

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 28 January 2014**

(7.00pm – 8.15pm)

Present:

Tony Lock - Chairman	John Hann
Martin Bailey	Mike Lock
Peter Brock	Manny Roper
Bridget Dollard	Darren Shutler
David Dollard	Alan Smith

Also Present:

Peter Gubbins	Yeovil Central Ward
Alan Tawse	Town Clerk

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from members of the public.

8/233 MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 26 November 2013, copies of which had been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8/234 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Tony Fife, Jon Gleeson, Andrew Kendall and Wes Read.

8/235 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

David Dollard declared a personal interest in Agenda item 5 (Applications for Grant Aid – Good Fellowship Club) by virtue of his position as a member of the organisation whose premises were used by the Club for their meetings and activities.

8/236 CORRESPONDENCE

There were no items of correspondence.

8/237 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT AID

(a) Life Education Wessex

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the nature of the services for which grant assistance was being sought, which it was felt would be more appropriately met from potential funding available

from the Police and Crime Commissioners for the areas of benefit, and the Safer Somerset Partnership.

RESOLVED that no action be taken this application, and the applicants be advised of the above-mentioned potential funding sources.

(b) Good Fellowship Club

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the need for the Club to consider ways of raising additional income from its members to help address future potential funding shortfalls.

RESOLVED that a grant of £250 be awarded towards the transport costs of the organisation, and the applicants be advised of the Committee's comments regarding future funding. (S.1 of the Localism Act 2011 – General Power of Competence).

8/238 **CAPITAL FUND**

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

During the ensuing discussion, reference was made to the ongoing discussions that were taking place with the Town Council's Property Agent and Solicitor with a view to providing details of the options available for taking the Goldcroft project forward. These were expected to be concluded in the near future following which a report would be submitted to the Town Council to seek Members' views on the preferred option.

Reference was also made to the successful partnership approach that had been taken with the District Council in funding and delivering play area improvements across the Town.

RESOLVED

- (1) that the position concerning the Capital Fund and the General Reserve be noted;
- (2) that the current position regarding the rolling programme of play area improvements be noted; and
- (3) that confirmation of the District Council's funding towards future schemes included in the programme be awaited.

8/239 **ESTIMATES 2014/15**

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 ongoing 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 Town Council's share of the council tax precept had effectively been reduced by £138,338. Whilst this year's allocated grant of £119,415 had helped to partly offset this decrease, the effect of the new arrangements was that the Council's overall net income had been reduced by £18,923.

The Town Clerk confirmed that any necessary reduction in the proposed allocation of £17,700 towards the costs of delivering youth services in the Town, which arose as a direct result of the council tax referendum rules set by the Government, could be offset by a matching contribution toward these services from the New Initiatives budget.

Members expressed their support for the proposals set out in the report and 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 2014/15 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 with the addition of the Town Council's contribution of £99,624 towards the operation of Yeovil Cemetery, this would result in a 1.98% increase (equivalent to £1.86 per year or less than 4p per week per Band D property) in the Town Council's share of the household precept:

Committee	Revenue Estimate
Planning and Licensing	£5,471
Grounds and General Maintenance	£243,391
Promotions and Activities	£76,955
Buildings and Civic Matters	£112,434
Policy, Resources and Finance	£397,422
Total	£835,673

- (3) that it be noted that the Government had yet to confirm whether it would be applying the council tax referendum rules to town and parish councils and that in the event that this turned out to be the case and the proposed increase would result in the Town Council having to hold a referendum (previously estimated at a non-recoverable cost of £10,000) the proposed provision for youth services be reduced by an appropriate amount to secure compliance with the set rules; and
- (4) that the Town Council be recommended to endorse these proposals and to fix the Town's precept for 2014/15 at its forthcoming meeting.

8/240 **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS – OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2013**

The Committee considered the report of the Finance Administrator (Agenda item 8 refers).

RESOLVED

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no comments from members of the public.

8/241 **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.

8/242 **STAFFING ISSUES**

The Committee considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk (Agenda item 9 refers).

RESOLVED

- (1) that the matter be noted; and
- (2) that Bridget Dollard and Wes Read be appointed to serve on the Appointments Panel, along with the Town Clerk.

Chairman