

BARTON-UPON-HUMBER TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF A FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
held on MONDAY 14 JANUARY 2019 at 7.00 p.m. in
THE ASSEMBLY HALL, QUEEN STREET, BARTON-UPON-HUMBER

Present Councillor Mrs W Witter (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors F Coulsey, Mrs J Oxley, Mr J Oxley, J Sanderson and J P Vickers

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

Prior to the meeting commencing, Mr N Turner (CHAMP Ltd) spoke about The Assembly Rooms. He circulated to members present a list of short and long term issues, referring to previous surveys undertaken. Due to the age of the building, he recommended a monitoring survey and damp survey be carried out. He stated that long terms plans were required for due diligence and forward planning. A conservation management plan for the building is something that CHAMP Ltd will undertake, once one has been completed for Baysgarth House Museum to assist with budget planning. He felt that immediate concerns were for monitoring and damp surveys to be undertaken, in order that the advice from these would allow matters to progress. Indeed, he highlighted an area on an Assembly Hall wall requiring attention, whereby he had engaged someone to look at this matter to determine the remedial work required. As he had previously reported in 2017, the rear fire escape work will get done. However, the joinery to the external woodwork of the building needs addressing before painting of the building can take place, or it will be a waste of time doing it. The secondary glazing to the windows, whilst useful, has no ventilation, so this also needs addressing. He felt that a drainage survey is required for the building, to determine the drainage and gully system condition. If the survey work could be undertaken during the 2019 spring/summer, with the joinery work also carried out, this would allow the painting of the woodwork to be done thereafter.

Members of the town council asked Mr Turner of the likely cost of the work he had spoken about. He stated that he didn't have the costs to hand, but costings could be sought in due course, once further investigated. With reference to the damp patch in The Assembly Hall, a contractor had previously undertaken some remedial work to the wall and an opinion on the render is currently being investigated. He felt that the joint on the rainwater gully is probably leaking. This is also being investigated for repair. The panels on the brickwork have been left unpainted, allowing air to get to them to dry out, thus avoiding further dampness. This is due to the wall being permeable, whereby maintenance using the appropriate materials is required. He stated that CHAMP Ltd is continuing their upgrade programme at The Assembly Rooms (new lighting in The Assembly Hall recently undertaken and also renewal of the stage is forthcoming). The current stage is on loan from a local group in the interim period.

It was concluded that until further information and investigation has been sought, the town council will have to look into this matter further. Mr Turner stated that significant costs were likely as some of the work would be expensive and slow to undertake. The Chairman, Councillor Mrs W Witter, along with several other members present asked Mr Turner if he could seek the appropriate information and quotations to present to the town council, for their perusal regarding the issues he had raised this evening. Mr & Mrs Turner then left the meeting.

243. **Apologies for Absence**

Councillor K Vickers (on holiday)

244. **Declarations of Interest**

CHAMP Ltd – Councillor J P Vickers (Personal Interest)

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245. **Minutes of a Meeting held on the 29 October 2018**

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 7 November 2018.

246. **Matters Arising**

(a) **The Town Council's Banking Arrangements** (*Min Ref: 163(b)/67– F&GP 29/10/18*)

The Town Clerk explained why transfer of the town council's bank accounts was taking so long to complete. This was mainly attributable to the local branch they are transferring to have no one to deal with local government requirements. Communication is made by a customer account manager from an adjacent town and by telephone via the headquarters of the bank. The original signed bank mandate sent to the bank appears to have been lost in the post with a second one sent thereafter and a councillor had been incorrectly named on the documentation by the bank as the contact point, when this should have been the clerks of the council. This resulted in the bank refusing to deal with the town council office staff. However, it was anticipated that the bank accounts would be up and running later this month, following a meeting with a bank representative and both the Town Clerk's last week.

Resolved that this be noted.

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

(a) **Barton-upon-Humber Civic Society** (*Min Ref: 178(3)(i)/76 – BTC 7/11/18*)

Members present perused and noted the contents of the correspondence. It was noted that one cctv bracket was unused, but the remaining were in use. Some cosmetic issues could perhaps be undertaken. Discussion took place regarding The Assembly Rooms as a well-used community venue. It was agreed and

Resolved that the Clerk write to the Barton-upon-Humber Civic Society thanking them for their comments, in which the town council have perused and noted the contents for future reference.

(b) **Maintenance Issues at The Assembly Rooms**

Following the comments made from Mr N Turner earlier in the meeting, it was agreed that until further information, investigation and costs were sought, it was difficult to progress some of these issues. However, reclamation of the VAT and the audit advice previously given was discussed. Work to the building agreed to be undertaken by the town council in liaison with the building's leaseholder CHAMP Ltd would require the contractor to invoice the town council direct. Quotations to be sought for the replacement of the town council noticeboards and mayoral board for further discussion.

Resolved

- (i) further information, quotations and costs to be submitted to the town council from CHAMP Ltd, in order for the town council to peruse and discuss these matters further;
- (ii) quotations to be sought for the replacement of the town council noticeboards at The Assembly Rooms for discussion by the town council;
- (iii) quotations to be sought for a new mayoral board to be hung in The Assembly Hall.

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(c) **Review of the Duties & Role of The Town Mayor & Deputy Town Mayor** (*Min Ref: 256(b)/103 - F&GP 15/01/18*)

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;
- (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

(i) 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;

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- (ii) 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;
- (iii) 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;
- (iv) 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.
- (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.

(d) Review of the Town Grant Scheme 2019/2020 – 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 2019/2020 Application Form' and 'Guidelines for Applicants' to submit with the relevant documentation to the town council.

(e) 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. Both clerks 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 town council's finances and procedures were undertaken well and are happy with what they do. The current internal auditor be retained. His next audit date will be 20 February 2019.

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Resolved this be noted.

(f) 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 2019 version be adopted.

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

The Clerk commented that the quarterly summary for October to December 2018 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 two meetings of this committee. Members present perused copies of the quarterly budget, noting the income and expenditure.

(h) 2019/2020 Budget/Precept

Members were presented with copies of the town council draft 2019/2020 budget, precept (with possible grant provision of £8,163), earmarked reserves and a comparison table of previous year's precept/grant/council tax for perusal and comment. The Chairman allowed time for members to peruse the contents of the documents. Incorporated into the draft budget are the budget proposals from the Environment Committee meeting held on 12 November 2018 and the Community Committee meeting held on 10 December 2018. Both of these were agreed at the town council meetings held 5 December 2018 and 2 January 2019 respectively.

Discussion took place regarding the budget proposals. It was noted that the grant element of the precept from North Lincolnshire Council for 2019/2020 is by adherence to certain conditions which were explained. These conditions had been increased from previous years. It was felt the town council may find it difficult to meet all of the conditions at the present time, but the grant is to be applied for with explanations given. The town council is mindful of the grant being continually phased out, and if the grant is not met for the 2019/2020 financial year, the Clerk explained the financial position affecting the town council thereafter. The draft budget submitted includes both the precept and the grant. Therefore, if the grant is not met, the sum of £8,163 will be taken from the town council's reserves. Councillor Mrs J Oxley enquired about the availability of grants/loans.

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 2019 if the forecasted predications of spending levels materialised. An increase in the council tax base was noted. The cost of living increase for the two staff members in 2019 had been incorporated into the budget however the overall budget for this remained the same for 2019/2020 as in 2018/2019. Planned expenditure for The Assembly Rooms was also addressed. The result of the proposals is that the town council request a precept of £159,730 from North Lincolnshire Council and, if allowed, a grant of £8,163, making the total £167,893.

Due to an increase in the council tax base of 3603.2, this will result in a Band D property council tax charge of £44.33. This figure has been maintained by the town council for five consecutive years (Appendix I and II appended to these minutes refers to the budget detail). The chairman and members felt the proposals were in order and proposed that the draft budget proposals be accepted. 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 21 January 2019.

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It was agreed and

Resolved

- (i) the sum of £4,000 be placed in earmarked reserves as provisional funding for 'Parish Elections';
- (ii) the sum of £30,000 be placed in earmarked reserves as provisional funding for 'Repairs/Decoration' to The Assembly Rooms;
- (iii) the total earmarked reserves of the town council as at 1 April 2019 will be £54,100;
- (iv) the 2019/2020 budget proposals to be checked, presented and approved at the next extra-ordinary meeting of the town council to be held on Monday 21 January 2019, to allow the Clerk to levy the precept funding from North Lincolnshire Council in the sum of £159,730. If the grant monies are considered for payment by them in the sum of £8,139, the total precept and grant would be £167,893. If not, the £8,139 to be funded through budget savings in the current financial year combined with the council's reserves.

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor Mrs W Witter, closed the meeting at 8.00 p.m.

..... Chairman 21 January 2019