

**BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

13 JANUARY 2014

PRESENT:- Councillor Cooke (in the Chair); Councillors Blissett, Hinchcliffe, Robinson and Watson.

Also in attendance:- Councillor Deacon.

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

35. ACCEPTANCE, OR OTHERWISE, OF APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Kinch and Mrs Moorhouse.

Resolved – That Councillor Kinch and Mrs Moorhouse's apologies be accepted.

36. 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.

37. RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING – 18 NOVEMBER 2013 – MINUTES

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

38. BUDGET MONITORING REPORTS

Submitted – A report and associated appendices relating to payments and receipts for the period 12 November 2013 to 6 January 2014, income and expenditure relating to the month end of December 2013 (Month 9) and income and expenditure by cost centre.

Resolved – That the information be received and noted.

39. INTERNAL AUDIT 2013/14 – HALF-YEAR INTERNAL CONTROL REPORTS

Submitted – Pursuant to the appointment of Mr G. Fletcher as this Council's Internal Auditor for 2013/14 (Council Minute 104/Oct/10 and 20(A)/May/13 refers) and as laid out in the Terms of Reference document (approved at Council Minute 131/Dec/10), a report stating that half-year internal control checks had been carried out on two areas of work, namely Creditors and Mini Golf – Collection of Income. It was stressed that, whilst there were five possible levels of Assurance ranging from Full Assurance to No Assurance, the levels awarded were Full Assurance for both areas of work. Only one low priority issue had been identified and it was noted that a way of implementing the subsequent recommendation would be considered prior to the opening of the 2014 Mini Golf season.

Resolved – That the information contained in the half-year internal control reports, together with the recommended action, be noted.

40. BUDGET 2014/15 – FINAL CONSIDERATION

Submitted – Pursuant to Minutes 24/Sep/13 and 30/Nov/13, a report incorporating prospective final details in respect of the 2014/15 budget, with a view to final consideration being submitted to the budgetary Council meeting scheduled for 20 January 2014. To help Members in their deliberations, details were supplied of the original 2013/14 budgetary figures, the projected final expenditure for 2013/14 and the previously

recommended budgetary figures for 2014/15 were outlined in the report itself and in the financial details in the Appendix. It was noted that Durham County Council's deadline date for Precept notification was 31 January 2014.

Members were reminded of the overall parameters which had to continue to be applied to the budgetary exercise, including the effects of the Local Council Tax Support Grant (LCTSG) to the budget and the fact that there would be no 'capping' proposals for local councils for 2014/15 but that these might be introduced in future years. A choice of strategies were outlined.

Reference was made to the provisional agreement by the full Council of three new budgetary items to be included in the 2014/15 budget (at Minute 78/Dec/13). It was also confirmed that one item had not been approved by the full Council.

The current overall financial situation was outlined, including the fact that a full review of the Council's Reserves was undertaken by the Resources Committee (Minute 21/Nov/13 refers) and subsequently agreed by the full Council (Minute 77/Dec/13 refers). A summary of the proposed rentals and charges for 2014/15 was also provided.

Discussion ensued and specific references were made to a potential reduction of a few expenditure items through business sponsorship opportunities and the perceived lack of maintenance that was not being carried out by Durham County Council to the Market Place public toilets to which this council contributed towards. Notwithstanding, members agreed to calculate a budget on the basis of need and to incorporate the growth items considered to date, whilst being mindful of areas where savings could be made.

Resolved – (A) That the following recommendations be submitted to the Council meeting scheduled for 20 January 2014:-

(a) That the following revised budgetary allocations for 2014/15 be approved:-

- (1) **Local Government Pension** - £15,022 (increase of £500);
- (2) **Employer On Costs** - £6,838 (increase of £788);
- (3) **Dog Fouling** - £500 (no change); and
- (4) **Office Rental** - £4,540 (increase of £529).

(b) That the indicated rentals and charges be agreed:-

(i) **Play Areas**

- (a) Ten Fields - £100 for 2014/15 (increase of £40) and £100 in years 2015/16 to 2018/19 inclusive (no change)
- (b) Gate Licence Fees - that the Gate Licence fee per property remain unchanged at £1.00 (no change)

(ii) **Allotments** – (per plot)

- (a) 2014/15 – (already determined) - £40 (no change); and
- (b) 2015/16 - £42 (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); and
- £10.00 loyalty ticket (7 rounds bought in advance) (no change).

(c) That no contribution from the Council's reserves be included in the 2014/15 budget; and

(d) That a Precept of £159,573 be approved (being the Town Council's net budget demand of £173,675 less the LCTSS Grant of £14,102).

(B) That the detailed 2014/15 budget, as now agreed, be submitted for consideration by the full Council at its meeting scheduled for 20 January 2014.

(C) That it be recommended to the Partnership Committee that opportunities of business sponsorship should be explored to contribute towards the costs of specific budgetary items such as Christmas lighting and floral displays.

(D) That Durham County Council be advised that this Council is dissatisfied of the lack of general maintenance not being carried out to the Market Place public toilets and enquires as to whether the facility can be transferred to this council's responsibility.