

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Minutes of Finance and Management Committee held in King's Hall Community Centre, Kings Avenue, Prestatyn on Wednesday 15th January 2020 at 6.45pm – 9.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillors: J. Thompson-Hill (Chairman), S. Frobisher, G. Sandilands, M. German, T. Jones, A. Tomlin, P. Duffy, B. Murray, G. Frobisher, T. Flynn, A. Frobisher, P. Penlington, R. Flynn, K. Jones, A. Sampson.

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr N. Acott -Town Clerk/Financial Officer (6.35pm), Mrs C. Evans – Assistant Town Clerk/Financial Officer.

APOLOGIES

Councillors: G. Davies, L. Muraca.
Mr T. Brown – Internal Auditor, Mrs L. Hewitt – Committee Support Assistant.

126 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs were reminded of need to declare personal and/or prejudicial interests in tonight's proceedings.

127 PAID ACCOUNTS

Details of paid accounts and quarterly budget statements had been circulated with agenda papers and no items or queries had been raised with Town Clerk/Financial Officer, Chairman or Internal Auditor prior to tonight's meeting. Town Clerk/Financial Officer and Internal Auditor will also arrive early at Finance and Management Committee to assist any Member with queries prior to meeting.

August 2019

BACS 413 Salford Children's Camp. In response to query Town Clerk/Financial Officer advised nine families (twenty-three persons) had attended this holiday leisure activity for children with special needs.

BACS 410 Waterloo Hire. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported this new event held at Coronation Gardens was arranged via small theatrical company although Council had assisted with identifying suitable venue etc. The company had agreed to donate a percentage of ticket sales in return for Council's support and this would cover portable toilet hire.

BACS 424 Denbighshire County Council (DCC) Parking permit. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer advised that following loss of car parking space at Town Council Offices both staff and visitors had to use DCC car park for long stay. Cllr P. Duffy offered use of his yard for parking and staff would be informed of this offer.

BACS 411 DCC bus shelter repairs. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer confirmed location of repairs. Cllr P. Duffy requested details, specifications and size of polycarbonate material used by DCC be sought.

BACS 407 Restore Datashred. In response to member query about disposal of confidential waste Deputy Town Clerk advised it was a legal requirement to dispose of such material via accredited waste disposal company.

Barclaycard – Display Rack. In response to member query Deputy Town Clerk reported that the display rack was part of a joint initiative with DCC to provide a Tourist Information Point on coast.

BACS 415 Routemaster 4 Hire. In response member query it was confirmed this formed part of a package support for Proclamation Ceremony. Urdd Eisteddfod Organisers had sought assistance with ceremony and had sent letter thanking Council for its tremendous support in preparation, and also for support on the day.

September 2019

BACS 440 Ty Caradoc Community Centre. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer confirmed all centres were used at various times for holiday leisure activity programme, and other town council initiatives such as health awareness days.

BACS 446 Phoenix Security. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported that this new open air event had taken place at Coronation Gardens, Prestatyn. The use of security personnel, although not legally required, was considered prudent and had been appreciated by local residents and visitors.

BACS 434 PARS Ltd. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer advised that asbestos had been identified in Council Offices prior to current removal works.

October 2019

BACS 480 Lloyds. In response to member query Deputy Town Clerk advised this was new and replacement computer equipment that is not covered by service maintenance agreement.

November 2019

BACS 522 Reindeer Lodge. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer confirmed cost of two reindeer and three elf helpers. Cllr T. Flynn reported that donkeys had also been arranged for this amazing Christmas event via Cytun (Council of Churches /Local Churches Together) who had been very grateful of Council's support for event.

BACS 535 Wales and West. In response to member query Deputy Town Clerk advised the cost of gas supply alteration was within contingency set for office extension. Councillors to be reminded of contingency sum and figure remaining.

December 2019

BACS 569 Crescent Press. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer advised that Christmas Cards had been paid via Council rather than Mayor's account as in previous years. Chairman suggested this should be reviewed and incumbent be informed prior to holding office. Consideration should also be given to use of electronic Christmas cards in future years.

BACS 543 Mobile Phone Allowance. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer advised that payments were reimbursement of actual costs. Mobile phones were used for work purposes, especially when lone working and out of office. A review of staff telephone allowances to be undertaken and item brought back to Committee.

BACS 561 DCC. In response to member query Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported that Council had undertaken railway embankment tidying and litter pick with rail companies, Friends of Prestatyn Railway Volunteers, and Denbighshire County Council for many years. The embankment was a significant feature within town centre but received very little maintenance by rail company as it was not considered to be an operational requirement.

BACS 559 White Fox. In response to member query Deputy Town Clerk explained this was for external tourism signage in partnership with DCC tourism department. The signage promoted Offa's Dyke Path and various town attractions.

BACS571 DCC – Meliden Community Centre. In response to member query Deputy Town Clerk advised paving repair work had been part of works framework agreement with DCC. The agreement ensured that all contractors were on County approved list, vetted and were quality assured.

Cllr J Thompson Hill, Chairman reminded Committee that paid accounts were presented for information and that scrutiny should not be about revisiting committee approved decisions, works or services. A number of queries raised tonight related to tourism, events and holiday leisure activity programme and it was for the Community Development and Regeneration Committee to determine activities, level of service provision, funding arrangements, and event programme etc.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Paid accounts for August, September, October, November December, plus quarterly budget statements be approved.
- 2) That details of events spend on Christmas event and future town events plan be agendered for next Community Development and Regeneration Committee.

(Cllr R. Flynn left meeting at 7.00pm)

128 FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2020/21

Draft financial estimates and precept options had been circulated with agenda. Chairman explained process of budget preparation, compilation and final presentation of financial estimates, council tax base as provided by Denbighshire County Council, and various precept options.

Committee then reviewed each service area with narrative provided by Town Clerk/Financial Officer, he also responded to member questions about service costs and future spend e.g. election costs. In respect of a question about Scala Cinema, the Chairman confirmed that the county-owned property remained within county portfolio, however other leisure assets were in process of moving to a new 'arm's length' leisure company being established by DCC.

Future town plans identified within town's financial estimates included Y Morfa Nature Reserve and potential Wildlife Interpretation Centre. Committee sought assurance that

Prestatyn Youth Club would be consulted and Deputy Town Clerk outlined position to date, and gave assurance they would be consulted and involved as part of local engagement work. The outline concept for this project had been discussed at last Community Development and Regeneration Committee and update would be presented at next meeting.

A discussion then took place upon the levels of Council's financial reserves and adequacy of such reserves. Town Clerk/Financial Officer offered guidance and made reference to Governance and Accountability for Local Council's in Wales – A Practitioners Guide 2019.

There followed a number of recorded votes on different precept options. Substantive motion was proposed by Cllr A. Sampson seconded by Cllr B. Murray.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Financial Estimates 2020/21 be accepted.
- 2) That Committee recommend Council Tax Precept 2020/21 be £492,800 (Option 2, band D property tax of £63.74 – an increase of 1.5%)

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Cllrs B. Murray, T. Flynn, A. Tomlin, G. Frobisher, T. Jones, K. Jones, A. Frobisher, S. Frobisher, A. Sampson, J. Thompson-Hill	Cllrs M. German, P. Duffy, G. Sandilands, P. Penlington	
(10)	(4)	(0)

SUBSTANTIVE MOTON CARRIED Precept Option 2

Proposal for option 1 No change in Council tax precept was declared LOST. Proposed by Cllr P. Duffy seconded by G. Sandilands.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Cllrs M. German, P. Duffy, G. Sandilands, P. Penlington	Cllrs B. Murray, T. Flynn, A. Tomlin, G. Frobisher, T. Jones, K. Jones, A. Frobisher, S. Frobisher, A. Sampson, J. Thompson-Hill	
(4)	(10)	(0)

Proposal for Option 4 Council tax precept based on £425,260 Band D property £55.00 was declared LOST. Proposed by Cllr M. German seconded by Cllr P. Penlington.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
Cllrs M. German, P. Penlington (2)	Cllrs B. Murray, T. Flynn, A. Tomlin, G. Frobisher, T. Jones, K. Jones, A. Frobisher, S. Frobisher, A. Sampson, J. Thompson-Hill (10)	Cllrs G. Sandilands, P. Duffy (2)

During the debate for Option 4 Cllr M. German made a derogatory remark about community and mental health services delivered by Town Council. Cllr A. Sampson responded stating that such services were very much appreciated by town residents and contributed to health and well-being of both town and its residents.

129 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported upon new financial regulations published by One Voice Wales purporting to be endorsed by Welsh Assembly Government but this had not been confirmed. It transpired the document had been published by National Association of Local Councils and published for English local parish and town councils only. Notwithstanding this information it was necessary for Town Council to update its own financial regulations to incorporate changes in electronic banking arrangements e.g. BACS online payments.

A new Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales - Practitioner's Guide 2019 had recently been published by Welsh Assembly Government. The guidance included accounting practices, corporate governance and financial accountability.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Town Clerk/Financial Officer prepare recommendations for updating Councils Financial Regulations.
- 2) That receipt of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales Practitioner's Guide 2019 be acknowledged. (Copy in Town Council's office)

130 PRESTATYN FORUM BUSINESS WHALE TAILS PM 99

Town Clerk/Financial Officer reported that his office was in discussion with Prestatyn Business Forum to clarify what assistance was required, technical specifications of their plans, planning approval processes, and potential future maintenance costs. Further clarity was also being sought upon insurance costs, project business case, and future plans for transferring ownership to town council.

RESOLVED That item be deferred pending receipt of written information and details of project business case.

131 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED That Public and Press be excluded in accordance with Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A parts 1, 7, 9 during following items:- Community Centres / Ty Pendre Community Building / Staff Report / Hanging Baskets, Troughs and Focused Grounds Maintenance Service.

132 COMMUNITY CENTRES – Landlord and Tenant Responsibility PM85

Mrs C. Evans, Deputy Town Clerk had circulated a comprehensive report with agenda papers. Following discussions with each of the community centres' management associations a consensus had been reached, subject to Council agreement, on future maintenance services and responsibility.

The new arrangements did not affect future lease terms and were primarily operational issues that required resolution, together with changes to rental fees based on actual costs to be incurred by landlord and/or tenant.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Cllr T. Flynn be appointed Chairman for this item.
- 2) That the Community Centre Landlord and Tenant report dated 15th January 2020, proposals and new rental arrangements and charges be accepted and implemented. Financial/Legal Implications: As per report. Rental fees to increase to cover actual costs at each community centre. Landlord and Tenants Acts 2015
- 3) That Mrs C. Evans be thanked for her efforts.

Cllrs J Thompson Hill and A Sampson declared interest personal and prejudicial interests and retired from meeting during this item)

133 TY PENDRE COMMUNITY BUILDING – PHASE RADIO

Deputy Town Clerk reported upon a recent meeting between Denbighshire County Council (DCC) as county landlord, Town Council, and community based Phase Radio. Unfortunately this new and innovative approach to digital radio broadcasting had encountered numerous operational difficulties, and a recent license application for radio wave broadcasting had been declined.

RESOLVED That situation noted and Town Clerk/Financial Officer and Chairman be authorized to take any necessary action in this matter. Financial/Legal Implications: Loss of rental income and bad debt unless agreement can be reached between parties. Building is owned by Denbighshire County Council and serviced by Town Council and Phase Radio.

134 STAFF REPORT

Cllr T. Jones, Chair of Staffing Sub Committee had circulated her report with agenda papers. Reference was made to long term sickness of named employee and temporary actions taken to cover this significant work area. Committee was pleased to hear that the employee had returned to work initially on phased basis, and has recently returned to normal operational hours.

A brief update on Town Council office building extension work was provided and it was confirmed all costs incurred are listed in paid accounts schedule. In response to member query Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that all costs are within contract sums. A further report on progress and financial position will be submitted to a future meeting. The building work is due for completion in March 2020.

Staff 1:1s and appraisals had recently been concluded for this period.

RESOLVED That report be received.

135 HANGING BASKETS/TROUGHS AND FOCUSSED GROUND MAINTENANCE SERVICE

Committee was reminded of the trial changes implemented last year and of the significant environmental improvements throughout town. Community partnership working between Town/County Council, volunteers and local businesses had resulted in success in both Wales in Bloom and Britain in Bloom national competitions. Deputy Town Clerk had prepared a report (copy circulated with agenda) detailing proposed Council services and schedules of work going forward. Committee guidance was being sought about provision of future services and delivery.

Members expressed thanks for the work undertaken to date and members commented upon the pride contractors had shown in serving the town last year. It was explained that the new bespoke floral service arrangements were still evolving, and that delivery methods were also changing to ensure a more focused grounds maintenance arrangement.

RESOLVED

- 1) That Plantscape Ltd be appointed for supply, planting and maintenance of hanging baskets and troughs from 1st April 2020 for two year period subject to satisfactory performance.

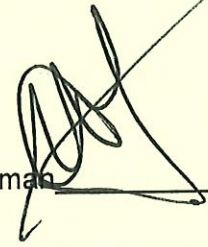
Financial /Legal Implications: £14,453 contained within budget provisions 2020/21. Financial Regulation 11a (iv) and 11.c be applied and contract extended for two years for provision of bespoke floral services. Local Government Act 1972/Highways Act 1980/Public Health Act 1875

- 2) That Pottles Premier Plants be appointed for supply of summer and winter floral bedding 2020/21.
Financial Implications: £3,950 subject to supply. Cost contained within budget provision 2020/21. Local Government Act 1972

- 3) That My Tidy Gardens be appointed for grounds maintenance service operator for two year period subject to satisfactory performance. The new work schedule and service specifications to apply from 1st April 2020.

Financial/Legal Implications: £21,600 contained within budget provisions 2020/21.
Financial Regulation 11a (iv) and 11.c be applied and contract extended for two years for further trial provision of focused grounds maintenance service.
Local Government Act 1972/Highways Act 1980/Public Health Act 1875

Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke, is written over a horizontal line that follows the word "Chairman".