recently died. The double charge for non-residents was due to the</p>						

	<p>cemetery being subsidised by residents through the Council Tax. For this purpose the definition of resident used was the one used for Council Tax.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Members discussed the double charge being the standard charge for burial with residents being given a discount, the grace period for those who had moved out of Weston-super-Mare shortly before dying, the minimum period of residency in the town to qualify for the residents charge and a sliding scale fee structure.</p> <p>PROPOSEDBY: Councillor Mark Canniford SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the wording on the charges for residents of Weston super Mare should change to recognise that as residents they are entitled to a 50% discount of the standard fees charged to people who do not live within Weston super mare. In addition based on the recommendations within the Town Clerk’s report it was agreed as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Town Council charge a 50% discounted fee for the purchase of rights of burial/cremated remains plots and for interments to residents of Weston-super-Mare. 2. That there be a 5 year ‘grace period’ for people who have purchased a plot and moved from Weston-super-Mare. 3. That the definition of ‘resident’ be that the person has their sole or main place of residence within the civil parish boundary of Weston-super-Mare. 4. That the Town Clerk be authorised to make exceptions, to recognise longstanding custom and practice, regarding charging for two interments of cremated remains or two burials in the same plot at the same time.
<p>304</p>	<p>Town Council Charges for the Year 2016/17</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer informed members that the Blakehay Theatre charges had been increased as per the previously agreed 5 year plan for the facility; the Waterpark entrance fee had been increased from £1.50 to £2 and the Museum was closed so no charges at the Museum were applicable.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Town Council charges for the year 2016/17 as recommended by Expenditure and Governance be approved (appended).</p>

<p>305</p>	<p>HLF Project</p> <p>305.1 HLF Budget Update</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>Debate ensued. In response to questions the Responsible Financial Officer informed members that the additional costs were for professional services and the main build. There was a £20,000 shortfall but savings would be made on lighting costs as there had been some double up on costs between image makers and the main build.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be approved.</p> <p>305.2 HLF Budget update</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that the group leaders had agreed that as the tender document was so large it would not be reviewed by committee.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the tendering process for the appointment of the main build contractor be approved.2. That Councillors Clive Webb, John Crockford-Hawley, Peter Crew and Catherine Gibbons are appointed for the tender opening process as required by financial regulations. <p>305.3 Coastal Communities Grant</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that the terms of the Coastal Communities grant required the money to be spent before 31st March 2016. This would require payment of pro-forma invoiced in advance of equipment and materials being received.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p>
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	<p>SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the tendering process suggested by SWHT for the specialist items required for the temporary gallery within the museum be approved, noting due to the limited companies available to provide this equipment standing orders will not fully be met. 2. That the payment of pro-forma invoiced for the temporary gallery equipment in order to meet the requirement for the Coastal Communities grant award of £50,000 be approved.
<p>306</p>	<p>Internal Audit</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had previously been circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that the recommendations and actions had been implemented.</p> <p>Debate ensued. When questioned, the Responsible Financial Officer advised members that the Water Park money was collected by North Somerset Council on the Town Council's behalf. The Blakehay Manager had implemented the recommendations as soon as the Town Council had received the recommendations.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Michal Kus SECONDED BY: Councillor Peter Crew</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the report be noted. 2. That the 5 year audit plan be approved.
<p>307</p>	<p>Payment of Salaries</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor Richard Nightingale</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That all payroll related payments be made from the Town Council's General Account from 1st April 2106.</p>

<p>308</p>	<p>Water Park Procurement</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that the aim was to have the new kiosk and changing facilities on site for the Water Park’s opening weekend, the weekend of the 2nd April.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the general reserves be used with immediate effect to meet the payments for works for the Water Park’s new kiosk facility with necessary works and changing facilities to a maximum cost of £19,865 as per the budget for 2016/17 which will be used to replace the reserve amount spent only.</p>
<p>309</p>	<p>Visitor Information Centre – VAT Implications</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that the VAT requirements and implications for opening the Visitor Information Center were being investigated.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
<p>310</p>	<p>Feedback on the draft Town Council Strategy</p> <p>The report of the Town Clerk had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Town Clerk advised members that the strategy had been out to public consultation and received mostly positive feedback. The South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) had suggested the wording used in the Museum’s Statement of Purpose for grant applications be used in the strategy as follows:</p> <p><i>“Weston Museum celebrate the human history and natural environment of Weston-super-Mare and its surrounding areas using the distinctive historic building that houses the Museum and the diverse museum collection of North Somerset Council. Through inspiration, learning and enjoyment, we will help the local community and its visitors to understand the past and ask questions about the present and the future. The Town Council will also develop the Museum as an arts and cultural facility and maintain it as a tourist attraction for the benefit of the local community and visitors to the town.”</i></p> <p>Debate ensued. When questioned, the Town Clerk advised members that the strategy was not a legal requirement but it was good practice to have a strategy.</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p>

	<p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Town Council Strategy be amended to include the wording requested by the SWHT and, with this amendment, be recommended to the Town Council for approval.</p>
<p>311</p>	<p>Cost comparison of tablets and electronic committee papers</p> <p>The report of the Finance Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that the IT Working Party had requested a costing exercise for tablets and electronic committee papers compared to postage.</p> <p>Debate ensued. Members discussed the hidden costs of posting papers out, including the paper and ink and the additional costs of supporting tablets, and development of software.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the status quo be currently maintained that iPads are not provided but town councillors retain the right to choose how to receive committee papers using their own tablet or laptop.</p>
<p>312</p>	<p><i>The Chairman asked members to resolve under the Public Bodies (Admissions of Meeting) Act 1960 to exclude the public and press for the following item by reasons of the confidential nature of the business.</i></p> <p>Debate ensued. Members felt that there was no reason why the public should not know about unpaid debts owed to the Town Council.</p> <p>A vote was taken and lost. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the press be permitted to stay for the discussion on Bad Debts.</p>
<p>313</p>	<p>Bad Debt</p> <p>George Masouras</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer had been previously circulated with the agenda.</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer advised members that George Masouras had been the Water Park's kiosk concessionaire. Following estimated invoices by British Gas since October 2015 a bill for £1028.10 had been received. The Town Council had paid the bill in full but Mr Masouras had only offered to pay 50% of the bill as he felt it was excessive. The Responsible Financial Officer confirmed that the finance office had undertaken tests on the meter and supply to ensure there was no cause for error. All tests carried out confirmed the meter was reading correctly and was not faulty.</p> <p>Debate ensued.</p>

	<p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Clive Darke SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the full debt of £1028.10 be pursued with Mr Masouras.</p> <p>John Butler</p> <p>The report of the Responsible Financial Officer advised members that John Butler had been paying an amount each month to pay off the debt but this had now stopped with no explanation.</p> <p>Some members felt that the debt was not worth pursuing and it was:</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Roger Bailey SECONDED BY: Councillor Catherine Gibbons</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the remaining debt for John Butler be written off from the Town Council's accounts - £130.</p> <p>Further debate ensued and it was argued that as a matter of principle it should not become known that the Town Council would not pursue debts. Moreover, court and bailiff's fees were recoverable.</p> <p>The first proposal was withdrawn and it was then:</p> <p>PROPOSED BY: Councillor Peter Crew SECONDED BY: Councillor Michal Kus</p> <p>A vote was taken and carried. Accordingly it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Mr John Butler be pursued for the outstanding debt of £130</p> <p>Rob Dumbarton</p> <p>Rob Dumbarton hired the Blakehay in December 2014 with an unpaid balance of £76.64. He had recently asked to hire it again.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Mr Dumbarton be sent a letter asking him to pay or he will be taken to court. In addition any future hire of the Blakehay will not be allowed until the debt is paid in full along with full payment for any future hire prior to use.</p>
	<p>There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 pm</p>

Signed.....
Chairman

Dated.....