

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Finance and Resources Committee Meeting held on Wednesday, 18 May 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Ante Room at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: I Dixon (In the Chair for Open Session and Item 1)
A Forbes (In the Chair for Item 2 onwards)
G Hill
P Hodgson
G Mclean
G Roughead
C Seymour

IN ATTENDANCE:

W Pattison, Town Clerk
5 Members of the public
Cllr E Goodyer
Cllr G Smith

Cllr Ivor Dixon opened the meeting.

OPEN SESSION

No questions from the public.

F001/16 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr Hill proposed Cllr Forbes as Chairman and this was seconded by Cllr Seymour, Cllr McLean proposed Cllr Hodgson and this was seconded by Cllr Dixon. A vote was then taken with 4 votes to Cllr Forbes and 3 votes to Cllr Hodgson.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Anne Forbes be appointed Chairman of the Finance and Resources Committee until July 1st 2016.

The Chairman took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

F002/16 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been accepted from: Councillor K Graham (holiday), Cllr A Gibson (holiday).

F003/16 3.APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Hill proposed Cllr Seymour as Vice Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Roughead, Cllr McLean proposed Cllr Hodgson and this was seconded by Cllr Dixon. A vote was taken with 4 votes for Cllr Seymour and 3 votes for Cllr Hodgson.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Catherine Seymour be appointed Vice Chairman of the Finance and Resources Committee for the year until July 1st 2016.

F004/16 4. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2016 were proposed by Cllr Roughead and agreed by all and signed as a correct record.

F005/16 5. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Roughead and Cllr Hodgson the Hoppa Bus.

F006/16 6. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr Hodgson has submitted a dispensation for the Hoppa Bus due to working for ADAPT.

F007/16 7. AUTHORISATION OF EXPENDITURE AND ORDERS

In accordance with Section 9 of the financial regulations, the RFO has certified all invoices received meaning there are no invoices for consideration by councillors.

F008/16 8. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN, SMALL BUSINESS CONFERENCE AND DESTINATION ORGANISATION

Suspend Standing Orders.

a) Neighbourhood Plan – Cllr Goodyer advised that Berwick was entitled to extra support due to Berwick being designated as a complex area. The reasons were varied, such as location, River Tweed and heritage aspects and were eligible to claim £15k to assist with the Neighbourhood Plan. The Council are entitled to apply for Locality grant funding of up to £15,000. So far, £1,500 has been received which was used to pay for the first round of public consultations. A further £3,800 has been requested to support the current activities of the Working Groups. This consists of £3,500 to pay for professional support for the WGs, and £300 for expenses. If the £3,800 is granted then the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group would have tender for the professional support in accordance with our current financial regulations. Cllr Hill mentioned staff costs and the Clerk agreed that she spent quite a lot of

her time on the Neighbourhood Plan and Cllr Goodyer will look at this further re staff time/costs. RESOLUTION – Finance Committee are asked to approve the establishment of a procurement process in accordance with current financial regulations if the £3800 requested is granted.

RESOLVED: Agreed Unanimously.

b) Small Business Conference – There were a number of requests from small businesses which attended the Berwick Investors Conference that the Town Council should run a similar event but focused on Small and Medium Enterprises (SME). It is therefore proposed that a small event be held in the Autumn for SMEs, probably in September, using surplus funds from the Investors Conference. RESOLUTION – Finance Committee is asked to approve a budget of £500 for running this event.

RESOLVED: Agreed Unanimously.

c) Destination Organisation – The Rural Payments Agency have reviewed BTC Expression of Interest, and said that it is too large for LEADER, and instead the Council should submit the project to the Rural Growth Fund (RGF) administered by the NELEP. As this call is not yet open, LEADER have agreed to consider a smaller bid from the Town Council for a project to develop a larger bid into the RGF. RESOLUTION – Finance Committee is therefore asked to approve the extraction of a smaller bid based on the current version of the Destination Organisation bid for a 1 year project. The full bid will be submitted to the next available and appropriate Council meeting – currently it estimated that the bid will for a £50,000 project, with 30% (£15,000) match funding being identified from existing budgets. The source of the £15,000 match funding will be stated in the full bid, and will need to be approved. **Reinstate Standing Orders.**

RESOLVED: Agreed Unanimously.

F009/16 9. HOPPA BUS

Councillors were unsure whether the figures quoted from ADAPT re the Hoppa Bus were for 2015/16 or for 2016/17. The Clerk will gain further information and report back to Councillors.

RESOLVED: To ascertain more information about the figures provided by ADAPT.

F010/16 10. BLAKEWELL GARDENS AND FIVE ARCHES ALLOTMENTS

The allotments at Blakewell Gardens are only 3 in number but water rates are over £300 and the rentals per year are £123 for the 3. **SUSPEND STANDING ORDERS** – Mrs Bronwen Perry said the water meter at the Lions Allotment worked well and was not overly expensive.

REINSTATE STANDING ORDERS – The Clerk advised Councillors that Northumbria Water would invoice BTC to look at the possibility of a water meter provision at both sites and there would also be a charge for installing the water meters and they would also require someone to be onsite to meet with the engineer. The same applied at Five Arches with an added concern that no water was currently available and this would have to be connected up. The fencing is also in disrepair. There is also a possibility of requesting more land at Five Arches from NCC with a view to having more allotments at that location.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will contact Northumbria Water to visit both allotment sites for costs for water meters and also cost for water connection at Five Arches and will also gain quotes for repairs to the surrounding fencing.

F011/16 11. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Spittal Improvement Trust have requested £4k for assistance towards Spittal Gala and Spittal Seaside Festival. Councillors were concerned it was quite a large amount so early in the year and because there was a reduced grants budget for 2016/17 and there will be other applications for grant funding to come in. **SUSPEND STANDING ORDERS** – Mrs Watkins, representing SIT, said that Spittal Gala could be managed meantime but they would need money towards the Seaside Festival. **REINSTATE STANDING ORDERS** – Cllr Dixon thought that the requested grant money justified the number of people who came to Spittal for the gala and festival and who spent money in the village. Cllr Forbes queried the amount Spittal Gala had in reserve and wondered if this was an error and also wondered if a saving could be made in regard to the marquee. Cllr Hill was also concerned re costs and thought half of the amount requested would be more acceptable. The Clerk said that Mr Warren thought that the grant money should be advertised twice a year in 2 tranches and all organisations would be asked to apply, Cllr Hodgson though quarterly tranches would be a better option. It was agreed to wait for the return of Mr Mike Greener of SIT and the Clerk will query the Trust's reserve figures with him.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will speak with Mr Mike Greener re further clarification on the quoted figures.

F012/16 12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 20 June 2016 at 6.00pm.