

YEOVIL TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES of a meeting of the **POLICY, RESOURCES AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Council Chamber, Town House, 19 Union Street, Yeovil on **Tuesday 29 January 2013**

(7.00pm – 8.05pm)

Present:

Tony Lock - Chairman	David Dollard
Martin Bailey	Tony Fife
Philip Chandler	Andrew Kendall
Clive Davis	Manny Roper
Bridget Dollard	Alan Smith

Also Present:

Alan Tawse – Town Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jean Newman of Yeovil Shopmobility spoke in support of their grant application for the purchase of replacement scooters. She indicated that a number of the existing scooters were almost 7 years old and, given their relatively high usage and in the interests of safety and reliability, they needed to be replaced.

She added that the organisation was making efforts to secure additional funding from other sources to help meet the cost of replacing the scooters that were approaching the end of their expected lifetime, and she drew attention to the contribution that scooter users made to the economic vitality of the Town.

8/151 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2012, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8/152 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Kris Castle, Jon Gleeson, John Hann and Darren Shutler.

8/153 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Clive Davis declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Agenda item 5 (Applications for Grant Aid – Yeovil Shopmobility) by virtue of his position as a trustee of the organisation. Tony Fife declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the same item in view of his role as an adviser to the organisation.

8/154 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items of correspondence.

8/155 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AID

(a) Yeovil Shopmobility

(Clive Davis and Tony Fife having both declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, left the room during its consideration and took no part in the discussion or voting thereon)

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the valuable service that the Shopmobility initiative provided in the Town, and the annual financial contribution that the Town Council currently made towards their operational costs.

Whilst Members were supportive of the application, it was felt that further information about planned expenditure over the next three years needed to be provided to support the business plan. It was also felt that it would be helpful for the application to be considered after the most recent annual accounts were completed.

RESOLVED that consideration of the application be deferred until the May 2013 meeting of the Committee and, in the meantime, the organisation be requested to provide a breakdown of planned expenditure over the next three years and a copy of the final accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013.

(b) Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre (Wessex) Ltd

RESOLVED that a grant of £150 be awarded towards the running costs of the organisation. (S.1 of the Localism Act 2011 – General Power of Competence).

8/156 CAPITAL FUND

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 6 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the successful partnership approach that had been taken with the District Council in funding and delivering play area improvements across the Town. Attention was also drawn to the benefit of undertaking required works at an early date to ensure that the quality of these facilities was maintained.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the position concerning the Capital Fund be noted; and
- (2) that the current position regarding the rolling programme of play area improvements be noted, and a report be awaited from the District Council on the suggested phasing of proposed future upgrades.

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 7 refers).

During the ensuing discussion, Members expressed their concern at the impact on all town and parish councils of the changes that the Government had introduced in relation to the future payment of Council Tax benefits.

It was noted that as a direct result of these changes, the tax base of the Town Council had been reduced by 14.6% and that the net effect of the new arrangements was that the Council's overall net income had been reduced by £12,480. This shortfall in funding, which was beyond the control of the Town Council, had necessitated a review of the funding of the Town Council's planned increase of 1.5% in the 2012/13 budget.

Whilst it was further noted that this impact could be lessened by a contribution from the General Reserve, it was pointed out that this would not provide a sustainable solution as a similar contribution would need to be made each year to bridge the gap in income that had arisen as a direct result of the Government's changes.

Members expressed their support for the need to take a sustainable approach to the setting of the precept taking into consideration the impact that the new funding arrangements would have on the Town Council's finances, which had put considerable pressure on the ability of town and parish councils to maintain local services without increasing their share of the Council Tax.

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED

- (1) that the developments outlined in the above report be noted;
- (2) that the 2013/14 draft revenue estimates for the various Service Committees of the Council summarised below be supported and recommended to the forthcoming Town Council meeting for adoption, it being noted that this would result in a 3.4% increase (equivalent to £3.08 per year or less than 6p per week per Band D property) in the Town Council's share of the household precept of which 1.9% was as a direct result of the Government's changes to the future payment of Council Tax benefits:

Committee	Revenue Estimate
Planning and Licensing	£5,027
Grounds and General Maintenance	£242,952
Promotions and Activities	£77,553
Buildings and Civic Matters	£105,579
Policy, Resources and Finance	£392,552
Total	£823,663

- (3) that the Town Council be recommended to endorse this approach and to fix the Town's precept for 2013/14 at its forthcoming meeting.

8/158 **YEOVIL COUNTRY PARK**

The Committee considered the report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 8 refers).

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that the request set out in the above report be supported.

8/159 **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2012**

The Committee considered the report of the Finance Administrator (Agenda item 9 refers).

RESOLVED

that the Financial Statements and payments therein for the above months be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no further comments from members of the public.

8/160 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting in accordance with Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

8/161 **STAFFING ISSUES**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 10 refers).

RESOLVED

that approval be given to the recommendations set out in the report.

Chairman