

BLANDFORD FORUM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Staffing Committee
held on Monday 5 December 2011

Cllr H White – Vice Chairman
Cllr S Loch (Vice Chairman of Council)
Cllr L Lindsay
Cllr A Pemberton

PRESENT

Cllr S Hitchings – Chairman
Cllr E Butler (Chairman of Council)
Cllr H Galpin
Cllr B Brannigan
Cllr J Stayt

SITTING IN

Cllr R Carter

IN ATTENDANCE

Town Clerk
Responsible Financial Officer

Committee Clerk
Representatives from Blandford School

35. PUBLIC SESSION

- 35.1 Blandford School – artificial playing surface – Sally Wilson, Head Teacher, and Liz Bishop, Business Manager, from The Blandford School spoke regarding their request for assistance in funding an artificial sports pitch. It is proposed that it will be sited on the old middle school. The Football Foundation has been approached and has confirmed that they will support 30-40% of the project cost subject to the school being able to prove they have strong financial support from the District, County and Town Councils. Local parish councils have offered moral support only with one offering a very small financial contribution. NDDC have been approached but have yet to respond. Although the school is asking for £25,000 from the Town Council, any contribution would be acceptable.

36. APOLOGIES

None

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were reminded of their obligations to declare orally their interests as per the Parish Councils Model Code of Conduct Order 2007 Number 1159.

38. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 OCTOBER 2011

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Pemberton and AGREED (8 in favour, 1 non-vote) that the Minutes are APPROVED and SIGNED.

39. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- 39.1 Bryanston Riding for the Disabled Group – A thank you letter has been received following the grant of £400.
- 39.2 Staff Training – The Grounds & Property Manager will be attending a Supervisors Training course on 6th December 2011 and the new grounds man will be attending a spraying course at Kingston Maurward.

39. **TOWN CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE (CONT)**

The Town Clerk and Grounds & Property Manager have both attended an Appraisal course in November and it is hoped that appraisals will commence in February 2012.

- 39.3 **Gas & Electricity Contracts** – DCC has moved their contract to Laser via Kent County Council and were unable to take the Town Council with them. The Town Council has entered into a 12 month contract with SSE which will run to October 2012, after which a 4 year contract will be entered into with Laser. The benefit of Laser is that the Town Council will get very favourable rates, however, there is a fee of £65 per gas site and £38 per electric site.
- 39.4 **Park Road Recreation Ground** – The Groundsman has offered to go in for one day between Christmas and the New Year to mark out the Park Road pitch for the football club. This will ensure it looks its best for the New Year matches and maintains the high standard expected from the site.
- 39.5 **CRB checks** – DCC carries out checks on behalf of the Town Council. The last CRB check for a member of the grounds staff was returned. It transpires that such checks are no longer necessary for grounds staff as they are not regularly working with the same children all the time and any contact with them would be incidental. However, it is necessary to conduct a Risk Assessment of the contact with children, set clear guidelines for employees of the boundaries of contact engagement with children and to hold a clear code of conduct regarding CRB clearances.
- 39.6 **Assistant Town Clerk Recruitment Pack** – The Working Group has met and have draw up the appropriate pack. This has been sent to the Project Manager and will also be checked by SWPE. The advert is due to go out in January 2012.
- 39.7 **Civic Service & Tree Lighting** – An E-mail has been received from the Chairman of Council thanking all the Administration Assistant for her help and hard work Friday evening. The Town Clerk commented on the input of all staff that evening, which was well attended by the public.
40. **TO RESPOND TO THE PRESENTATION FROM THE BLANDFORD SCHOOL REGARDING THE REQUEST FOR FUNDING TOWARDS AN ARTIFICIAL SPORTS PITCH**

The Chairman asked members if they felt there was sufficient new information in order to discuss this point less than 6 months after it was last discussed, or if they felt it necessary to suspend Standing Orders.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Loch and AGREED unanimously that Standing Orders are SUSPENDED.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Loch and AGREED unanimously that a RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that

The Town Council does not approve a grant for the project but considers allocating funds from the Land North of the Bypass (Sports Pitches) budget line subject to further discussions with The Blandford School to determine exactly how much use the Blandford Forum community and taxpayers will be able to benefit from such a facility.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Stayt and AGREED unanimously that the Standing Orders are REINSTATED.

41. **ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR:**

41.1 **Administration Budget for the year to 24 November 2011**

The paper was noted (see Appendix A).

41.2 **Overall Revenue Budget for the year to 24 November 2011**

The paper was noted (see Appendix B).

42. **REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION**

42.1 **To receive and retrospectively approve the list of cheque payments 515 to 523 (009067-009141) totalling £122,163.40**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that

The list of cheque payments 009067 – 009141 totalling £122,163.40 are received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

42.2 **To receive and retrospectively approve direct debit payments for the period August 2011 to October 2011 totalling £58,094.89**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that

The direct debit payments for the period August 2011 to October 2011 are received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

42.3 **To receive and retrospectively approve BACS payments lists 13-15 totalling £5958.82**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that

The BACS payments for the period are received and retrospectively approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

42.4 **Retrospective approval of the Investment Account for the period to 24 November 2011**

The paper was noted (see Appendix C).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Stayt and AGREED unanimously that

The investment account for the period to 24 November 2011 is retrospectively approved as per Appendix C.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

42.5 **Report by Chairman on Bank Reconciliation and Petty Cash checks**

The Chairman confirmed that the bank reconciliation and petty cash checks had been undertaken. Petty Cash is £5 out but this was discovered late and will be brought back to Full Council via the Town Clerk's report.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

42. **REVIEW OF FINANCE DOCUMENTATION (CONT)**

42.6 **Bank Reconciliation to 31 October 2011**

The paper was noted (see Appendix D).

42.7 **To receive the Reserve Accounts**

The paper was noted (see Appendix E).

43. **TO RECEIVE THE INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The paper was noted (see Appendix F).

44. **TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP FORMED TO REVIEW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT**

The paper was noted (see Appendix G).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Butler, SECONDED by Cllr Stayt and AGREED unanimously that

The Finance & Staffing Committee confirms that:

- 1. The internal audit programme meets the needs of the Town Council.**
- 2. The Town Council is satisfied with the effectiveness of the system of internal audit.**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

45. **TO CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMUNITY PLANNING MODEL**

The paper was noted (see Appendix H).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Brannigan, SECONDED by Cllr Pemberton and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council is unable to make a decision at this stage as more detailed information is required, with regards to the benefit for the community and financial commitments for the Three Choughs.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

46. **TO CONSIDER EXPENDITURE AUTHORITY FOR A LAPTOP FOR THE PROJECT MANAGER**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Brannigan, SECONDED by Cllr Butler and AGREED unanimously that

The Town Council purchases a lap top at a cost of £1,165.83 + VAT to include the supply, transfer of information and data backup using funds from the IT Standard Asset Replacement Fund for replacement equipment (Expenditure Authority: Local Government Act 1972 s111).

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

47. **CONFIDENTIAL**

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Butler, SECONDED by Cllr Brannigan and AGREED unanimously that

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

47.1 Payroll budget (staff grading) for the year 2012/13

A paper was tabled (see Appendix I).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Loch and AGREED unanimously that

The payroll budget (staff grading) for the year 2012/13 is approved.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Brannigan and AGREED unanimously to come out of the confidential session.

The public and press were welcomed back into the meeting for the following items;

48. **CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSED REVENUE BUDGET FOR THE FINANCE & STAFFING COMMITTEE FOR 2012/13**

The paper was noted (see Appendix J).

4050 Newsletter – Cllr Butler asked if members need to consider increasing this now that the Western Gazette is no longer covering events within the town and it may be necessary to produce more than four newsletters. It was decided any additional costs would be taken from the contingency budget.

4802 CIVIC Book Award – this line is showing as blank and will be removed. The original £40 is incorporated within Civic Expenses.

Civic Expenses – Cllr Hitchings reminded members that 2012 would include the Jubilee Celebrations and both twinning partners will be visiting the town.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Stayt and AGREED unanimously that

The budget for Civic Expenses is increased to £5,000.00.

ACTION: RFO

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED unanimously that

The proposed revenue budget for 2012/13 is approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

49. **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES**

49.1 Town & General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 21 November 2011

49.1.1 Minute No. 41.1 Revenue Budget

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stayt, SECONDED by Cllr Loch and AGREED unanimously that

The Revenue Budget 2012-13 is accepted.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

49. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES (CONT)

49.1.2 Minute No. 41.2 Earmarked Reserves

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Pemberton and AGREED unanimously that

The Earmarked Reserves budget for 2012-13 is approved at £6,450, as detailed below:

- **£2,500 is set for Town Maps and Boards (to purchase 2 new notice boards for the Persimmon Homes development and Tabernacle toilet block and for replacement glass for the large Town Map board in the Langton Road car park).**
- **£1,850 is set for Christmas Lights (which includes the tree, Christmas Window Competition, the Christmas Card Competition, cherry picker, Christmas trees and decorations for the Corn Exchange)**
- **£500 is set for the Tourism Budget. No monies will be set aside for Blandford in Bloom.**
- **No additional monies will be set aside for Twinning as nothing was spent during the last financial year and a balance of £331 remains.**
- **£1,000 is set for Town Improvements to include the tidying up of the library site.**
- **£100 to be added to the Seat Replacement fund and the name to be changed to New Benches.**
- **£500 is set for Contingency.**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

49.1.3 Minute No. 41.3 Reserve Accounts

As a result of the last meeting the RFO reported that 64 benches have been included in the calculations at £500 each, lasting for 12 years. Using these figures, it is necessary to accrue £16,833 immediately and with £2,500 being accrued annually thereafter.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr Butler and AGREED unanimously that

- **There is no increase to the Railway Arches and Old Bath House budget lines.**
- **£5,000 is put to CCTV New Equipment to allow for a CCTV camera at the Brewery site by the skate park.**

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

49.2 Recreation & Amenities Committee Meeting held on 28 November 2011

49.2.1 Minute No. 49.1 – Revenue Budget

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Owen and AGREED unanimously that

The proposed revenue budget for 2012-13 is approved.

49.2.2 Minute No. 49.2 – Earmarked Reserves

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Mieville and AGREED unanimously that

The Earmarked Reserves budget for 2012-13 is approved at £18,850, as detailed below:

49. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES (CONT)

- Allotment	£0
- PPM	£5,500
- Cemetery Chapel	£500
- Cemetery Workshop	£500
- DDA	£0
- Larksmead play equipment	£4,000

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Butler, SECONDED by Cllr Loch and AGREED unanimously to rename the budget line for Larksmead Replacement (Doors and Windows) to Larksmead Play Equipment.

- Play area fencing and surfacing	£1,000
- Seat replacement	£0
- Tree Survey	£5,500
- HS Memorials	£350
- Woodhouse Gardens Walls	£500
- Woodhouse Gardens Planting	£0
- Contingency	£1,000

49.2.3 Minute No. 49.3 – Reserves Account

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr Owen and AGREED unanimously that

The Cemetery Records, Maps & Procedures line is transferred to the Garden of Remembrance budget line and, with this amendment, the proposed Revenue Budget for 2012/13 is approved.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

50. CONSIDERATION OF THE OVERALL BUDGET FOR THE YEAR 2012/13 AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE PRECEPT FOR 2012/13

The paper was noted (see Appendix K).

It was agreed that the Standard Asset Replacement budget for benches is kept in the accounts but reduced to £15,200. At a future date, all the benches will be surveyed and their condition determined. They will then be included in the Asset Register.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Hitchings, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED unanimously that a RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that

The Town Council's overall precept for the year 2012/13 is set at £565,489 which is a total of £150.34 per Band D property, a total increase of 0%.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

9.17pm – Cllr Pemberton left the meeting.

51. CONFIDENTIAL

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Stayt, SECONDED by Cllr Brannigan and AGREED unanimously that

The public and press may be excluded from the meeting on the grounds that publicity might be prejudicial to the public interest as per the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960.

51.1 Town Clerk's Report & Correspondence

51.1.1 Staffing – A disciplinary hearing has been held with a member of staff, with the result being a formal oral warning and an action plan is in place.

51.1.2 Insurance Claim – An insurance claim has been made regarding a self-closing gate at the Park Road play area. The Town Clerk will respond accordingly.

51.2 To consider the financial implications attached to the Town Crier's position and duties

The paper was noted (see Appendix L).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Lindsay and AGREED unanimously that

The Council gives a biannual payment of £400 to the Town Crier to offset the costs of the South West Town Criers' Competition.

ACTION: TOWN CLERK

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Loch, SECONDED by Cllr Butler but NOT AGREED (3 in favour, 5 against) that the Town Crier's annual honorarium is increased by £50 to £350 from 1st April 2012.

51.3 To consider a report regarding a staff payment in recognition of additional duties and responsibilities

The paper was noted (see Appendix M).

It was PROPOSED by Cllr White, SECONDED by Cllr Brannigan and AGREED unanimously that a RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that

In recognition of the exceptional team work, additional duties and responsibilities that one additional day of leave is granted to every employee who was in post on the 1 May 2011 and is still in post. This extra is to be taken by the end of next year's leave period at 31st March 2013.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

Cllr Butler declared a Personal and Prejudicial interest and left the room during discussion and voting.

It was PROPOSED by Cllr Lindsay, SECONDED by Cllr White and AGREED (6 in favour, 1 abstention and 1 non-vote) that a RECOMMENDATION is made to full Council that

A payment is made to Cllr Butler in recognition of the additional duties and responsibilities that she took on, effectively filling in the Town Clerk's role for 6 months. The additional sum of £1500 is to be added to the Chairman of Council's allowance for this year only and this being subject to being within the legal limits set by an independent remuneration panel.

ACTION: TOWN COUNCIL

The Meeting closed at 22.15 p.m.

SIGNED: DATED: