



**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on
Thursday 15th June 2017
at the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillors S Allcroft (Chair), G Castle, W Grisdale, G Mavin, M Swinbank and A Symmonds.

In attendance: W Batey, Chief Officer and Town Clerk; J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk; T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer.

FP 17/01 Apologies
Councillors Aynsley, Broom, Humphries and Patience.

FP 17/02 Declarations of Interest
The Town Clerk declared a pecuniary interest in Item 4. Grant Applications.

FP 17/03 Budget update 2017/18
The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at 14th June 2017. He explained that the figures in red in the Notes column were the carried forward from 2016/17 and added to the 2017/18 budget. This had increased the 2017/18 budget to £200,365.

He highlighted the following lines of expenditure:

INSURANCE - £6,219.32 paid for annual insurance. Some money will be recovered from Mechanics Institute.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - £1,300 carried forward from 2016/17. Expenditure to date £820 for the design, printing and distribution of a Referendum leaflet.

TOWN TEAM - £500 carried forward from 2016/17.

AUDIT FEE - £450 paid for internal audit.

SUBSCRIPTIONS – NALC annual subscription of £1,153.76 paid.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION - £6,500 carried forward from 2016/17. £397.36 paid to date for rent, phone and broadband charges.

N PLAN COMMUNITY ACTION PROPOSALS/OTHER COUNCIL PRIORITIES - £10,000 carried forward from 2016/17.

CCTV - £22,000 carried forward from 2016/17. £10.50 expenditure to date for postage.

Councillor Mavin asked about the £500 budget for Town Team and if anyone else paid towards the Town Team. The Town Clerk advised that the £500 was not given to the Town Team but used to support them.

Councillor Castle asked how much the office rent was. The Town Clerk advised that it was £150 per month plus water rates.

Councillor Swinbank asked about new office accommodation. The Town Clerk advised that £6,500 had been allocated to enhance the office accommodation in 2016/17 and was still available.

He explained that officers had looked at some office accommodation in the town but that it had not been suitable. He had also spoken to NCC and space in The Playhouse and about the space which had become vacant at Fenkle Street but this was now being used for hot desking.

RESOLVED: To accept the budget update.

FP 17/04**Consideration of new Grant Applications**

The Town Clerk advised that a grant application had been received from Lindisfarne Middle School. He also reported that a letter had been received from Northumberland Theatre Company.

The Town Clerk let the meeting at this point.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk explained that Northumberland Theatre Company (NTC) had originally requested a grant in December 2016 and were advised that their application had been put on hold until clarification was received on their location and productions in 2017. The letter from NTC had clarified that they were still based at The Playhouse and that their productions for 2017 were Alnwick based including one at Swansfield Park Primary School.

Councillors agreed a grant of £500.

The Town Clerk re-joined the meeting.

He explained that the grant application from Lindisfarne Middle School was for the European Music Project which Lindisfarne were part of. Lindisfarne would be hosting pupils from the other European schools who were also part of the project.

RESOLVED: To award £500 to Northumberland Theatre Company and allocate £500 towards a Civic Reception for Lindisfarne Middle School's music project in October 2017 with any remaining money used towards transport costs.

Councillor Grisdale suggested that the money for the Lindisfarne School music project grant be taken from the Town Twinning budget.

FP 17/05**Internal Auditor's Report**

The Town Clerk reported that the Internal Audit had been undertaken and the Internal Auditor had found everything to be satisfactory. He had made two recommendations:

INVOICES All invoices, including Direct Debits and Pro Forma invoices, should have the Town Council payment stamp on them duly completed.

QUOTES As part of his audit the Internal Auditor checked three orders. He found that in first two samples everything was in order but that in the third sample, how the quote was accepted was unclear and was not minuted, which was a requirement as it was over £5,000.

Councillor Mavin felt that the Standing Orders needed to be reviewed in order to make less work for officers. The Town Clerk advised that the quote process had been relaxed in April as part of a review which had taken place.

Councillor Symmonds felt that the process was still a bit onerous for officers. The Town Clerk advised that it would only apply for tenders over £15k.

Councillor Swinbank agreed that the process should not be onerous for officers.

RESOLVED: To accept the Internal Auditors report.

FP 17/06**Review of Insurance**

The Town Clerk explained the Town Council's insurance was in year 2 of a 3 year policy. In 2016/17 the insurance had been £5,300 whilst in 2017/18 it would be £6,200 which included a full 12 months insurance on the council van.

He explained that some items had been added during the year which had been reflected in the 2017/18 figure as well as the fingerposts in April 2017. He

advised that the War Memorial and the Hotspur Statue were insured Robertson's Pant wasn't. As the railings had been damaged by a vehicle recently he asked councillors if they wanted to add it to the insurance policy.

Councillor Mavin asked if the Town Council had public liability insurance. The Town Clerk advised that they did to the value of £12million.

Councillor Swinbank thought that the people in the town would expect the Town Council to rebuild it if it were demolished.

Councillor Castle felt that some raised cobbles could be installed in front of it.

Councillor Symmonds asked if the area would be cover the new CCTV system. The Project & Funding Officer advised that it would be.

The Town Clerk advised he would get insurance quotes for Robertson's Pant.

RESOLVED: To get quotes for insurance to cover Robertson's Pant.

FP 17/07

Update on a) CCTV and b) new bus shelters

CCTV - The Project & Funding Officer reported that NCC had advised that the decision notices for the planning applications for the CCTV system would be due out in the next few days. He reported that the contractor would start installing the system in the police station the following week.

New bus shelters - The Project & Funding Officer reported that the new bus shelters for Greensfield and St Paul's had been ordered at a cost of £9,280. These should be ready by the end of June and installed by NCC in July.

He explained that the licence for the shelter at the Greensfield site was for 10 years.

Councillor Swinbank asked if there was any update on the proposed bus shelter at The Limes. The Town Clerk advised that there was no update.

Councillor Swinbank asked how the new CCTV system would be reported to the public. The Town Clerk advised that notices would be put up near camera sites. Councillor Swinbank advised that Listed Building Consent may be needed.

Councillor Allcroft felt that a press release should mention that the CCTV covers the whole town.

RESOLVED: To accept the updates.

FP 17/08

Town Twinning

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that there was a budget figure of £2,000 to cover 2 people on approved duties visiting Norway plus any other Town Twinning activities in the year.

She advised that the Town Council had received an email from Time Kommune saying that their Mayor (Reinert) was looking forward to hosting a visit and suggesting this was during the 2017 Potato Festival from 6th to 8th of October. They have confirmed that there are happy to arrange other activities including visits people would like to make.

COSTS - cheapest flights are currently £135 per person return, hotel costs are between £86 and £111 per night and taxis to and from the airport would be around kr 600 (£55) each way.

Total costs would be around £1,200 for two people Councillor Symmonds felt that the visit by the civic party from Time Kommune in 2016 had been very useful and that a return visit should be made. He felt that the Town Council

should pay for two people on official duties and that anyone else wishing to go would fund themselves.

Councillors Castle, Gridale and Swinbank advised that supported the visit but were unable to go.

Councillor Mavin agreed that a return Civic visit should be made and that the Mayor and Town Clerk should attend.

Councillor Symmonds advised that he would be unable to make the visit and offered it to the Deputy Mayor. He felt that the visit should be from Thursday October 5th to Sunday 8th.

Councillor Castle felt that councillors should advise the Town Clerk if they were interested then the Mayor would select representatives to make the visit.

RESOLVED: To organise and fund a civic visit for two people to Time Kommune in October 2017.

FP17/09

Any Other Urgent Business

Councillor Swinbank asked if councillor training would be needed on the newly approved Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Clerk advised that this could be done at the next Full Council meeting July. He also advised that the Town Council needed to decide if the Steering Group was still needed.

Councillor Symmonds asked that the civic flagpole should be progressed as a matter of some urgency, as it would be important that the town had this in place should it needed to be flown at half-mast. Councillor Castle suggested speaking to Mark Ketley, Head of Planning at NCC, about the matter.

Councillor Castle also advised that he now had his budget which included money for the speed camera on Clayport Bank.

Meeting closed at 8.25pm