

BARTON-UPON-HUMBER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
held on MONDAY 19 JANUARY 2015 at 7.00 p.m. in
THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, QUEEN STREET, BARTON-UPON-HUMBER

Present Councillor Mr J Oxley (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs A Clark, F Coulsey, Mrs J Mason, Mrs J Oxley and J P Vickers.

Also Present Councillors J Evison, N Jacques, A Todd and Mrs W Witter. Also Mrs C Clark (Deputy Town Clerk) and Ms S Richards (Town Clerk)

236. **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor K Vickers (on holiday)

237. **Declarations of Interest**

Barton Senior Alliance – Councillor Mrs A Clark (Personal interest)

Barton Bike Night – Councillor J Evison (Personal interest)

Barton Bike Night, Barton Lions and Barton Senior Alliance – Councillor Mrs J Oxley (Personal interest)

Barton Bike Night, Barton Lions and Barton Senior Alliance – Councillor Mr J Oxley (Personal interest)

Barton Bike Night – Councillor A Todd (Personal interest)

Barton Tourism Group and CHAMP Ltd – Councillor J P Vickers (Personal interest)

Barton Senior Alliance – Councillor Mrs W Witter (Personal interest)

238. **Applications by Members for Dispensations Previously Submitted**

It is noted that all members present had submitted a “Code of Conduct Dispensation Request” to the Town Clerk. The Clerk had granted dispensation for members to remain, speak and vote regarding the budget/precept. The period of dispensation granted is up to and including the 2015 Town/Parish elections.

239. **Minutes of Meeting held on the 20 October 2014**

It was noted that these minutes had been signed as a correct record, for action as necessary, at a meeting of the town council held on 6 November 2014.

240. **Matters Arising**

No matters of report were discussed at this meeting that are not already covered by the following agenda items.

241. **Requests for Financial Assistance**

Members considered the following received request for financial support:

(a) **Barton Carnival Committee**

Consideration and discussion took place regarding this request and an appraisal of the application was read out. The group are requesting funding of £4,500 from the town council and had already received a £3,000 grant from North Lincolnshire Council. They require a further £7,000. Councillor J Evison stated that he felt a budget should be available in the town council’s earmarked reserves to assist

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small groups requiring funding in the town. Although a small budget was available in the town council's main budget for this, he noted that in recent years the level of this budget had been reduced. He felt that many groups in the town were dependant on the grant funding available from North Lincolnshire Council, whereby in several of these cases funding from the town council would assist some of these able to seek assistance from other funding streams, once an audit trail of support was established. He made reference to another application for funding that had been received too late for this meeting, but, would be discussed at the next town council meeting. Once again he stated, this highlighted the need for a funding stream to support such organisations. The Town Clerk reported that Councillor Evison had spoken to her about this matter. The town council has limitations on the amount it is able to precept, without falling foul of the penalty of losing the grant element of the precept. However, from savings made by the town council on various budget lines and a reduction in staff costs, it is a possibility to place an amount in earmarked reserves for this purpose if required. She also pointed out that the level of general grant monies available in the town council budget had decreased a few years ago, due to the town council financially supporting the costs and maintenance of the town centre CCTV system. Therefore, some budget was diverted to this. Councillor Mrs Witter explained that donations for small groups to apply for have always been available from the town council, but the town council cannot support individuals. Councillor Jacques thought it was an excellent idea to support small groups more. Councillor Vickers felt that he would rather the town council take each funding application on its own merits and take the funding from earmarked reserves where possible. Councillor Mrs Clark felt that remedial and maintenance work on the town council owned building was a priority for funding and that careful use of the reserves should be made. She also noted that previously the town council supported the Barton Carnival with a £1,000 donation. Councillor Mrs J Oxley felt that a donation of £4,500 was too much in this instance, after careful consideration of the application. She proposed that a donation of £1,000 be made to the group, which Councillor Mrs A Clark seconded. It was agreed and

Resolved

- (i) that a donation of £1,000 be made to the Barton Carnival Committee, on condition that the event takes place. The budget to be taken from the 2015/2016 earmarked reserves of the town council;
- (ii) that all applications of funding requests made to the town council, be made on the town council's "Town Grant Scheme" application form and submitted with the relevant requested documentation. This ensured that fairness prevailed, supported with the correct information for the town council to determine the application.

242. **The Following Issues Were Considered:**

- (a) **The E-Mail Scheme Policy – Purchase of Equipment** (*Min Ref:162(b)/65 – F&GP 20/10/14*)

Discussion took place regarding this matter, including general office equipment and budgets. It was noted that one of the computer terminals in the town council office was to be replaced shortly, as previously agreed by the town council. This would soak up the budget available for office equipment in the current financial year. It was agreed and

Resolved this matter be reviewed after the next election, in the next financial year.

- (b) **Risk Assessment**

The Clerk stated that the town council risk assessment had been updated and reviewed.

Resolved that following review of the town council risk assessment the new version be adopted.

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(c) Contractor Tender List

Councillor Jacques reported that in light of the recent difficulty in obtaining a contractor to undertake a small job in levelling the front step to the Assembly Rooms to make easier access for the disabled, that a contractor tender list should be formulated. The Town Clerk explained that although 5 local contractors were contacted to undertake the work, only 1 responded, but in the fullness of time did not complete the work. The difficulty appeared to arise from contractors not keen to carry out small jobs under £50. Currently the town council office is arranging for a contractor to do several small jobs at the same time, in order for the work to be economically viable for the contractor to do. Councillor A Todd stated that the town council could start a list of named contractors that conform to all the required Health and Safety Regulations, risk assessments, tax etc. In the meantime, he would provide the town council with the approved lists of local authority contractors, as the town council uses to reference contractors for the Christmas Festival in the town.

Resolved that this be noted.

(d) The Town Council's Precept Leaflet 2015/2016

Following discussion, it was agreed and

Resolved that the town council will not issue paper copies of the required precept leaflet to be sent out with the council tax demands to local residents. This is in line with the Police and Fire Authority's and would save money on printing and delivery costs. The information to be available on the North Lincolnshire Council website, the Barton Tourism website (the town council section) and also be printed in the April 2015 'Bartonian' that is delivered to each household in the town. This is the same system adopted by the town council in the current financial year.

(e) 2014/2015 Budget – Quarterly Summary of Income/Expenditure

The quarterly summary for October to December 2014 is incorporated into the next agenda item.

(f) 2015/2016 Budget/Precept

Members were presented with copies of the town council draft 2015/2016 budget, precept, earmarked reserves and a comparison table of previous year's precept/grant/council tax for perusal and comment. Incorporated into the draft budget are the budget proposals from the Environment Working Party meeting held on 2 December 2014 and the Community Working Party meeting held on 16 December 2014. Both of these were agreed at the town council meetings held 3 December 2014 and 7 January 2015 respectively.

The Town Clerk reported that although limitations were placed on town /parish councils regarding the precept. The suggestions put forward were inside the guidelines, therefore, the grant element of the precept would be granted on this occasion by North Lincolnshire Council. In future years, this may or not be available therefore the town council had to be mindful of this. The earmarked reserves and general reserves are in permitted levels, with savings anticipated in the current financial year.

Members discussed and debated the 2015/2016 proposals, to put forward to the next ordinary meeting of the town council to be held on Wednesday 4 February 2015. The result of the proposals, is that the town council request total funding (precept + grant) of £161,007 – the same as the current financial year. This comprises precept £138,188 and grant £22,819. Due to an increase in the council tax base of 3116.7, this will result in a Band D property council charge of £44.33. A 2.51% decrease on the current year's council tax charge. It was agreed and

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Resolved

- (i) an earmarked reserve of £1,000 be added to the Community Working Party section for “Barton Carnival Committee” in the 2015/2016 earmarked reserves;
- (ii) an earmarked reserve of £300 be added to the Community Working Party section for “Barton Tourism – Additional Costs” in the 2015/2016 earmarked reserves;
- (iii) an earmarked reserve of £500 be added to the Community Working Party section for “Barton Arts – Additional Costs” in the 2015/2016 earmarked reserves;
- (iv) the sum of £500 be retained in earmarked reserves as provisional funding for ‘Parish Elections’. An additional £3,500 be added to this, making the total figure £4,000, due to possible expenditure in the forthcoming elections in May 2015;
- (v) the sum of £5,000 be retained in ear marked reserves as provisional funding for ‘Repairs/Decoration’ to The Assembly Rooms;
- (vi) that the 2015/2016 proposals to be checked, presented and approved at the next meeting of the town council to be held on Wednesday 4 February 2015, to allow the Clerk to levy the precept and grant funding from North Lincolnshire Council in the sum of £161,007.

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mr J Oxley, closed the meeting at 8.07 p.m.

.....Vice-Chairman 4 February 2015