

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

18 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Blissett, Harrison (Town Mayor), Hinchcliffe (Minutes 25 to 30 inclusive), Kinch, Mrs Moorhouse and Robinson.

Also in attendance:- Councillor Deacon (Minutes 28 to 34 inclusive).

Officers:- Mr King (Town Clerk) and Mrs Plant (Assistant Clerk).

25. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Cooke.

Resolved – That Councillor Cooke's apologies be accepted.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with this Council's adopted Code of Conduct (Minute 72(a)/Sep/12 refers), Members were asked whether they had any personal or prejudicial interests in any matter on the agenda and, if so, to declare those interests at this point of the meeting. Members were reminded that a declaration could be given later in the meeting if a need arose during discussion. There were no declarations of interest at this juncture.

27. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 23 SEPTEMBER 2013 – MINUTES

Resolved – That the Minutes be accepted as a correct record.

28. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

Submitted – A report and associated Appendices relating to payments and receipts for the period 17 September to 11 November 2013, income and expenditure relating to the month end of October 2013 (Month 7) and income and expenditure by cost centre.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

29. UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF LGPS 2014 PROJECT

Submitted – A summary providing an update in respect of the statutory consultation on new benefit regulations for the Local Government Pension Scheme that would take effect from April 2014.

Resolved – That the information be noted.

30. BUDGET 2014/15 – FURTHER CONSIDERATION

Submitted – Pursuant to Committee Minute 24/Sep/13, a report comprising the remaining details of the prospective 2014/15 budget, leading to final recommendations, from a further Resources Committee meeting on 13 January 2014, being submitted to the budgetary Council meeting on 20 January 2014. The report primarily centred on the remaining items that had not been considered at the Committee meeting on 23 September 2013 and included the Partnership and Services Committee's 2014/15 budgetary bids. It was also noted that a number of items would be deferred until the January Resources Committee meeting, as costs had yet to be established for a number of reasons. A confidential supplementary report containing details of the pay and conditions of individual members of staff was also submitted for members' consideration as the items had been summarised as 'Salaries and Wages' in the main report for data protection reasons.

Discussion ensued in respect of a number of budgetary items, including whether staffing costs should be allocated to specific services and the ownership status of the Red Well.

It was noted that the potential new budgetary items would be referred to the Council meeting scheduled for 2 December 2013 before submission (if approved) to the January Resources Committee meeting. A member called for a named vote as to whether the new budgetary item 'Creation of a Neighbourhood Plan', as recommended by the Planning Committee, should be progressed and this was voted in favour as follows:-

In favour:- Councillors Blissett, Kinch, Hinchcliffe and Mrs Moorhouse.

Abstained:- Councillor Robinson.

Reference was made to the anticipated net reduction in income to the Town Council through the Local Council Tax Support Grant that needed to be taken into consideration in the overall budgetary process.

Resolved – (a) That the following budgetary allocations for 2014/15 (all expenditure allocations except where stated) be provisionally approved for onward transmission to full Council in due course, subject to an examination of the overall budget by this Committee at the meeting scheduled for 13 January 2014:-

- (1) **Society of Local Council Clerks** – £231 (increase of £1);
- (2) **Co Durham Association** – £696 (increase of £52);
- (3) **Travel Allowance** – £300 (increase of £200);
- (4) **Chairs of Office** – £50 (no change);
- (5) **Election Expenses** – Nil (decrease of £1,440);
- (6) **Salaries and Wages** – £80,329 (increase of £2,670);
- (7) **Ongoing Staffing Costs** – £0 (decrease of £750);
- (8) **Employee Eye Tests** – £25 (decrease of £25);
- (9) **Allotments** – Expenditure £3,630 (increase of £40) and Income £3,630 (increase of £40) (Net position unchanged);
- (10) **Mini Golf** – Expenditure £10,000 (increase of £5,700) and Income £10,000 (increase of £5,700) (Net position unchanged);
- (11) **Christmas Lights** – £6,500 (decrease of £1,500);
- (12) **Play Areas** – Expenditure £8,000 (increase of £500) and Income £114 (increase of £40);
- (13) **Red Well** – £300 (no change);
- (14) **Donations** – £3,000 (increase of £1,500);
- (15) **Floral and Open Spaces** – £6,000 (increase of £500);
- (16) **Castle Floodlights** – £400 (increase of £50);
- (17) **War Memorials** – £710 (decrease of £3,040) (with £710 in each of years 2015/16 and 2016/17);
- (18) **Public Seats** – £1,000 (increase of £1,000);
- (19) **Community Events** – £14,000 (no change);
- (20) **Contingencies** – Nil (no change) (with General Reserves up to a maximum of £1,500 to be used during the year if necessary);
- (21) **Bank Interest** – Income – £1,600 (decrease of £200);
- (22) **Grants** – Income – Nil (decrease of £33,350);
- (23) **Donations** – Income – Nil (no change);
- (24) **Sponsorship** – Income – Nil (no change); and
- (25) **LCTSG** – Income – £14,102 (decrease of £2,364).

- (b) That the following fees and charges be agreed:-
- (i) **Play Areas**
 - (a) **Ten Fields** – (Barnard Castle Football Club Rental) - £100 for 2014/15 (and to be the yearly rental for the next four years and every five years thereafter an incremental increase of (at least) 5%, subject to review).
 - (b) **Gate Licence Fees** – £14 (no change) (i.e. £1.00 per gate).
 - (ii) **Allotments** (per plot)
 - £40 in 2014/15 (previously determined) (no change).
 - £42 in 2015/16 (increase of £2.00).
 - (iii) **Mini Golf – 2014 season**
 - £2.00 per round for all users (no change)
 - £0.50 lost ball (no change)
 - £5.00 damaged club (no change)
 - £6.00 group ticket (up to 4 players – saving £2.00) (no change)
 - £10.00 loyalty ticket (7 rounds bought in advance) (no change).
- (c) That it be recommended to the Council meeting scheduled for 2 December 2013 that the following list of potential new projects be included within the 2014/15 budget:-
- (1) **Creation of Neighbourhood Plan** - £7,500 (new item) (one off);
 - (2) **Replacement IT & Software** - £850 (new item) (with £850 in each of years 2015/16 and 2016/17); and
 - (3) **Chains of Office** – (i) Velvet Collar – £500 and (ii) Additional Links (4 off) - £300.
- (d) That the revised staffing particulars (confidential note) be approved.
- (e) That an information gathering exercise be carried out in respect of staff time allocation for the town council's services.
- (f) That investigations be made into the ownership status of the Red Well which is actually located in the Parish of Marwood.

31. REFERRAL FROM THE PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE – DISPOSAL OF ASSET

Submitted – A report to consider the recommendation of the Partnership Committee regarding the disposal of an asset, namely the curtain lights which previously illuminated the Market Cross, which comprised part of the town council's fixed asset register, and sought approval for the changes necessary to the register to enable determination of the issue by Council on 2 December 2013, including a summary of the light's history and concerns by Cllr Cooke, submitted for members' consideration, as he was absent from the meeting. Discussion ensued.

Resolved – That, it be recommended to the Council meeting on 2 December 2013, that the curtain lights are not disposed of and that the Partnership Committee should make endeavours to relocate the lights at another suitable location.

32. EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL

Submitted - Pursuant to Council Minute 33/Jun/12 and in accordance with local council good practice, a report outlining an assessment of the effectiveness of this Council's internal controls with regard to the financial year 2012/13, including risk assessment, control systems, internal audit, independence and competence.

Resolved – (a) That it be agreed that the Council's system of internal audit is effective.
 (b) That it be agreed that this review will form part of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

33. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (in respect of Minute 34 below)

Resolved – That, under the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 §1(2), the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the matter referred to at Minute 34 below, due to the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

34. RISK ASSESSMENT AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Submitted – Pursuant to Council Minute 128/Jan/13, a report incorporating this Council's Risk Assessment and Financial Management document, in accordance with the decision to review the document during the cycle prior to the formulation of the budget each year.

Resolved – That the Risk Assessment and Financial Management document, as now submitted, be recommended for approval at the Council meeting scheduled for 2 December 2013.