



**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee meeting held on  
Thursday 17th December 2015  
at the Mechanics Institute, Percy Street, Alnwick at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Councillors P Broom, G Castle, D Farrar, B Grisdale, S Patience and A Symmonds (Chairman).

**In attendance:** J Pibworth, Assistant to the Town Clerk, T Kirton, Project & Funding Officer and Councillor P Holt.

**FP 15/22 Apologies**

Councillors S Allcroft, P Allcroft, G Mavin, S Mavin and R Roberts.

**FP 15/23 Declarations of Interest**

The following declaration of interests were declared in relation to the grant applications (Item 4.) listed below because the Councillors/officers held positions of responsibility in the organisations:

- Alnwick Playhouse Trust – Councillors G Castle and D Farrar
- Alnwick Juniors FC – Councillor Castle
- Bailiffgate Museum – Councillor W Grisdale
- Friends of Bullfield Community Orchard – Councillors D Farrar, S Patience
- North Northumberland HospiceCare – Councillor W Grisdale

**FP 15/24 Budget update 2015/16**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk circulated the committee budget as at 15th December 2015. This showed expenditure at £48,409 and included the payments approved at the November's Full Council meeting. This was reviewed line by line with the following highlighted by the Assistant to the Town Clerk:

ADMINISTRATION - currently at £28,584 and should end the year on budget.

SEASONAL OPERATIVE – budget line moved to Recreation & Amenities budget.

INSURANCE - Below budget as actual insurance was lower than predicted figure.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - £4,397 of the £6,800 budget spent. End of year prediction is £8,659 of which £2,650 is offset by a grant.

PROJECT & FUNDING OFFICER – Below budget as not recruited until November 2015.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN / COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN DELIVERY – No expenditure to date as most of the budget was for the housing survey.

GENERAL – Above budget due to annual web hosting fee.

MISC/CONTINGENCY – Will be above budgeted figure due to funding for Gallery Youth.

The Project & Funding Officer gave an overview of the work he had undertaken since starting in post. He explained about the housing survey which NCC might help with either with money or staffing. This could help reduce the overall cost of the housing survey or increase the sample size.

Councillor Farrar asked if the survey would be a paper one? The Project & Funding Officer advised that samples had been sent through from NCC to look through.

Councillor Farrar felt that a low % return could have a knock on effect on developments having 15% affordable housing.

Councillor Holt asked what questions would be covered in the housing survey. The Project & Funding Officer advised that the survey would ascertain what sort of the housing was needed to be developed for the community.

**RESOLVED: To receive the budget update.**

**FP 15/25 Consideration of the 2015/16 Grant applications**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk advised that 20 grant applications had been received. A summary document had been circulated to councillors, each one having been reviewed against the grant criteria by the Chairman, the Town Clerk and the Assistant to the Town Clerk, which had included initial recommendations for grant amounts. Each application was considered and the following 17 grant awards totally £10,900 were agreed:

| <b>Organisation</b>                       | <b>Agreed support form Town Council</b>                                                                                                  | <b>Grant Award</b> |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Alnwick and District Playhouse Trust      | Assistance with core running costs                                                                                                       | £1,400             |
| Bailiffgate Museum                        | Assistance to help with core costs and to expand the exhibition and events programme                                                     | £1,400             |
| Hospice Care North Northumberland         | Assistance with running costs                                                                                                            | £1,400             |
| Northumberland CAB (Alnwick Office)       | Assistance with the costs of delivering services and training volunteers                                                                 | £1,400             |
| Alnwick & District Sports Council         | Assistance with the annual sports awards held at the Playhouse                                                                           | £ 350              |
| Alnwick Town Juniors FC                   | Assistance with the cost of a video camera, tripod and television to help with training                                                  | £400               |
| Alnwick Amateur Boxing Club               | Assistance towards a new minibus                                                                                                         | £400               |
| Alnwick Cricket Club                      | Assistance with the cost of new mower parts                                                                                              | £400               |
| Alnwick Rugby Club                        | Assistance towards improvement towards their car park                                                                                    | £400               |
| Northumberland Touring Theatre Company    | Assistance to support core activities                                                                                                    | £500               |
| Lionheart Radio & Media CIC               | Assistance with cost of licences and insurance                                                                                           | £600               |
| Community@NE66                            | Assistance with cost of a trip to Sunderland Glass Museum for young people                                                               | £350               |
| League of Friends of the Alnwick Hospital | Assistance towards the costs of hand held devices for a Digital Remembrance project                                                      | £400               |
| Lionhearts Service User Group - Alnwick   | Assistance towards the cost of sporting activities, within Alnwick, for individuals with mental health problems of learning difficulties | £400               |

|                                            |                                                                                 |      |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| RE-NU-IT                                   | Assistance with the insurance, repair and running costs of van                  | £500 |
| Friends of the Bullfield Community Orchard | Assistance with insurance and core costs for family fun day                     | £400 |
| Northumberland Credit Union                | Assistance to promote the Credit Union in Alnwick and help with operating costs | £200 |

The committee also considered requests from:

- Great North Air Ambulance - although the Town Council value their work they do not qualify for a grant as the criteria was not met.
- North of England Brass Band Championships - do not qualify for a Town Council grant as the criteria was not met.
- Friends of Bryne – did not meet the criteria for a grant. However, councillors suggested working with the Friends on the twinning visit and that a figure should be added to the Town Twinning budget for 2016/17 towards the visit by Town Kommune in August 2016.

**RESOLVED: To recommend to Full Council for approval.**

**FP 15/26 Consideration of the Draft 2016/17 Budget**

The proposed 2016/17 budget, in the budget summary which was circulated, was reviewed and discussed. The following changes were recommended:

GRANTS - be increased by £1,000 to £12,000.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN/COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN DELIVERY – Councillor Farrar advised that there could be additional budget needs after the Away Day on January 9<sup>th</sup> 2016.

**RESOLVED: i) To recommend that the Finance & Policy Committee draft budget for 2016/17 be initially set at £119,748; ii) To amend the budget figure in light of any additional budget requirements which arise from the Away Day.**

**FP 15/27 Consideration of the Draft 2016/17 Precept**

The Assistant to the Town Clerk took councillors through the information circulated by the Town Clerk showing a comparison between the Alnwick Town Council precept and other Town Councils. This showed that based upon the 2015/16 figures, Alnwick had a below average town council precept of £84.76 for a Band D dwelling.

Based on the total draft budget for the Council for 2016/17 of £218,253 (Finance & Policy £119,748, Recreation & Amenities £70,055 and Cemetery £28,450) and using the Tax Base figure of 2608.98, this would give a Band D equivalent Town Council element of £83.65 per annum.

The Assistant to the Town Clerk reminded councillors that the reserves policy states that these should be a minimum of 4 months and a maximum of 8 months gross expenditure. Councillors were of the opinion that this year, reserves should not be utilised to reduce the precept.

**RESOLVED: To recommend to the Full Council that the precept for 2016/17 should be £218,253 plus any additional budget requirements which arise from the Away Day, and the reserves should not be used to reduce the precept.**

**FP 15/28 Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm