

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018  
at the St James's Church Centre, Pottergate, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors S Allcroft (Chair), P Broom, B Grisdale, G Mavin, S Patience, M Swinbank, A Symmonds and G Watson.

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

**FP 18/26 Apologies**  
Councillors Castle, Humphries and Wearn.

**FP 18/27 Declarations of Interest**  
The following declarations of interest were noted for the grant applications:  
Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard - Councillors Patience and Swinbank.  
Mechanics Institute - Councillor Symmonds and the Town Clerk.

**FP 18/28 Minutes of the last meeting - matters arising not on the agenda**  
FP 18/14 OFFICE ACCOMMODATION – The Town Clerk reported that the photocopier had been purchased rather than leased.

**FP 18/29 Budget update 2018/19**  
The Town Clerk went through the circulated budget as at 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018. He highlighted the following lines of expenditure:  
OFFICE ACCOMMODATION – main items of expenditure are for office equipment.  
PROJECT & FUNDING OFFICER – expenditure made up of salary costs and Business Forum expenditure.  
N PLAN / COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN / OTHER COUNCIL PRIORITIES – £5k budget is allocated to new signage at the bus station.  
INCOME – includes a management charge of £1,100 from the Mechanics Institute.

**FP 18/30 Grant Applications**

The list of grant applications had been issued to councillors and an updated sheet showing the recommended grant amounts, which had been recommended following a meeting of the Chair, Town Clerk and the Assistant to the Town Clerk.

- a) The Alnwick Playhouse – the Town Clerk reminding them that the Town Council had agreed a four-year financial plan to help the Playhouse and that this was the first year. He reported that he had reviewed their financial situation which at present seemed healthy. He advised that this was due to the money received from the sale of the Playhouse to NCC and the fund raising which had been taking place which had a target of £800k. He recommended that the £5k for 2018/19 be paid to the Playhouse.

**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that Alnwick Playhouse be paid £5,000.**

- b) Other Applications - The Town Clerk advised that £5k had just been allocated to The Playhouse so there was £20k left in the grants budget. The following grants were awarded:

The Assistant to the Town Clerk issued copies of the list of grant applications. She explained that, excluding The Playhouse, 23 applications had been received including 8 from new organisations applying for the first time. She

took councillors through the other grant applications which had been listed in groups in their relevant type.

Councillors reviewed each application and awarded the following grants:

Bailiffgate Museum £2,000  
Northumbrian CAB – Alnwick Office £4,000  
HospiceCare North Northumberland £2,000  
Alnwick & District Sports Council £300  
Alnwick Dolphins £600  
Alnwick Cricket Club £600  
Alnwick Tennis Club (New application) £600  
Alnwick Juniors Football Club £600  
Lionheart Radio & Media CIC £850  
Alnwick Music Society £400  
Alnwick Choral Society (New application) £400  
Age UK Northumberland (New application) £1,000  
VoiCes Northumberland Ltd (New application) £1,000  
North East Equality & Diversity Ltd £1,000  
Community@NE66 £1,000  
Alnwick Stroke Club £190

Councillor Patience and Swinbank left the meeting.

Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard £600

Councillor Patience and Swinbank re-joined the meeting.

1801 (Alnwick) Squadron Air Training Corps £614

Councillor Symmonds and the Town Clerk left the meeting.

Mechanics Institute (New application) £500

Councillor Symmonds and the Town Clerk re-joined the meeting.

Councillors also agreed to contribute £1,000 towards the cost of a new Town Crier.

Councillors decided that the grant applications for Loving Alnwick and Alnwick MACPI could not be supported at this stage and officers were asked to have further discussions with applications. An application from Alnwick Lions was not supported with a grant at this stage, but officers were asked to look at the possibility of Section 106 funding for the scheme.

Councillor Symmonds felt that grant recipients should advertise that they are funded by Alnwick Town Council on a sign displayed on their premises.

Councillor Watson thought that this could be done on their literature.

**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council that the grants listed above are paid.**

**FP 18/31**

### **Draft Budget Proposals for 2019/20**

The Town Clerk took councillors through the proposed Finance & Policy budget for 2019/20 highlighting the followed headings:

ADMINISTRATION (COST OF CLERK AND ASSISTANT) – additional salary budgeted to cover the cost of one month's overlap with new Town Clerk in June 2019.

ROOM BOOKINGS - £460 additional budget to cover the cost of room hire at the Mechanics Institute.

GRANTS – an additional £5k budget is suggested to cover the £10k due as the year 2 payment to the Playhouse.

MAYOR'S CHAIN - £500 is budgeted to cover the cost of updating the chain with the names of recent mayors.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION – budget increased by £8k to cover the full year's costs of the new council office.

N PLAN / COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN / OTHER COUNCIL PRIORITIES – proposed budget of £20k but will have a potential carry over of £14,750 from 2018/19 making the total line budget £34,750. Councillors were advised that if they agreed to employ a part time operative (2.5 days per week) there would be a budget need of £12k (incl. on costs and training) which could come out of this budget line. This would leave £24,750 for any other priorities which may include a contribution towards a Town Centre Manager, which is being investigated under the Town Centre Action Plan. CCTV - £3k is budgeted to add to the reserve to cover the future costs of a replacement CCTV system. There is an existing budget of £5k in 2018/19 for additional CCTV cameras.

**RESOLVED: To agree the Finance & Policy budget of £177,130 for 2019/20 and recommend to the Full Council for approval.**

**FP18/32**

**Initial consideration of draft 2018/19 Precept**

The Town Clerk issued the precept sheet with recommended budgets from Cemetery (£19,300) and Recreation & Amenities (£110,155) along with the precept comparisons and Band D analysis. He took councillors through the information showing a comparison between the Alnwick Town Council precept and other Town & Parish Councils. This showed that based upon the 2018/19 figures, Alnwick's precept of £105.29 for a Band D dwelling was just below the average figure of £106.34.

Based on the total Town Council draft budget for 2019/20 of £306,585 and using the Tax Base figure of 2774.89, this would give a Band D equivalent Town Council element of £110.48. This equates to a 6.7% a year increase in the total precept of a 4.9% increase for a Band D property.

The Town Clerk suggested that reserves were not used to fund the budget for 2019/20 as the reserves policy requires a minimum of 4 months and a maximum of 8 months expenditure to be kept in reserves which based on the 2018/19 figures would need a reserve of between £112k and £224k. Reserves, after allocated expenditure are £154,760.

Councillor Symmonds proposed not using the reserves to offset the precept.

**RESOLVED: To recommend to the Full Council that the precept for 2019/20 should be £306,585 and that Council reserves not be used to reduce the precept.**

**FP18/33**

**Query About Northumberland Gazette Archives**

The Town Clerk reported that he had spoken to Paul Larkin, Editor of the Northumberland Gazette, who had confirmed that the Gazette were not moving and that it was the ground floor of their building which was to let. He confirmed that the archives were likely to remain in the building but at present they had stopped people viewing them as the archive newspapers were becoming fragile.

**FP18/34**

**Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

Meeting closed at 8.49pm