

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on Monday 26th October 2015 at 6.30pm at Grosvenor House, Grosvenor Road, Whittlesey

Present: Cllr Boden, Butcher, Mrs Mayor, Mason, Miscandlon

Officer in Attendance: Mrs Sue Evans Town Clerk & RFO

Recording: DS2500.32.DS2

FP68/15 - To receive apologies from absent Members.

Cllr Dorling & Bristow (holiday), Cllr Wicks (meeting)

FP69/15.- Declaration of Members Pecuniary Interests, on items to be discussed later in the agenda and the Council to decide which items are to be discussed as confidential under agenda item number FP15.

Cllr Mrs Mayor – declared an interest in the grant application for Whittlesey in Bloom.
Cllr Mason – declared an interest in the grant application for Whittlesey Christmas Lights.

FP70/15 – Public Forum

There were no members of the public present.

FP71/15 - To confirm and sign the Minutes from the last meeting of the Finance & Policy on 28th September 2015.

Ratified: The minutes were approved with the following change noted: FP81/15 – Date of next meeting should read 26th November 2015

FP72/15 – Budget 2016/2017

Proposed Additional budget heads for the future year.

The following additional budget heads had been submitted by members for inclusion in the 2016/17 budget, it was requested that these were noted in the minutes of this meeting:

- Cllr Bristow has requested 20K is earmarked to reserves for the future projects of Whittlesey Town Council
- Cllr Curtis asked if consideration to be given for the advertising budget to sell the town and what it has to offer to generate footfall.
- Grass cutting and hanging baskets – this was put forward by the Community Projects Committee
- Cllr Mrs Dee Laws requested funding set aside for the Local Neighbourhood plan
- Cllr Mason wished funding to be included for anything to do with the bus service.
- Members suggested that Street light provision is included, should the need arise to fund lights that the County Council are turning off.
- Showfield Appeal – Cllr Butcher felt that there should be a budget head that would cover this type of thing, ie the budget head could be for Planning related issues, it could be named planning contingency fund.

- Cllr Butcher advised members that the CCC report has been released, WTC may have to help fund other services within the town and its villages.
- The Clerk to contact all members advising of the additional items that F & P have considered and ask if anyone has anything else that they may wish to have included.
- The Clerk suggested that a budget heading be included for Music events on the Market Place.

Budget Heads and Preliminary Figures

Cllr Boden advised members that we are too early in the budget process to be settling on any figures, whether on the income or on the expenditure side. However, in discussing the 2016/17 budget at this evening's meeting he hopes that we will at least be able to begin to assemble a "wish list" from which any new or upwardly revised expenditure for next year may be drawn when we make our final decision as a Council as to next year's budget.

In facilitating the creation of a more tightly controlled budget he raised several issues and would like people to consider these issues for input at a later meeting. A copy of the text that was given to members by Cllr Boden is below:-

1. For budgeting purposes, it often obscures, rather than illuminates, to net off income and expenditure within a single cost code. I'd therefore recommend that allotment income, office rent receivable and bank interest received be separated from allotment expenditure, office rent payable and bank charges payable respectively in separate cost codes.

2. The accruals for the next year differently. Accruals brought forward should not appear in the Income & Expenditure Account. However, accounting appropriately for accruals significantly improves budgetary control during the year and both Cllr Dorling and Cllr Boden are keen to assist Sue in establishing simple and straightforward monthly and/or quarterly procedures to achieve this.

3. After discussion with Eamonn, I'd like to suggest that budgeting, and in-year budget monitoring, would be improved by splitting certain cost codes into their constituent parts. The cost codes where this may be considered are 2. Staff Salaries (pensions, net pay & PAYE/NIC);

4. In light of year-to-date expenditure (or possible changes in procedures) there is potentially scope within the budget to reduce budgeted amounts for 2016/17. Given the desire from several of us to budget for greater expenditure in certain areas, some "housekeeping" in the following cost code areas may therefore be worth examining with a view to reducing net budget expenditure figures for next year where possible, when compared to the 15/16 budget:

- 7. General Office Expenses and 20. Sundry Admin (these could reasonably be combined, I suggest)
- b. 8. Postage (is there further scope to email invitations/notifications/Christmas Greetings etc rather than posting them?)
- c. 10. Publications
- d. 11. Advertising
- e. 17. Election Costs (this is the largest budget reduction available (£17,500) because of the electoral cycle)
- f. 19. Training
- g. 22. Bank Interest Receivable
- h. 23. Professional Services

18 Subscriptions (is NALC stopped and, if so, can this budget provision be reduced?)

j. 36. Office Repairs - is additional expenditure reasonably anticipated in 2016/17?

I would also like to put on the table whether the following budget provisions are still appropriate:

- 66. CAB £1,000
- 70. Youth Services £5,000
- 75. Contingency £1,500

With several areas of significant additional or new expenditure already proposed or suggested for next year, it will clearly be important and useful to clarify at an early stage the appropriateness of recurring budgeted incomes and expenditure, so that we can more accurately judge how much of our eventual "wish list" can be afforded. I'm keen to gather as much of this information in advance to assist us all when we collectively make decisions as to our priorities for next year. If we do budget more tightly than in previous years, we may also wish to consider increasing the budget for the Sundry Projects cost code to make allowance for additional expenditure decisions which may be made during the year in response to unforeseen events/opportunities. Additionally or alternatively we may wish for 2016/17 to institute a more disciplined virement process to maintain overall spending limits whilst allowing greater in-year flexibility.

End

Election Costs – Cllr Boden advised members that the Clerk had chased for the invoice but to date had not received any response, he was aware that the apportionment would be available at the end of November and invoices sent out for payment. Cllr Mrs Mayor advised that the potential new budget did not mention election costs but felt they should be present to cover any eventuality, ie we may not be in an election year, but if anyone stood down, the council may be forced to hold a by election.

Members discussed the amount of interest that the Reserve account is generating, and suggested that it may be better to relocate the funds to an account that gives a better return on the balance.

Cllr Boden advised members that serious choices for the budget heading would need to be made and a more tightly drawn up budget put in place to enable funds to be vired between budget headings.

FP73/15 - Paint for Benches on the Bower Towpath

Cllr Boden advised members that he had received the figures from Cllr Mrs Windle for the painting of the benches at the Towpath, the cost for all materials totalled £178.89 and was approved under the authority of the standing orders. Members were advised that there would be no labour costs as the work will be carried out by volunteers.

FP74/15 – Purchase of Dog waste bin for Briggate West.

Cllr Boden advised members that he had received the figures from Cllr Mrs Windle for the purchase of the dog waste bin, the cost for installation from FDC was totalled £153.81 and was approved under the authority of the standing orders.

FP75/15 – Policy document review

The Clerk presented members with a complete list of policies that were held, some of these policies were now going to be obsolete, Cllr Boden suggested that the policies were split into

sections and each one amended, a list then compiled of all the policies that were in practice and when they would need to be reviewed.

FP76/15 – Bank Reconciliation

Members approved the reconciliation that was presented by the Clerk, the reconciliation was completed as of Friday 23rd October 2015

FP77/15 – Year to Date figures

Members approved the year to date figures which were up to the 23rd October 2015.

FP78/15 – Payment list for approval

The payment list was submitted to members and advised by the Clerk that the list would increase before final approval at Full Council on the 14th November 2015.

FP7915 - Donation Requests.

Pursuant to the Minutes of 4th February 2013, donations will only be dealt with at the Meetings in April, July, October & January.

Whittlesey Christmas Lights – Cllr Mason advised that the A605 lights are no longer being installed as the connection to the FDC street light that would provide the power will overload the circuit, therefore the grant could be reduced, however costs have increased. Cllr Mrs Mayor proposed a donation of £2500.00, seconded by Cllr Butcher, unanimous vote in favour.

Whittlesey In Bloom – Cllr Mrs Mayor advised that after discussions with FDC they have agreed for planters to be located on the barriers at the bus terminal, Cllr Butcher proposed £500.00, Cllr Mason seconded, with a unanimous vote in favour, if this specific scheme cannot go ahead Cllr Boden advised that the Whittlesey In Bloom would need to submit another document. It was suggested by Cllr Mrs Mayor that WTC will purchase the 6 planters at a cost of £747.76, £500.00 will be the donation from WTC, and Whittlesey in Bloom will pay WTC £247.76, Whittlesey Town council will then donate the planters to Whittlesey in Bloom.

Whittlesey Extravaganza Committee – Members agreed a donation of £500.00, this was proposed by Cllr Mrs Mayor, seconded Cllr Butcher with a unanimous vote in favour

FP80/15. Exclusion of the Public, including the Press.

Resolved that in respect of the following item of business, the public, including the press, will be excluded from the meeting, because of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed, publication of which would be prejudicial to the public interest.

FP81/15. – Date of Next Meeting 23rd November 2015

Meeting closed 20.24



.....
Cllr Chris Boden
Vice Chairman