

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on 22nd February 2016 in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Marlborough, at 8.05 pm

PRESENT	Councillor A Ross Councillor Mrs. M Rose Councillor S. Dobson Councillor N. Fogg Councillor N. Barrett-Morton Councillor A. Kirk Wilson Councillor G. Loosmore Councillor M. Hall	Chairman Town Mayor
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ALSO PRESENT	Mrs S. Parker Mrs D. Whitehall Councillor B. Castle Councillor J. Cook Plus 1 member of the public	Town Clerk Administrator Observing Observing
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PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions.

528/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Dow.

529/15 DECLARATION(S) OF INTEREST
There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensation.

530/15 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS
We have been informed that the referendum principle will not apply to town and parish councils setting precepts for 2016/17. This in all probability recognises that services cascading down from the unitary authority will require precept increases above the 2% guideline.

Members would be interested to note the precept increases of other Wiltshire town councils. The Marlborough increase of 4.96% was just a fraction over the average increase of 4.86%.

Members should be aware that, even after the grant application to be considered in this meeting, a sum was still available of around £3,000. There was only one meeting left when grants could be considered for the year, after which the money would be lost. This would be a terrible shame as there were many worthy local organisations which might benefit from a grant. There had been some very favourable publicity arising from the award to the Macular Support Group, and Members were reminded of a visit to The Greatwood Charity on Thursday 25th February at 11 am where the Mayor would be presenting a grant cheque. He was

sure all would agree these were very worthy organisations that the Town Council could be proud to have supported.

Members will have been shocked to hear that Sir John Sykes had resigned as Chairman and Trustee of The Merchant's House Trust. Sir John had been the lead in the Merchant's House project right from its inception, and the 25th Anniversary event in April would be his last engagement with the Trust. The Chairman was sure he spoke for all in wishing Sir John a speedy recovery and return to full health.

531/15 MINUTES

RESOLVED: by 6 votes for with 2 abstentions that the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Policy Committee held on Monday, 30th November 2015 be approved.

532/15 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk's report was noted.

533/15 TOWN COUNCIL GRANT SCHEME

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered an application for grant funding received from Splash Wiltshire which would benefit at least 8 young people from Marlborough. The Mayor had met people who had benefitted from the support Splash provide and recommended the charity very highly.

RESOLVED: to award £960 to Splash Wiltshire.

534/15 INTERNAL AUDIT 2015/16

Members noted the interim audit reports from the Council's Internal Auditors for 2015/16.

Cllr. Dobson asked that his concerns be noted: he questioned the auditor's ability, asking why receipts from rental properties were not mentioned in the Income section of the report and also the accuracy of the comments about reviews.

The Town Clerk confirmed that many other Parishes across the country used this experienced Auditor.

Cllr. Fogg, seconded by Cllr. Barrett-Morton, expressed a debt of gratitude to the Chairman and Town Council staff in view of the complementary remarks within the report.

535/15 NEW AUDIT REGIME

Members noted a report, and considered recommendations by the Town Clerk about new arrangements for external audit.

RESOLVED: Marlborough Town Council remains as an opted in authority in line with most other town and parish councils.

536/15 COMMITTEE BUDGETS 2014/2015

The Committee income and expenditure reports to end-January 2016 (Month 10), together with a list of payments, were noted, and informatives given for a number of individual budget lines.

537/15 BANK ACCOUNTS

Members were pleased to note from the Town Clerk's report that no charges would be levied against Town Council accounts, at least for the next year.

538/15 TOWN COUNCIL INVESTMENTS

Members noted a report and recommendations by the Town Clerk. No decisions were taken and it was agreed to find out more information about Treasury Bonds.

539/15 RISK ASSESSMENT

Members considered a Risk Assessment for recommendation to Full Town Council. Cllr. Dobson asked for an amendment to page 1 concerning risks associated with the new dipping pond at Stonebridge Meadow, asking that a timescale be added for review, and that checks be made that adequate insurance/improvement plans were in place to meet health and safety requirements.

RESOLVED: with one amendment that the Risk Assessment be recommended to Full Town Council.

540/15 PRECEPT 2016/17

Members noted a draft promotional statement by the Town Clerk about the precept for 2016/17. It was agreed to add 'Emergency Planning' to section 1 and include the Model Flying Club in the list of groups.

RESOLVED: by 6 votes for with 2 abstentions that, with agreed amendments, the statement was accepted.

541/15 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Members considered a draft Social Media Policy.

RESOLVED: that the draft Social Media Policy be submitted to Full Town Council.

542/15 TRUSTS AND CHARITIES

A progress report from the Town Clerk was noted.

543/15 CIVIC MATTERS

Members noted a report by the Town Clerk and considered recommendations about payments for Civic Duties.

RESOLVED: to increase the out-of-pocket expenses payment to Civic Officers to £20.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm

Signed Date
Chairman