

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Town Council Finance and Resources Committee Meeting held on Monday, 20 June 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Ante Room at The Town Hall, Marygate, Berwick-upon-Tweed

PRESENT:

Councillors: A Forbes (Chair)
A Gibson
K Graham
G Hill
P Hodgson
G Mclean
G Roughead
C Seymour

IN ATTENDANCE:

W Pattison, Town Clerk
10 Members of the public
Cllr G Smith

OPEN SESSION

Mrs Janet Clare Dean advised she had reported Berwick Town Council to the external auditor regarding item 17. Mr Jim Waugh requested page numbers were put onto all Council papers. Mr Brian Darling advised of his disgust with the Council and made an allegation concerning a Councillor and also said the Council had provided the public with phoney and false figures. The Clerk advised Mr Darling to write in to the Town Council highlighting his concerns.

F013/16 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

F014/16 2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2016 were agreed by all and signed as a correct record.

F015/16 3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Cllr Hill personal, Berwick Literary Festival and Cllrs Hodgson and Roughead, the Hoppa Bus.

F016/16 4. REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

Cllr Hodgson said he has obtained a dispensation regarding the Hoppa Bus.

F017/16 5. NOTIFICATION OF PAYMENTS MADE BY BERWICK-UPON-TWEED TOWN COUNCIL

Agreed by Councillors.

RESOLVED: Agreed.

F018/16 6. PAYMENTS FOR APPROVAL

Agreed by Councillors.

RESOLVED: Agreed.

F019/16 7. 2015-16 YEAR END FIGURES AND DRAFT ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS

Cllr Hill expressed concern in relation to the Council cash assets of £411,756.00. She said that misleading and inaccurate figures had been provided at the time of the budget setting because the schedule III income had not been included. She said that the Council and public had been misled by what she described as "phoney deficits". She said that the public were owed an apology for the council tax precept increase based on misleading figures.

Cllr Hill also felt Councillors needed to agree the allocation of the general fund into various budget and reserve headings. Cllr Mclean mentioned performance management controls and said that all Councillors will participate in a Council 3 year financial plan in the coming months. Cllr Hodgson agreed. Cllr Seymour mentioned a £50 unallocated cheque for Edwin Thompson and advised this was probably for Neighbourhood Plan sponsorship.

RESOLVED: Noted by Councillors.

F020/16 8. FINANCIAL REPORTING

Cllr Hill said expenditure versus budget needed to be sorted fairly quickly. Quarterly figures will be reported at the July 25th full Council meeting.

RESOLVED: Noted.

F021/16 9. FLAGSTAFF PARK

Approval was requested to buy a disabled swing with an extra harness for Flagstaff Park. The cost will be £2,310.95 and the extra harness was priced at £175. Cllr Graham proposed and Cllr Hodgson seconded and this was approved. Discussion on where the harnesses would be kept ensued and could be stored in a locker at Flagstaff Park with a disabled/radar key to open. Cllr Gibson thought the harness may be able to be attached to the swing by rivets to

prevent removal.

Discussion on the progress of the play park took place with the Clerk advising that Historic England would require a qualified person to investigate each bucket of soil removed due to the archaeological aspects of the site. Cllr Mclean also advised that Northumbria Water had to do some work there also and the start date of June 27th to install the play equipment was unfortunately unlikely to be met.

RESOLVED: To purchase a disabled swing and an extra harness for Flagstaff Park.

F022/16 10. SEAFIELD PARK, SPITTAL

Bollards which light up Seafield Park have been vandalised and are in a very poor state. NCC has quoted over £2k to repair them. Councillors discussed and thought because the park belonged to NCC, they should bear the cost of repairing the bollards and possibly by inserting vandal proof glass.

It was decided the Clerk would formally write to Mr Mike Jeffrey, NCC Head of Parks and Open Spaces and request this work be carried out.

RESOLVED: The Clerk will write to Mr Mike Jeffrey, NCC to request repairs to the bollards.

F023/16 11. LITTER BINS

A request to buy 8 more litter bins to finish off the town centre and create uniformity was agreed by Councillors. The agreed budget will be exceeded by the cost of 2 bins and this will take the litter bin budget over limit by £460. The bins removed will be placed elsewhere in the town. Cllr Graham requested 2 of the bins which will be removed to be placed at Prior park and the Clerk advised that advice on any placement would be requested from NCC who empty all the bins. A request to purchase a Dolphin novelty bin for Spittal Splash park and a novelty Bear for Newfields Play Park was also agreed and will be paid for out of the novelty bin budget.

RESOLVED: To purchase 8 litter bins for Hide Hill, Church Street and Bridge Street and 2 novelty bins for Spittal Splash Park and Newfields Play Park.

F024/16 12. GRAFFITI ON BANKHILL UNDER THE BRIDGE

The Clerk has received 2 quotes for the removal of graffiti from under the bridge at Bankhill. Councillors were in general agreement for this work to be done and Cllr Hill advised this could not be agreed at the finance meeting due to the item being listed as an update and approval for this work would have to be given at full Council. Cllr Roughead had concerns the graffiti

would be immediately put back there again and a suggestion was made to provide an area/boards in the town where graffiti could be given free reign.

RESOLVED: To seek approval at full Council for the removal of graffiti at Bankhill.

F025/16 13. BERWICK GOLDWING LIGHT PARADE

Mr Tom Gardener representing Goldwing spoke to Councillors about The Goldwing Light Parade and how much interest and tourism it generated for the town of Berwick over 2 days. The Goldwing Parade suits all ages and includes a bouncy castle, fireworks, live band, disco and much, much more. There will also be collections taken in support of the RNLI. Mr Gardener mentioned they had recently received £1k from an anonymous donor and Cllr Hill had concerns this may impact on the Council depending on who it was. Cllr Hill proposed that BTC gave £1k to support the Parade and this was seconded by Cllr Mclean. Cllr Gibson suggested £1.5k and this was seconded by Cllr Hodgson. A vote was taken with 2 Councillors voting for £1k to be given and a separate vote to give £1.5k was carried by 6 votes to 2.

RESOLVED: To give the Goldwing Light Parade £1.5k.

F026/16 14. NOTICE BOARDS – CASTLE VALE AND CORONATION PARKS / HIGHCLIFFE

Approval to purchase 2 notice boards for Coronation park and Castle Vale Park was agreed.

RESOLVED: To purchase 2 notice boards for Coronation Park and Castle Vale Park.

F027/16 15. APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Application for financial assistance for an amount of £4k to assist with the Spittal Gala and the Seaside Festival has been received from Spittal Improvement Trust. Infrastructure was the main expense and the Seaside Festival requires the most money. Cllr Graham proposed the Council give £4k and this was seconded by Cllr Gibson. Cllr Graham said a lot of people took pleasure in this event and it was something she was happy to support. Cllr Hill had concerns that the Events Committee had previously agreed that an amount of 2k was to be given.

Overspend on the budget was concerning and Tweedmouth Feast had still to be approved. Cllr Roughead suggested £3,500 be given. A vote was then taken with 2 votes for £2k and a vote for 4k received 4 votes with 2 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED: To award £4k to Spittal Improvement Trust for Spittal Gala and Spittal Seaside Festival.

Gardening Grant- Spittal Improvement Trust – Councillors voted by 6 votes to 2 to award £1k to Spittal Improvement Trust for the enhancement of Spittal with shrubs and plants and general gardening work.

RESOLVED: To award £1k to Spittal Improvement Trust to enhance Spittal with plants and shrubs and general gardening maintenance.

Berwick Detachment, Northumbria Army Cadet Force – A request for £263.75 to support National Armed Forces day was agreed by Councillors.

RESOLVED: To grant £263.75p to Berwick Detachment, Northumbria Army Cadet Force Berwick Autumn Festivals – It was agreed to award £2,618 to the Autumn Festival.

RESOLVED: Agreed to award £2,618 to the Autumn Festival.

Berwick Literary Festival – It was agreed to award £2,000 to the Literary Festival.

RESOLVED: Agreed to award £2,000 to the Literary Festival.

F028/16 16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

No further meetings of the Finance and Resources Committee due to the new committee structure. The business of the Finance and Resources Committee will be dealt with by full Council.

The Clerk advised Ms Janet Clare Dean that the current Council Bank Account contained all of the Council's money and it was felt advisable to move some of this money into 2 new bank accounts as the Council would only receive £75k compensation should the Council's current bank fold for any reason. The item was considered as confidential to allow elected Councillors who represent and were voted for by the people of Berwick to discuss the various/appropriate banks and interest rates privately before taking to full Council for approval.

Councillors agreed to discuss this matter in public due to Ms Clare Dean making a formal complaint to the Council's external auditors, BDO, re Councillors discussing public money in private.

F029/16 17. COUNCIL BANK ACCOUNT

Councillors thought all banks interest rates were currently low and no particular bank stood out from any of the others.

RESOLVED: Agreed to discuss further at full Council.