

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10th SEPTEMBER, 2019

Present: Councillors Miss L Willis (Chair)
Mrs B E Allen, R Arthur Mrs G Bleasdale,
Mrs K Brace, S P Colborn, S Cudlip,
Mrs S Forster, Ms R M Gratton,
G N Hepworth, Mrs L Kennedy,
D McKenna, T Shepherd,
B Taylor, R Whitehead.

Apologies: Councillors, E Bell, Mrs J A Bell,
D Cummings, Mrs V Cummings,
Mrs S Pratt, K Shaw.

Officers: Mrs D Rickaby (Town Clerk)
Mrs J Knight (Finance Officer)
Ms A Rountree (Minute Taker).

Prior to commencement of the meeting the Chair advised members of this Committee and members of the public that in line with the amendment to 'the public bodies (admission to meetings) act 1960', which came into force in August, 2014, parts of this meeting may be recorded by photographic, video and audio means.

F63/19 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded prior to the start of the meeting of the need to disclose any interests, prejudicial or personal, in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Such interests must be submitted to the Town Clerk prior to the meeting.

F64/19 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 2nd JULY, 2019

RECOMMENDED the Minutes of this meeting, a copy of which had been previously printed and circulated to each Member, be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chairman.

F65/19 PAYSHEET NUMBER 4 – JULY 2019/20

a) Expenditure – July 2019

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 4 – 2019/20 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, Bacs, Online and Debit Card payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £221,029.56 being the total sum authorised under this Paysheet;

A Member queried the differing costs between the Health Assessments. The Finance Officer stated that the difference in costs is due to the level of assessment that individual employees require.

The Member also questioned whether the Town Council still has a dedicated person from Ramside Events as he felt that there has not been sufficient income due to lack of events. The Town Clerk stated that she also has concerns and has a planned meeting with Ramside Events to discuss the service level agreement as well as to raise her concerns and she will report this back to Council.

- (ii) that the BACS authorisation sheet be signed by three Members and the credit transfers be actioned immediately; and
- (iii) there were no transactions made this month from the Clerks Imprest Account.

b) Income – July 2019

RECOMMENDED the summary sheet showing the range of income received by the Council during the current month be accepted.

c) Bank Balances – July 2019

RECOMMENDED the report of the Finance Officer a copy of which was circulated, be approved.

F66/19

PAYSHEET NUMBER 5 – AUGUST 2019/20

a) Expenditure – August 2019

RECOMMENDED:

- (i) that all payments in Paysheet Number 5 – 2019/20 be approved, it being noted that the direct debits, Bacs, Online and Debit Card payments including Imprest expenditure amount to £265,470.76 being the total sum authorised under this Paysheet;

A Member raised fuel costs and questioned whether there was any movement on what the Council pay and whether there was a decrease. The Town Clerk stated that the costs were level and audits are carried out on the usage. This system is more controlled and no anomalies have been noted.

Another Member raised the cost of the hire of the tractor. The Finance Officer stated that the cost was the monthly hire cost but if the Council decided to purchase the tractor any rental costs paid would be deducted from the purchase price.

A Member also raised a query regarding the income from the café. The Town Clerk stated that this is also an item that she will be addressing and will report back to Council.

- (ii) that the BACS authorisation sheet be signed by three Members and the credit transfers be actioned immediately; and

- (iii) there were no transactions made this month from the Clerks Imprest Account.

b) Income – August 2019

RECOMMENDED the summary sheet showing the range of income received by the Council during the current month be accepted.

c) Bank Balances – August 2019

RECOMMENDED the report of the Finance Officer a copy of which was circulated, be approved.

F67/19

APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS

a) Seaham NPT & Deneside Action Group

Members discussed the grant application received from Seaham NPT & Deneside Action Group and agreed to award a grant of £1000 towards the cost for the DAG Boat Project.

RECOMMENDED that a grant of £1000 be awarded to Seaham NPT & Deneside Action Group.

The Town Clerk and Finance Officer made Members aware that there was only £900 left in the Grants Budget for this financial year. Members discussed this in detail and agreed that the Finance Officer could transfer a further £4k into the Grants Budget.

RECOMMENDED that the Finance Officer transfers £4k to the Grants Budget.

b) Seaham Neighbourhood Policing Team

Members discussed the grant application received from Seaham Neighbourhood Policing Team and agreed to award a donation of £500 for the 'Too Hot to Handle' project to purchase property marking kits.

RECOMMENDED that a grant of £500 be awarded to Seaham Neighbourhood Policing Team.

c) Seaham NPT

Members discussed the grant application received from Seaham NPT and agreed to award a donation of £500 for the Seaham Community Cricket Coaching in conjunction with Durham County Council to raise funds for a defibrillator.

RECOMMENDED that a grant of £500 be awarded to Seaham NPT.

d) **Seaham Music Academy**

Members discussed the grant application received from Seaham Music Academy and agreed to award a donation of £1000 towards the cost of stand banners so the Academy is easily identified.

RECOMMENDED that a grant of £1000 be awarded to Seaham Music Academy.

e) **1338 (Seaham) Squadron ATC**

Members discussed the grant application received from 1338 (Seaham) Squadron and agreed to award a donation of £461.47 for signposting of the site.

RECOMMENDED that a grant of £461.47 be awarded to 1338 (Seaham) Squadron ATC.

f) **Michael Wilson – Thank You**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

g) **Eastlea Community Centre – Thank You**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

F68/19 **YOUNG HEROES NIGHT**

The Town Clerk received a quote for trophies but informed Members that she would look for further prices and would purchase the best value.

RECOMMENDED that the Town Clerk sources further quotes and under her delegated authority to purchase the best value.

F69/19 **AUDIT REPORTS**

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the report of the Internal Auditor for Internal Audit work planned between September to December 2019.

F70/19 **EXTERNAL AUDITOR NOTIFICATION OF COMPLETION OF THE AUDIT OF THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2018/19**

Councillor S Cudlip declared an interest on this item.

RECOMMENDED that Members accept the findings in the report.

F71/19 **SALE OF THE LAND ADJACENT TO 25 SEAHAM STREET**

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

F72/19 **RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RECOMMENDED in view of the confidential nature of the following items which relate to issues of contractual, sensitive and confidential information, Members agreed to pass the formal resolution to exclude the press and public from the meeting pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act, 1960.

F73/19 **DAWDON PARK PROJECT – PHASE 2**

Pursuant to the Parks & Events Committee meeting held on the 3rd September, 2019 the Town Clerk stated that she would provide further information at this meeting. The Town Clerk introduced Mr Bob Huitson, Quantity Surveyor and Project Manager to the meeting who provided Members with an overview of works to date.

Mr Huitson stated that he had been employed by Seaham Town Council from Phase 2 of the project. The budget given was £202k and the total cost had come in at £201,760 and Phase 2 would be completed by the end of this week.

RECOMMENDED that Members note the information.

F74/19 **DAWDON PARK PROJECT – PHASE 3**

Mr Huitson stated that he had priced Phase 3 of the project for £126,276 which would complete the upstairs refurbishment which would make the building DDA, Fire and Accessibility compliant. He has priced to the same specification as Phase 2 and he complimented Wearside Contractors on doing a good job. Mr Huitson stated that he can price Phase 3 with Wearside Contractors to get a fixed price for the Council. He noted that a total spend for Phase 2 and Phase 3 of £328k had previously been agreed by the Council.

Mr Huitson stated that the price for the specialist rendering required would be twice the normal amount due to the location of the building, subject to various weather elements. A Member suggested that Mr Huitson provide the Council with prices to include and exclude the rendering so the Council can decide whether to carry out this work now or at a later date. The Town Clerk stated that the current rendering at the rear of the building would not last and will have to be done eventually. Mr Huitson stated that he would provide the information requested by the Member and he will also give options for the different specifications of floor coverings etc.

The Town Clerk stated that some of the Phase 3 work has been carried out with Phase 2 as this could not be avoided due to the nature of the work required. If the Council choose not to continue with Phase 3 using the current contractors then the extra work involved would need to be paid.

A Member stated that Dawdon Cricket Club Committee are really happy with the work that has been carried out. The Town Clerk informed Members that the Cricket Club have been involved with the contractors and have been able to choose their own colour schemes etc.

A Member requested that Mr Huitson comes back to the Council with his certificate stating that Wearside are giving the best price available and stating that he suggests the Council do not go out to tender. The Member noted that if the Council do not have this certificate then this could be queried by auditors.

Mr Huitson stated that the works could start in November/December if the Council use the current contractors and the works will be finished by the start of the next cricket season.

RECOMMENDED that Members waive Standing Orders to not go out to tender subject to Mr Huitson providing the certificate.

A Member queried when the works to the bowls would be carried out. It was noted that there was agreement that the bowls would not be done until the cricket pavilion had been completed.

F75/19

PRESS OPPORTUNITIES

RECOMMENDED that there are no press opportunities from this meeting.