

BARTON-UPON-HUMBER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
held on MONDAY 15 JANUARY 2018 at 7.00 p.m. in
THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, QUEEN STREET, BARTON-UPON-HUMBER

Present Councillor K Vickers (Chairman)

Councillors Mrs J Oxley, Mr J Oxley, J Sanderson, J P Vickers and Mrs W Witter

Also Present Mr N Turner and Mrs S Turner (CHAMP Ltd), Councillor F Coulosey, Mrs C Clark (Deputy Town Clerk) and Ms S Richards (Town Clerk)

252. **Apologies for Absence**

None

253. **Declarations of Interest**

Barton Lions – Councillor Mrs J Oxley (Personal Interest)

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

Mayoral Roles for Barton Town Council – Councillor J Sanderson (Personal Interest)

254. **Minutes of Meeting held on the 23 October 2017**

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 1 November 2017.

255. **Matters Arising**

(a) **The Barton Memorial Trust – Request for the town council to adopt the Tin Tommy sculpture located on Barrow Road, Barton** (*Min Ref: 168(a)/64 – F&GP 23/10/17*)

It was reported that the matter was being negotiated with the town council's insurers.

(b) **The Town Council's Internal Half-Yearly Audit 2017/2018** (*Min Ref: 168(b)/64 – F&GP 23/10/17*)

The Clerk stated the half yearly internal audit had been undertaken during November 2017, as previously reported (*Min Ref: 213(9)(iv)84 – BTC 06/12/17 refers*). In summation of this, the Auditor reported that "the accounts and governance arrangements of the council continue to be maintained to a very high standard". A copy of the report was available for perusal and discussion at the meeting.

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

(a) **The Assembly Rooms**

Mr N Turner of CHAMP Ltd wished to clarify that at the last meeting of this committee held on 23 October 2017, he requested "permission from the town council to directly liaise with the town council's structural survey consultants to discuss long-term monitoring issues of The Assembly Rooms". This, he explained, was for informal advice only. He wanted to understand aspects of the building more fully, bearing in mind the age and possible movement of the building, requiring monitoring. Remedial work to the rear fire escape staircase to the Assembly Hall would hopefully be undertaken without cost to either CHAMP Ltd or the town council in the near future.

Minutes of a Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 15 January 2018, cont'd

Councillor K Vickers enquired about problems being experienced with the heating system to the building. Mr Turner explained that the problem was a maintenance issue, therefore would incur no cost to the town council. However, the system was awaiting the heating engineer to return to site and locate where the fault in the heating system is. There appears to be a water leak somewhere with air getting into the system.

Councillor J P Vickers joined the meeting.

Councillor K Vickers referred to the newly installed cctv system to the Assembly Rooms and any impact this may have on council meetings held in the committee room. Following several enquiries from members of the town council, the Clerk had sought further information about this from ERNLLCA. Whilst public meetings are able to be recorded, caution was needed regarding personnel meetings and meetings without the press and public in attendance. These cannot be recorded. It was felt that in these instances the cctv cameras be covered up. Mr Turner explained the cctv was a 28 day recording system and data would only be downloaded in the case of criminal activity taking place at the building for the Police.

Mr Turner reported there had been increased bookings at The Assembly Rooms for wedding receptions, birthday parties and events. This was a positive move with increased income, particularly when the bar was booked for an event. Whilst in the past daily, regular bookings took place, in recent years there had been a decline in this. However, new bookings were being sought and a few now taking place. It was felt the town centre location of the building was good, with the sprung dance floor a unique feature. The 1940's events held were stated to be well supported, but the attendee's brought their own food and drink so the bar was not booked for these events. Mr Turner reminded everyone that the Development Trust Project was originally set up so that each building in the project could be kept afloat and supported by one another. Therefore the income gained from one building is sometimes used to support another. Mr & Mrs Turner then left the meeting.

Resolved that this be noted.

(b) **Review of the Duties & Role of The Town Mayor & Deputy Town Mayor** (*Min Ref: 103(a)(b)(c)(d)-F&GP 09/07/12*)

This matter was discussed with a view to reviewing the practices and procedures of the role, in line with current requirements. It was agreed:

(1) **The Duties & Role of The Town Mayor**

Following discussion, regarding expectations of the mayoral role, it was agreed and

Resolved the mayoral role of the town council to include the following:

- (i) to chair meetings of the Town Council;
- (ii) to chair the Annual Town Meeting;
- (iii) to chair the Annual Meeting;
- (iv) to hold an Annual Civic Service;
- (v) to represent the people of Barton-upon-Humber on occasions like the Remembrance Day Parade and Service and when high profile visitors visit the town;
- (vi) to represent Barton-upon-Humber at other local Town/Parish Civic Services;
- (vii) to represent the Town Council in the town/outside the town, at relevant functions/events;
- (viii) to speak on behalf of the Town Council as and when required to the media and local press;
- (ix) to be aware of the Town Council's role and business it undertakes to function;

Minutes of a Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 15 January 2018, cont'd

- (x) to be an advocate for Barton-upon-Humber and encourage visitors into the town to promote tourism and business;
- (xi) to host an annual presentation event;
- (xii) to support events and activities within the town;
- (xiii) the Deputy Town Mayor is expected to stand in for the above duties, in the absence of the Town Mayor.

(2) Mayoral Term of Office

It was agreed and

Resolved that the term of office for the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor shall be for one year. This can only be extended to two years under extra-ordinary circumstances, and, if the town council agree at the time it is appropriate to do so.

(3) Nomination & Election of The Town Mayor & Deputy Town Mayor

Following discussion, it was agreed and

Resolved

- (ii) in January of each year, the town council office to notify all members that nominations for the next mayoral year will be considered at the February ordinary meeting of the town council. Any member wishing to be considered for the position of Town Mayor or Deputy Town Mayor, to forward a letter of interest to the town council office before the meeting is held. Nominations received will be considered by members at the February meeting, whereby each candidate will be required to speak and give a short appraisal of him/herself. The election of the two roles to take place at the annual meeting held in May;
- (iii) an agenda item at the February ordinary meeting of the council each year to be placed to consider the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor nominations; received for the forthcoming civic year;
- (iv) appointment of the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor will be undertaken at the annual meeting of the town council held during May of each year;
- (v) as guidance, under normal circumstances, any Mayor elected would not expect to be considered for nomination to the position again, for a four year period thereafter.

(4) Mayoral Allowance

It was agreed and

Resolved:

- (i) the mayoral allowance is not to be paid as a lump sum directly to the Mayor;
- (ii) the mayoral account to be incorporated in a separate budget line within the main town council budget and administered by the town council office;
- (iii) the town council office to draft a suitable expenditure form, to enable the Mayor to submit this on a monthly basis to the council office for reimbursement;
- (iv) the Mayor to submit his/her expenses for each month, by submitting an expenditure form together with any receipts obtained, to the town council office. The Mayor to be reimbursed for the expenses after the next ordinary meeting of the town council;
- (v) the amount of the mayoral allowance to be determined and agreed at the Finance and General Purposes Committee budget meeting to be held in January each year.

Minutes of a Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 15 January 2018, cont'd

(vi) following discussion regarding the attendance of the town council clerk's at mayoral functions, (notably at weekends), it was agreed to review this matter at a future meeting of the Personnel Committee. In the meantime, the Town Mayor/Deputy Town Mayor will need to liaise with the Town Clerk/Deputy Town Clerk regarding staff attendance at mayoral functions and events.

(c) **Review of the Town Grant Scheme 2018/2019** – Application Form and Guidelines

Review and assessment of the existing application form and guidelines was discussed. This system is used universally throughout town and parish councils to adopt, making the basic requirements for applications a system with equal set criteria for everyone. It was agreed and

Resolved that when outside organisations apply to the town council for financial assistance, they are sent a copy of the 'Town Grant Scheme 2018/2019 Application Form' and 'Guidelines for Applicants' to submit with the relevant documentation to the town council.

(d) **Audit Provision of the Town Council – Internal & External Auditors**

The Clerk gave appraisal of the audit provision and financial checks of the town council's finances, practices and procedures. The town council employ two clerks who check each other's work, two members and one clerk sign and check all cheque payments at each town council monthly meeting, the Chairman and the Town Clerk ensure the bank reconciliation sheets agree at each monthly town council meeting, financial quarterly reports are discussed at each meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, a qualified, professional internal auditor is appointed and undertakes half-yearly and end of year financial, practice and procedure audits, RBS audit the accounts software each financial year and PKF Littlejohn LLP are employed as the town council's external auditors. The Clerk felt the checking and auditing procedures of the town council are robust in the current climate, to ensure that legislation is adhered to and that financial checks are in place. Members present thanked the employed staff for ensuring the checking and auditing of the town council's finances and procedures were undertaken to their maximum effect.

Resolved this be noted.

(e) **Update of the Risk Assessment**

The Clerk stated that the town council's risk assessment had been updated and reviewed. A copy was presented at the meeting for perusal and information purposes.

Resolved that following review of the town council risk assessment the new 2018 version be adopted.

(f) **2017/2018 Budget** – Quarterly Summary of Income/Expenditure

The Clerk commented that the quarterly summary for October to December 2017 was within most budget line allocations and that income/expenditure levels were mainly in line with those planned for the current year. One or two overspends were reported at the last meeting of the committee (*Min Ref: 168(c)/64 – F&GP 23/10/17 refers*). Members present perused copies of the quarterly budget and also income/expenditure for the current financial year up to and including 15 January 2018.

Minutes of a Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 15 January 2018, cont'd

(g) 2018/2019 Budget/Precept

Members were presented with copies of the town council draft 2018/2019 budget, precept, possible grant provision of a maximum of £11, 262, 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 Committee meeting held on 13 November 2017 and the Community Committee meeting held on 11 December 2017. Both of these were agreed at the town council meetings held 6 December 2017 and 3 January 2018 respectively.

Discussion took place regarding the budget proposals. It was noted that the grant element of the precept would be possibly forthcoming from North Lincolnshire Council for 2018/2019 by adherence to certain conditions which were explained. It was felt the town council could meet the conditions. The town council had to be mindful of the grant being gradually phased out and as and when it stopped, the town council would need to review the budget requirements closely.

Rooms/venue's for town council meetings were discussed, along with the current system of room hire at Baysgarth House, with the meeting room fees helping support CHAMP Ltd. It was agreed to review this in 12 months' time, when it would be clearer what changes to the town council are to be implemented. The Remembrance Day Parade was reported to require a PA system, in order for everyone to hear at the Cenotaph. Councillor J Sanderson agreed to discuss this matter with the Barton Salvation Army. Police assistance at the Remembrance Day Parade was not guaranteed therefore external traffic management assistance may need to be investigated. It was deemed this could be funded by the town council if quotations for the service were sought from external contractors and looked into. The same problem with the lack of Police assistance was highlighted with the town's Christmas Festival, whereby traffic management was hired in to assist.

The earmarked reserves and general reserves were reported to be in line with the requirements, liabilities and future financial needs of the town council. The Clerk reported that some savings are anticipated to be made in the current financial year up to 31 March 2018 if the forecasted predications of spending levels materialised. An increase in the council tax base was noted, and as each budget line was perused, reasons for the planned expenditure for the next financial year explained by the Clerk. It was noted that a 1% increase in staff salaries had been granted for the last two financial years, but, to date, no increase reported for the next financial year. A slight increase was allowed for in the budget to address this if required. Planned expenditure for The Assembly Rooms was also addressed. The result of the proposals is that the town council request a precept of £154, 503 from North Lincolnshire Council and, if allowed, a grant of £11,262, making the total £165,765.

Due to an increase in the council tax base of 3485.3, this will result in a Band D property council charge of £44.33. This figure has been maintained by the town council for the last four years (Appendix I and II appended to these minutes refers to the budget detail). The Chairman, Councillor K Vickers explained he had attended both of the budget meetings for the Community Committee and the Environment Committee and had looked into the draft proposals put forward at this meeting. He felt the proposals were in order and proposed that the draft budget proposals be accepted, this was seconded by Councillor's J Oxley and J Sanderson. All members present agreed to accept the proposals. The budget proposals to be put forward for approval at the next extra-ordinary meeting of the town council to be held on Monday 22 January 2018.

It was agreed and

Resolved

(i) Councillor J Sanderson to liaise with the Salvation Army regarding Remembrance Sunday;

Minutes of a Finance & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 15 January 2018, cont'd

- (ii) room hire for council meetings to be reviewed in January 2019;
- (iii) the sum of £4,000 be placed in earmarked reserves as provisional funding for 'Parish Elections';
- (iv) the sum of £20,000 be placed in earmarked reserves as provisional funding for 'Repairs/Decoration' to The Assembly Rooms;
- (v) that the 2018/2019 proposals to be checked, presented and approved at the next extra-ordinary meeting of the town council to be held on Monday 22 January 2018, to allow the Clerk to levy the precept funding from North Lincolnshire Council in the sum of £154,503. If the grant monies are considered for payment by them of £11,262, the total precept and grant would be £165,765. If not, the £11,262 to be funded through budget savings in the current financial year and the council's reserves.

The Chairman, Councillor K Vickers, closed the meeting at 8.05 p.m.

..... Chairman 22 January 2018