

**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**  
**MEETING HELD AT 7.00PM ON MONDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016 AT THE CIVIC**  
**HALL, POYNTON**

PRESENT

Chairman: Cllr C Gorst

Cllrs: L A Clarke, Mrs R Horsman-Johnson, L Podmore, G Smith.

22. Apologies for absence

Cllrs: G King, Mrs T Lorde, H Murray and Mrs J Saunders.

23. Declarations of disclosable pecuniary or other interests

None.

24. Other business – External Audit Report

**RESOLVED: That the External Audit Report be discussed at the end of the meeting (NC)**

25. Previous meeting minutes

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2016 are approved as an accurate record (NC)**

26. To receive and consider a report from the Clerk on a review of the Town Council's current budget for the financial year 2016-17 at mid-year.

The Deputy Clerk spoke to the report.

Whilst the salaries coded to administration were over budget, savings on salaries were being made elsewhere. There had been an overspend relating to one off restructuring costs.

The most significant budgetary issue related to the increase in business rates following the revaluation by the Valuation Office of the Civic Hall. Business rates would be discussed later on in the meeting.

The Deputy Clerk reported that, on hire income although only 29% of the budget had been achieved this was in line with last year. The summer is the quietest period in terms of hirers and many regular hirers do not meet at all in the summer.

A member asked if there were any forward bookings for the coming months. The Deputy Clerk confirmed that this autumn was a busy time and the hall and rooms had a number of regular bookings. Following the recent review of rates with hirers, all hirers had confirmed that they intended to remain at the Civic Hall at present.

No budget had been earmarked for the Neighbourhood Plan but there was over £23,000 in earmarked reserves. Costs for the production of the Neighbourhood Plan are anticipated shortly.

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 2016/2017 at mid-year is received (NC)**

27. To receive and consider a report from the Clerk on the Town Council's reserves and a preview of the Town Council's 2017-18 budget.

The Deputy Clerk presented a report on the Town Council's Reserves and a preview of the Town Council's 2016-2017 budget. The Accountant is due in on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2016 to work with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk on the budget.

The budget for salaries will need to be increased for 2017/2018 to take into account the 1% nationally agreed pay rise for 2017 and increments on some posts.

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

The reserves have been affected by the revaluation of the Civic Hall and the increase in business rates from £13,019 to £39,970 for the current year (including the readjustment for 2015/2016). As there is also some uncertainty regarding the level of business rates increases next year, an increase to the budget would be prudent.

The Civic Hall requires some updating and costs for the work are estimated at c£6,000. There is currently a reserve of £21,644 for Civic Hall Maintenance.

The cost of replacing the boiler, should it be required, would come from the rolling capital fund, which currently stands at £62,315.

**RESOLVED: That the report from the Clerk on the Town Council's reserves and a preview of the Town Council's 2017/2018 budget is received (NC)**

28. To consider the financial report from the Clerk on the new Wednesday Lunch Club run in partnership with Age UK Cheshire East.

The services provided by the Wednesday Lunch Club service were described to the Committee. The Town Council are working in partnership with Age UK. The Clerk presented information regarding the funding of the Wednesday Lunch Club.

The Lunch Club service started on the 14<sup>th</sup> September and seven people are already signed up to attend. The group has four to five volunteers at present. The business plan indicated that if the group could attract eight people it would break even.

Members discussed whether the service should be restricted to residents of Poynton. An agreement to formalise the arrangements with Age UK needs to be signed.

A member asked whether our insurance policy covered the group. The Town Clerk confirmed that she had reviewed the insurance policy and it did cover both the members of the group and the volunteers.

Whether volunteers are required to have a DBS check will be reviewed by the Clerk.

**RESOLVED: That the financial report on the Wednesday Lunch Club is received (NC)**

29. To receive and consider a report on non-domestic business rates.

The Deputy Clerk presented the report on non-domestic business rates. The increase in the valuation of the Civic Hall is significant rising from £28,000 to £59,000. The revaluation has also been backdated to 21<sup>st</sup> July 2015 when the refurbishment of the Civic Hall was completed.

There are no costs to bring an appeal against the revaluation. However, Members should be aware that in appealing there is a risk that the valuation could be increased further.

This area of valuation is complicated and specialised and the Deputy Clerk recommended that a professional company be used to make an appeal on behalf of the Town Council. Two potential companies have been identified although further information regarding costs and experience in the public sector need to be sought.

The impact of the rates for the shared area in reception would also need to be assessed as this could be recharged to Cheshire East.

**RESOLVED: That the report is received and that quotations from professional advisors be obtained (NC)**

30. To note action taken under Standing Order 51 concerning the payment of three invoices.

**RESOLVED: That the action taken under Standing Oder 51 is noted (NC)**

31. To note the bank reconciliations for June, July and August 2016 as verified by the Chairman.

**RESOLVED: That the bank reconciliations for June, July and August 2016, as verified by the Chairman, are noted (NC)**

32. To receive the payment schedules for July and August 2016

The Committee members reviewed the Payment Schedules for July and August 2016.

**RESOLVED: That the Payments Schedules for July and August 2016 are received (NC)**

33. To receive the completed Annual Return for 2015/2016

The Committee received Section 3 of the completed Annual Return for 2015/2016, together with a covering letter from the External Auditor, BDO LLP and notice of the conclusion of the audit.

The Issues Arising Report for the audit for the year ended 31 March 2016 identified that the Risk Assessment 2015/2016 had been approved at the Finance and General Purposes Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The minutes were received and adopted at the Town Council on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015. The Risk Assessment should be reviewed by the full Council and not only a subcommittee.

The Clerk's Action Plan has addressed the issue and this year the Risk Assessment for 2016/2017 will be taken to the full Town Council on 26th September 2016.

**RESOLVED: That the completed Section 3 of the Annual Return for 2015/2016 is noted; associated correspondence, the Issues Arising Report and the Clerk's Action Plan are received (NC)**

The meeting concluded at 8.00pm