

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 18TH JANUARY 2017** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

PRESENT: Councillors C N Parker (Chairman) Presiding
M Hocking (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors

Mrs C Bunday	M Joyce
Mrs J Cleave	K L Purchase
D Corney-Walker	Ms L Roberts (Mayor)
C Coyle-Moore	M E Ryan
R Hayes	Mrs L Sheffield
D Howe	T Ward
Mrs J A Jones (Dep Mayor)	

Representatives of the press: Mr Sam Hall – Mid Devon Advertiser

In attendance: Ms Samantha Scott – Deputy Town Clerk
Mr Philip Rowe – Town Clerk
Mrs Alexandra Robinson – Committee Administrator

334. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Jenks.

335. **INTERESTS**

Councillors Mrs C Bunday and M Ryan gave notice of their intention to declare a personal interest in Minute 338 C (1) below and Councillors M Hocking and Mrs L Sheffield also gave notice of their intention to declare a personal interest in Minute 338 C (3) below.

336. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 2nd November 2016 were received and signed as a correct record.

337. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

338. **INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

A. The Committee received the Income and Expenditure Statements for October and November 2016 (previously circulated). The Chairman invited questions from Members.

31st October 2016

Opening Balance	£445,883.29
Misc. Income	£ 6,161.58
CIL Payment	£ 19,620.78
Total Income	£471,665.65
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 77,637.65
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 77,637.65
BALANCE at 31st October 2016	
Business Call & Current Account:	£394,028.00

Balances as at 31st October 2016

Current Account	1102.00
Business Call Account	392,926.00
Petty Cash Account	200.00
Imprest Account	2,210.47
Total Cash in hand at bank	£396,438.47
Total:	£396,438.47

30th November 2016

Opening Balance	£394,028.00
Misc. Income	£ 3,974.65
Total Income	£398,002.65
LESS:	
Expenditure	£ 79,446.56
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£ 79,446.56
BALANCE at 30th November 2016	
Business Call & Current Account:	£318,556.09

Balances as at 30th November 2016

Current Account	304.99
Business Call Account	318,251.10
Petty Cash Account	200.00
Imprest Account	2,008.65

Total Cash in hand at bank **£320,764.74**

Total: **£320,764.74**

Accordingly it was,

RESOLVED that the statements of income and expenditure for October and November 2016 as submitted to the Committee be hereby approved.

B. Financial Budget Comparison – The Committee received and noted the Financial Budget Comparison summary and report which detailed Income and Expenditure by Account for the period 1st April to 30th November 2016 (previously circulated). The Chairman drew attention to the increased income received for contributions to Christmas Lights which had assisted in offsetting the additional infrastructure costs associated with the new regulations required for the installation of lights this year.

RESOLVED that the budget and accounts reports as detailed by Account be noted.

C. Applications for Grant and Financial Assistance – The Chairman introduced the item and reported that the Grant Application scheme had not been reviewed and updated for some years. He added that it would be beneficial to review the scheme at some stage. A review of the Application of Grants and Financial Assistance was noted. Further to Minute 16/11 (270) the Deputy Town Clerk had been delegated responsibility to write to the Newton Abbot branch of the C.A.B. and Teignbridge Homeless Action Today (T.H.A.T.) to invite applications. The Committee received the following Applications for consideration:

<u>Grants</u>	
1. Newton Abbot CIC	not specified
2. T.H.A.T. Food Bank	£1,000.00

<u>Financial Assistance</u>	
3. Citizens Advice Teignbridge	£2,200.00

The Chairman invited comment and consideration from Members on the applications. Following considerable discussion, it was

RESOLVED that

(a) Applications for **Grants** listed as 1. be hereby approved in the sum of £1,500 and a decision on 2. be deferred to the next meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee on 15th February 2017 pending clarification on the information supplied.

(b) Application for **Financial Assistance** listed as 3. be hereby approved in the sum of £2,283.75.

Councillors Mrs C Bunday, M Hocking, M Ryan and Mrs L Sheffield having declared an interest in the applications for Grants and Financial assistance and did not take part in the voting thereon.

D. Electors' Fund Proposed Nomination – The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to report on a recent application he had received for assistance from the Chairman of the Courtenay Centre. The Centre has experienced increasing commercial pressures due to development on either side of their boundaries. The age of the building and overall fabric needed enhancement and modernisation to ensure the ongoing viability as a venue for eminent speakers and events. Members discussed the proposal to offer the remaining balance of the Elector Fund for 2016/17 for use by the Courtenay Centre. All Councillors were in agreement that it was a valuable resource for the town and should be assisted in making an application for the fund.

Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED that the Town Clerk be delegated the authority to make an application to Teignbridge District Council on behalf of the Courtenay Centre for the remaining portion of the **Elector Fund for 2016/17** amounting to **£15,896** prior to the deadline of 3rd February 2017.

339. STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM

The Committee received and approved the minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum meeting held on 30th November 2016 (previously circulated).

RESOLVED that minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum meeting held on 30th November 2016 be hereby approved and adopted.

340. 2017/2018 PRECEPT AND BUDGET

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to brief Members on the report on the Budget 2017/18 (previously circulated). The Clerk reminded Members that the Council had a statutory obligation to put in place a budget and precept that would deliver the Council's objectives, vision and priorities. He highlighted the key elements of the report noting that on balance the precept was much lower than some other town and parish councils and provided good value overall for the services and priorities delivered to those in Newton Abbot and the wider community. Consideration was given within the Town Clerk's setting out a recommended Precept and budget for the year 2017/18 arising from the Strategic Planning Forum meeting as above (minute 16/11 (SP28)).

Members were reminded that a recommendation from the Committee was required to be submitted to the Council for approval at its meeting to be held on 25th January 2017. Members noted their sincere thanks to the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk for the excellent report and the high degree of clarity that it offered Members in giving their consideration.

Arising from a lengthy and detailed discussion on the report it was

RESOLVED that the Council at its meeting to be held on 25th January 2017 be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt a Precept sum of **£666,913 for 2017/18** representing an increase of £2.48p p.a. (0.05p per week) or 3.06% for a Band D property in Newton Abbot and that Teignbridge District Council be therefore requested to collect on the Town Council's behalf the **precept sum of £666,913** and provide a **Council Tax Support Grant in the sum of £70,880** and to complete in full the table provided by Teignbridge District Council (below).

Line 1	Town/Parish Council Name	Newton Abbot Town Council
Line 2	Cash Required from Teignbridge (budget requirement)	£737,793
Line 3	Less: Council Tax Support Grant as shown in bold on attached table	£ 70,880
Line 4	Equals: precept from which council tax will be calculated	£666,913

341. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2017/18

The Chairman reported that he, as Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee; the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee and the Town Clerk had had a meeting with Marcus Jones MP Under Secretary of State for Local Government on the extension of Referendum Principle to parish and town councils, at Westminster on 10th January 2017.

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to provide a verbal report to Members on the outcome of the meeting. The Town Clerk reminded Members of the background to

the Government's proposals to extend the Referendum Principle to include town and parish councils. This was subject to a consultation period and the Government received lobbying from the whole sector. In addition, Newton Abbot Town Council lobbied the local MP the Right Honourable Anne-Marie Morris. The Government's decision to not extend the Referendum Principle for 2017/18 coincided with an invitation from the MP's office for an audience with Marcus Jones MP Under Secretary of State for Local Government.

The meeting was extremely positive in which the representatives from the Town Council were able to convey the strategic visions, priorities and views key to the Council. Members expressed their sincere gratitude to Anne-Marie Morris MP in facilitating the meeting and to the two respective Chairmen and the Town Clerk for promoting Newton Abbot Town Council. The Mayor thanked Councillors Colin Parker and Mike Hocking and the Town Clerk, Phil Rowe for attending the meeting with the Under Secretary of State on her behalf whilst she was away. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED that

- a) that the report on the meeting with the Under Secretary of State for Local Government be noted; and
- b) the Town Clerk send a letter on behalf of the Council to Anne-Marie Morris MP expressing thanks for her assistance in facilitating the meeting.

342. NEWTON'S PLACE - PROJECT UPDATE

The Chairman reminded Members that further to Minute 16/11 (306) that Newton's Place would be included on all main Committee Agendas to ensure that Councillors received regular and timely updates on progress. To this end he invited the Town Clerk to give an update. The Town Clerk reported that having met with the South West Grants Officer from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) earlier that day that the Project Group felt they were in a much stronger position to make the application to the HLF on 24th February 2017. The key essence that the HLF sought was that the application demonstrated the ability to enhance the heritage asset and the increased opportunities available to the public. The HLF was primarily concerned with managing their risk in releasing funding and that the project would be sustainable over time.

A discussion followed on the success of the first Open Day held at Newton's Place on Saturday 14th January 2017. Despite a minor incident with the ceiling the previous day, it was estimated that between 300-400 people came to the event and the comments were overwhelmingly positive and enthusiastic. It was noted that due to the limitations of the building at present that there were some access issues however an appliance to assist was in place for those wishing to make use of it. The Councillors offered their support to those involved in the preparation of the event and their delight in its overall success.

It was noted that a press release had been issued detailing the first of the two open days. The second would be held between 10am-2pm on Wednesday 25th January 2017.

343. LATE CORRESPONDENCE

None

344. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee would be held on Wednesday 15th February 2017.

Chairman