

Main points arising: Funding bid for Community Centre / Town Council Reserves and Preview of 2016/17 Budget / Annual Return 2014/15 / Bank Reconciliations and Payment Schedules for June, July and August 2015.

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD AT 8.00PM ON MONDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER 2015 IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC HALL, POYNTON.

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr C Gorst

Cllrs: M Beanland, L A Clarke, G King, H Murray and G Smith

Also attending under SO 56: Cllrs I Hollingworth, Mrs S Horsman, Mrs J Saunders and Mrs N Wylie

16. Apologies for absence

Cllrs Mrs R Horsman-Johnson and Mrs T Lorde

17. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Interests

Cllr King declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 19, given that he is Chairman of the Community Centre Trustees. He abstained on the vote.

18. To approve the minutes of the F&GP Committee meeting held on 6th July 2015

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 6th July 2015 are approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman (5 – 1 abstention)

19. Community Centre

This item was proposed under SO 19(d) 'Other Business':

Cllr King was about to submit a WREN bid for the Poynton Community Centre. A third party guarantor is required for 10% of the £50,000 funding bid as part of the application, although this is only payable if the funding bid is successful. The amount payable to WREN would be £5,375. The deadline for the application is Wednesday 30th September 2015. This item would normally be presented to the COPS Committee but because of the application deadline date it needed to be dealt with before then.

It was proposed that this item comes before this Committee under SO 19(d) with the permission of the Chairman of the COPS Committee.

RESOLVED: The proposal to receive this additional agenda item was approved (NC)

The Chairman of COPS, Cllr Mrs Saunders, said this was a worthwhile cause and that the Town Council stand as guarantor. The Poynton Community Centre is a real community asset and the community has recently galvanised to raise funds for the Community Centre. The Clerk noted that this could be a charge to the COPS reserve, given that it would exceed the Community Grants budget.

How could this be justified in terms of setting a precedent?

Each is considered on a case by case basis. The funds are coming back into this community and are highly leveraged. The Community Centre is a multigenerational venue.

Does the Community Centre have a special place in this village?

From comments in the Neighbourhood Plan there was a very high level of support for the Community Centre. This is the oldest public building in the village.

The £50,000 repairs of work required now - will that then be the end of the work required to the Community Centre?

A full roof replacement in the region of £260,000 is required. This work is not urgent but a funding bid for this work is being prepared.

Is it possible that even after money is spent on the building it cannot be made fit for purpose?

No, it can be made fit for purpose.

It was noted that in instances of urgency one committee has made a decision on matters normally in the remit of another.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council via this Committee underwrite the £5,375 payable to WREN should the bid be successful and that this would be a charge to the COPS reserve (NC)

20. A review of the current Town Council budget for FY 2015/16 at mid-year.

The Clerk presented a report on a review of the current budget for FY 2015/16 at mid-year.

The Clerk reported that, on hire income, the Civic Hall has retained some hirers and attracted some new groups. Some are very loyal. There is now an extra meeting available room too.

Overall, the Town Council is in a good budgetary position at mid-year, with no cause for concern.

RESOLVED: That the report from the Clerk on a review of the current budget for FY 2015/16 at mid-year is received (NC)

21. The Town Council's Reserves and a preview of the 2016/17 budget.

The Clerk presented a report on the Town Council's Reserves and a preview of the Town Council's 2016/17 budget. The Accountant is due in on 13th October 2015, to help prepare the latter.

The issue of a damaged granite block on the Victoria Fountain at Fountain Place was brought to the attention of the Committee. The Chairman of FIED, Cllr Murray, will ask the Operations Manager to follow up on this item with CE.

The Chairman of Finance requested that each of the three spending Committees look to save in the region of £5,000 in addition to this report and prioritise the Committee spends. This would amount to a saving of £15,000, equivalent to around 4% of the precept.

The Clerk noted that the financial position will become clearer following the Accountant's imminent visit to set a provisional budget.

A Member noted that it was discussed in setting the precept last year that there would be a review of all the budgets and agreement in principle to make savings in future.

The Chairman noted that an increase of 6% of the CE rate on a Band D household would be £1.67 a week, and on the Town Council precept a 6% increase would be just 7p a week.

RESOLVED: That the report is received and the contents noted and that each Committee consider saving in the region of £5,000 from their 2016/17 budgets if possible (NC)

22. Annual Return for 2014/15

The Committee received Section 3 of the completed Annual Return for 2014/15, together with a covering letter from the External Auditor, BDO LL. The Clerk and his staff were congratulated for their efforts on receiving a clean bill of health.

RESOLVED: That the completed Section 3 of the Annual Return for 2014/15 is noted; associated correspondence is received and the efforts of the Clerk and his team acknowledged (NC)

23. Bank Reconciliations for June, July and August 2015.

RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliations for June, July and August 2015, as verified by the Chairman, are noted (NC)

24. Payment Schedules for June, July and August 2015

The Committee members reviewed the Payment Schedules for June, July and August 2015.

Why is there a charge to the Clerk for the Microsoft Licence?

Microsoft charge each user a fee of around £10 a month for use of their computer. This fee can only be paid online by direct debit so the Clerk uses his own debit card to pay the fee and reclaim the expense.

This raises an issue with the payment systems for Councils which should be addressed by NALC/CHALC to allow for Councils to have a debit card for transactions up to a certain level, subject to issues of control and a review of statements.

RESOLVED: That the Payment Schedules for June, July and August 2015 are received (NC)

The meeting concluded at 8:50pm