

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Finance and Resources Committee Meeting held on Monday, 7 March 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Ante Room at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------|------------|
| Councillors: | Paul Hodgson (Chair) | G Hill |
| | H Bettison | G McLean |
| | A Forbes | G Roughead |
| | A Gibson | C Seymour |
| | K Graham | |

IN ATTENDANCE:

W Pattison, Town Clerk

8 Members of the public

OPEN SESSION

Mr Spencer Barclay raised an issue regarding the Maltings and the future catering therein. The Clerk will look into the matter. Mr Jim Waugh queried the absence of the Finance Officer at the EGM Council meeting.

F150/15 1. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Councillor Hill proposed Cllr Forbes as Vice-Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Bettison and voted unanimously by all Councillors.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Forbes be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Finance and Resources Committee for the remainder of the 2015-16 municipal year.

F151/15 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillor I Dixon.

F152/15 3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Cllr Seymour requested the time was changed on the Council Minutes to 6pm from 5.15pm. Cllr Hill also had a couple of queries, in particular, the wording re xmas trees/ light fittings and it was thought the minutes were not the updated draft version but agreed to leave as is. The

minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2016 were then agreed by all and signed as a correct record.

F153/15 4. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllrs Hill and Seymour - Appendix A/ Civic Society expenditure.

F154/15 5. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

There were no requests for dispensation.

F155/15 6. AUTHORISATION OF EXPENDITURE AND ORDERS

Cllr Forbes queried Highcliffe Play Area expenditure and which was advised as recently caused by further vandalism.

RESOLVED: To approve all payments and orders appended to these minutes.

F156/15 7. CLEAR CHANNEL BUS SHELTERS

Berwick Town Council have received Non Domestic rates invoices for all 8 Adshel Bus Shelters which incorporate advertising space on the sides of each shelter. The rights for renting out advertising were owned by Adshel but the lease ended in February 2015. The full yearly charge for most shelters is £230.40 per shelter. The Clerk has spoken to the Valuation Office who promised to speak with NCC on this matter to see if there could be a reasonable solution, but so far, have not come back on this matter. Some Councillors though advertising could be continued on with BTC renting the space out to advertisers, however the Clerk thought there was not enough Council staff to implement this and put into practice. Cllr Gibson advised that the Council would have to become VAT registered to do this and also felt it would be better for the Council to remove the advertising space from all of the bus shelters. Cllr Bettison thought the Council should still advertise to prevent graffiti and Cllr Roughead thought the main bus shelters on the road driving into Berwick should be used for this purpose. Cllr Bettison thought putting pictures of Berwick into each advertising space would look attractive. Cllr Forbes thought putting in bus timetable could be informative. It was decided the Clerk would look into various options with Adshel and advise Councillors accordingly.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will check with the Valuation Office and also contact Adshel.

F157/15 8. ANNUAL AUDIT 2014-2015 & 2015-2016

- a) A query arose regarding the second 2015/16 report as not attached, Cllr Hill advised deferral. The Clerk advised hard copy only had been received and she was not aware of a report as well as the issues arising report.

- b) Issues Arising Report - Cllr Hill advised the dates given for the Delivery Organisation for Portas were not accurate and thought BDO should change the dates they had given. The Clerk advised that BTC would have given the dates originally and would ask the Finance Officer to check on this. Viewing dates and timelines were requested to look at the accounts and the Clerk advised that anyone could look at the accounts but an appointment would be preferable due to the Finance Officer only working two days per week. Cllr Hill also advised her intention to look at the accounts at 4pm on Friday 11th March. Cllr Mclean advised the issues report contained minor issues only. Cllr Seymour mentioned current BTC Financial Regulations and advised the 2014 NALC regulations appeared to be out of date. Cllr Graham advised the issues highlighted were helpful to the Finance Committee.
- c) Discussion on Tender Document for the 2015/16 Internal Annual Audit – The tender document had only just been circulated prior to the meeting and was felt Councillors had not had enough time to read properly. Cllr Hodgson pointed out 6 bullet points which were key matters that Councillors needed to consider. Cllr Seymour mentioned BTC current financial system SCRIBE 2000 and Cllr Hodgson advised that the Finance Officer was already looking at changing this and had been in contact with 3 companies. RBS (not Royal Bank of Scotland) was a preferred option and they were willing to send up a demo of their systems. Cllr Hill said approval of the tender process could not be given at the finance meeting, however, as Mr Stephen Warren was in Berwick on Friday this would be discussed further with him and the Clerk could use delegated authority to approve payment for Mr Warren and for the tender document if agreed.

RESOLVED: To look further at dates given by BDO for Portas timelines. To make an appointment for Cllr Hill to look at the Accounts of Friday 11th March at 4pm. Subject to further consultation with Mr Warren on Friday 11th March, payment for the tender document can be approved. The tender document can then be sent out to Auditors/Accountants.

Cllr Graham left the meeting at 6.30pm.

F158/15 9. LITTER BINS

A request to purchase 12 new 120L litter bins was discussed by Councillors with the cost of each bin approx. £250 and would bring the total amount over the budgeted figure of £1,600. Cllr Hill expressed concern at this and said that a contingency was needed and should be

included within the budget, Cllr Mclean agreed and advised a three-year programme re future spending was required. Cllr Hodgson also agreed and advised a dedicated budget for each committee was the way forward. Cllr Gibson proposed the litter bins be purchased and this was seconded by Cllr Mclean.

RESOLVED: 12 new 120L litter bins to be purchased for the town.

F159/15 10. WATER SUPPLY TO ALLOTMENTS

Northumbria Water are to put up water charges re the water supply to Blakewell Gardens, (3 plots) and Five Arches field (4 plots). The water supply has been charged on a ratable value basis of £95 per year but this is now moving to an assessed charge where there is no water meter installed. Blakewell Garden site is assessed as Band 3 which will be phased in over 2 years and will eventually cost £632.15 by 2017/18. Mention was made that there was no current water supply at Five Arches. Cllr Hill also mentioned the possibility of a section 106 in regard to the land at Five Arches. **Suspend Standing orders** – Mr Haswell advised that metered water was in place at his allotment and the rule of thumb was watering cans only. Mr Waugh advised that there were fixed charges on metered water and this accounted for 30% of the bill and there were also water disposal issues. **Reinstate Standing Orders.**

RESOLVED: Installation of a water meter will be looked into at the smaller allotment and will be investigated whether the meter can be removed at a later date if proved to be expensive or not successful. Five Arches lack of water supply will be reported.

F160/15 11. TEENAGE MARKET

Councillors were asked to approve £750 to purchase a lease for one year for the Teenage Market taking place on 3rd July 2016. The lease could be purchased next year by NCC and it would cover all Market Towns in Northumberland. Cllr Bettison thought it was an exciting idea and was a great opportunity for young people in the town. The lease would include all signage, banners and media publicity as well as support from the originators who first started the concept in Stockport. Cllr Forbes declared an interest as a youth leader. Cllr Mclean also thought it was a chance to give young people the opportunity to be entrepreneurial. It was then proposed by Cllr Mclean to buy the lease and this was seconded by Cllr Bettison and agreed by all. Cllr Hill abstained.

RESOLVED: To buy the lease for the Teenage Market.

F161/15 12. BERWICK TOWN CENTRE CCTV

Cllr Hodgson advised 3 expressions of interest/tenders had been received and had been

opened by the Clerk and Chair of Finance, Cllr Hodgson. One company had not given any figures and a recommendation/decision was made between the 2 remaining quotes re best value, financial stability and closest to the specification. Cllr Seymour queried the tender process and advised that Councillors had not looked at them or agreed them. The Clerk advised the tenders were in the BTC office and all Councillors were welcome to come into the office to look through them. Cllr Hodgson advised that the CCTV successful company would be notified once the unsuccessful companies had also been notified.

RESOLVED: Councillors will look at the tenders.

F162/15 13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 4th April 2016 at 6.00pm.

**Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
PAYMENTS TO BE APPROVED**

See page 3 for accompanying explanatory notes

| Voucher | Code | Date | Cheque No | Description | Supplier | Net | VAT | Total |
|----------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| 411 | Site Repairs | 25/02/2016 | 101268 | Play Area maintenance | Tweed Landscapes | 279.85 | 0.00 | 279.85 |
| 412 | Stationery & Printing | 25/02/2016 | 101269 | Stationery | Viking | 40.42 | 8.08 | 48.50 |
| 413 | Postage | 25/02/2016 | 101269 | Stamps | Viking | 63.00 | 0.00 | 63.00 |
| 414 | Consultation | 25/02/2016 | 101270 | Room hire | Berwick United Reform Church | 22.00 | 0.00 | 22.00 |
| 415 | Rent | 25/02/2016 | 101271 | Rent | Edwin Thompson | 1,650.00 | 330.00 | 1,980.00 |
| 416 | Service Charge | 25/02/2016 | 101271 | Service charge | Edwin Thompson | 53.39 | 10.68 | 64.07 |
| 417 | Photocopies | 25/02/2016 | 101272 | Photocopies | Capital Solutions | 137.94 | 27.59 | 165.53 |
| 418 | Bus Shelter Maintenance | 25/02/2016 | 101273 | Bus Shelter cleaning | Wheeleigh Clean | 241.00 | 0.00 | 241.00 |
| 419-26 | Salaries | 25/02/2016 | 101273 | Salaries | Northumberland County Council | 5,076.01 | 0.00 | 5,076.01 |
| 427 | IT Support | 26/02/2016 | 101274 | IT support | Northern Lab | 90.00 | 18.00 | 108.00 |

Berwick-upon-Tweed Town Council
RECEIPTS

See page 3 for accompanying explanatory notes

| Voucher | Code | Date | Cheque No | Description | Supplier | Total |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 25 | Sundry | 25/02/2016 | 100077 | Insurance - civic regalia | Zurich Municipal | 3,204.94 |
| 26 | Sundry | 25/02/2016 | 100078 | Payment | Teeside University | 50.00 |
| 27 | Sundry | 25/02/2016 | 100078 | Payment | Civic Society | 50.00 |

Explanatory Notes to accompany payment list.

Payments

| Voucher | Notes |
|----------------|--|
| 411 | Repair work at Highcliffe play area |
| 412-3 | Stationary & stamps |
| 414 | Neighbourhood plan Consultation in Spittal |
| 415-6 | Office Rent and service charge |
| 417 | Cost of office photocopies |
| 418 | Cost of quarterly cleaning of bus shelters |
| 419-26 | February wage costs |
| 427 | Monthly IT support |

Receipts

| Voucher | Notes |
|----------------|---|
| 25 | Insurance payment for replacement pendent |
| 26-27 | Contributions to Investors Conference |