



WETHERBY TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: Tuesday 30th December 2016
Time: 5.30pm
Location: Deighton Room, Wetherby Town Hall

Present: Cllr N Harrington (Mayor), Cllr H Chapman (Deputy Mayor), Cllr C Bentley, Cllr K Knight, Cllr N O'Byrne, Cllr G Wilkinson

In Attendance: Cllr J Brady, Cllr D Frame (from 6.30pm), Cllr N Kanabar (from 6.16pm), Cllr G Moss, Cllr D Payne
Iona Taylor (Town Clerk)

1.	Declarations of interests and requests for dispensations – none.
2.	Apologies. It was agreed that apologies be received, and reasons for absence accepted, from Councillors Hawkins, Lamb and Procter.
3.	Correspondence a) Police and Crime Commissioner for West Yorkshire. It was noted that the Commissioner's new Police and Crime Plan has been launched and can be viewed at: www.westyorkshire-pcc.gov.uk/our-business/the-police-crime-plan.aspx b) Environment Agency - River Stewardship and Sustainability – Wharfe It was agreed that environment agency representatives should be invited to attend a Full Council meeting to discuss proposals for a programme of maintenance to help prevent or alleviate future flooding from the River Wharfe. It was also agreed that this item should be brought to the attention of the Chairman of Leeds City Council's Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Alan Lamb. c) Wharfedale House - Leonard Cheshire Disability Councillor Payne was thanked for volunteering to represent the Council on the proposed 'Friends of Wharfedale House' group. Councillor Wilkinson will also be a member of this group which will meet regularly to provide ideas and practical help and support to enrich the lives of the residents in Wharfedale House.
4.	Financial Reports a) List of payments for December 2016. It was resolved that the list of payments for December 2016 be approved and signed. The payments are summarised as: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wetherby Town Council – 40 payments - £31,123.11.• Wetherby Town Hall – 11 payments - £3,805.03. b) BACS payments. It was resolved that the schedule of BACS payments for December 2016 be approved and signed by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

5.	<p>Bank Signatories and Authorisation of payments.</p> <p>a) Unity Trust Bank signatories. It was resolved that the members of the Budgets Committee (currently Councillors Harrington, Chapman, O'Byrne and Lamb) should be signatories on the Council's two accounts held with Unity Trust Bank. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will be authorised users.</p> <p>b) HSBC bank signatories. It was resolved that the members of the Budgets Committee (currently Councillors Harrington, Chapman, O'Byrne and Lamb) should be signatories on the Council's two accounts held with HSBC Bank. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will be authorised users.</p> <p>c) Authorisation of payments. It was agreed that any two members of the Budgets Committee should check and authorise all payments made by the Council and Town Hall, to include signing of cheques, cheque stubs, invoices or internet banking transaction printouts. A full list of payments will continue to be submitted for approval at the monthly Full Council meeting. It was noted that the Council's Financial Regulations require updating and that using the latest model version as a basis will ensure that a comprehensive policy for payment approval is adopted.</p>
6.	<p>Council's Reserves The Clerk noted that a review of the Council's reserves is required as part of the transfer to the new accounting software package.</p> <p>a) Jubilee Fund and Youth Council reserves. It was agreed that the previously ring fenced sums for the Jubilee Fund (£507) be reallocated to Welcome to Wetherby who are continuing the work carried out by the former Jubilee Committee. It was agreed that the previously ring fenced sums for the Youth Council (£975) continue to be kept for projects relating to young people, but that the fund be renamed 'Youth Voice'.</p> <p>b) Ear marked reserves. The following 'ring-fenced sums', as at 1st April 2016, were agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Works Fund (Sale of Cemetery Lodge) - £14,542.00 • Neighbourhood Plan - £26,402.67 • Replacement Van - £4,000.00 • Property Reserves - £21,480.00 • Election Fees - £5,400.00 • Privas Visit - £500.00 • Office Furniture - £500.00 • Replacement Computers - £500.00 <p>c) General reserves policy. It was agreed that the Budgets Committee should draw up a general reserves policy for the Full Council's future consideration.</p>
7.	<p>Internal Audit The Clerk reported that she had recently met with the Council's Internal Auditor, Moulds & Co. Ltd Accountants. The purpose of the meeting was a half-yearly review and for the new Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer to introduce herself. A resulting letter, dated 9th November 2016, was considered, including:</p>

	<p>a) Revised scope of audit. Moulds have now confirmed that, after receiving guidance from the Clerk, the scope of their 2016/17 internal audit will now be in line with 'Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England' and have detailed what their work will include.</p> <p>b) Reduction in cost of audit. It was noted that the cost of the Council's 2016/17 internal audit will be £1,700. It was noted that the proposed 2017/18 budget includes a reduction of £2,000 on auditing costs, primarily due to a reduction in the cost of the internal audit because of the Council's accounts being prepared in house, using the new financial software.</p> <p>After discussion, it was agreed that the Council should keep its choice of internal auditor for the 2016/17 period under review. Audit work for the 2016/17 financial year will not begin until after 1st April and it may be that issues arise as a result of specialist advice which would warrant reconsidering the Council's choice of internal auditor.</p>
<p>8.</p>	<p>Council's Treatment of VAT</p> <p>a) Clerk's report on VAT. The Committee considered a report highlighting a number of points in relation to the Council's treatment of VAT. It was noted that the Clerk has recently had the benefit of advice from Leeds City Council's Taxation Manager. Issues considered by the Committee included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reclamation and charging of VAT in respect of the cemetery. • Reclamation of VAT in relation to community projects. • Reclamation and charging of VAT in relation to the Town Hall. • The relationship between Wetherby Town Council and other community organisations. <p>b) VAT audit. It was agreed that DCK Beavers Ltd be appointed to conduct a review of the Council's treatment of VAT in relation to the Town Council and Town Hall accounts. Their charge for this will be £1,219.10 + VAT. This includes the preparation of an advisory report and the completion of any necessary HMRC forms for submission.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Christmas Lights</p> <p>a) Feedback on 2016 event. It was noted that feedback on the switch-on event has been generally positive, although comments about the sound quality and event timings have been received via Welcome to Wetherby.</p> <p>b) Planning for 2017 and beyond. It was noted that the Clerk is convening a meeting to review the 2016 event and consider arrangements for future years. This is in view of issues in relation to the reclamation of VAT, project finances and the role and capacity of Wetherby Business Association.</p> <p>It was noted that Welcome to Wetherby has already considered this item and has indicated that it would be willing and able to play a leading role in future events, but would want to have control of all aspects of the Christmas lights. It was noted that whilst this committee is not averse to this suggestion, Welcome to Wetherby is a committee of Wetherby Town Council and as such the implications of such an undertaking would need careful consideration.</p> <p>It was agreed that representatives of Wetherby Town Council should discuss the future of Wetherby Christmas lights with Wetherby Business Association and that the Council should be represented by Councillors Harrington, Bentley, Maltby and the Clerk.</p>

	Further information in relation to this matter will be brought back to Full Council for further consideration.
10.	<p>Grasscutting Contract</p> <p>a) Current contract It was noted that the current contract ends on 31st March 2017.</p> <p>b) New contract. It was agreed that a competitive tender process for a new, 5 year, grasscutting contract should be undertaken. The new contract will provide a review at the end of each year.</p>
11.	<p>2017/18 Financials</p> <p>a) 2017/18 budget. A draft budget was considered. It was agreed that this item should be re-considered at a future meeting, after the receipt of advice in relation to the Council's treatment of VAT.</p> <p>b) 2017/18 precept requirement. It was agreed that this item should be re-considered at a future meeting, after the receipt of advice in relation to the Council's treatment of VAT. It was noted that the deadline for submitting the Council's precept requirement to Leeds City Council is 10th February 2017.</p>
12.	<p>Budget committee. It was resolved that the remit of the Budgets Committee be extended throughout 2017 as a task and finish group to oversee a review of the Council's governance and practices. Work will be brought to Full Council for consideration, approval and adoption on a regular basis.</p>
13.	<p>Items for information only.</p> <p>a) Development at site to East of Wetherby. The Clerk reported that a request had been received from a housing developer looking to begin pre-application engagement with the Town Council about the large housing site to the East of Wetherby. It was agreed that these discussions should not take place unless / until the site is formally allocated for development by Leeds City Council in the new Local Plan.</p> <p>b) Wetherby Police Station. Councillor Wilkinson advised that, despite recent rumours, Chief Inspector Croft of West Yorkshire Police has confirmed that there are no plans to close Wetherby Police Station.</p> <p>c) Horsefair. Councillor Wilkinson advised that the block paving on Horsefair is to be replaced at the end of January 2017 / early February 2017.</p> <p>d) Christmas Events Members were reminded of the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas Window Dressing Competition Results – 15th December, 4pm, Wetherby Town Hall • Jubilee Award Presentation – 21st December, 5.30pm, Town Hall • Carol Concert – 21st December, 7.30pm, Market Place <p>e) Thanks to Clerk. Members expressed their thanks to the Clerk for the work she has undertaken in relation to the matters considered at this meeting.</p>

The meeting closed at 6.58pm.
These minutes were recorded and prepared by Iona Taylor, Town Clerk.

SIGNED: (Chair)

DATE:

DRAFT