

BARNARD CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL
11TH JANUARY, 2010

PRESENT:- Councillor Yarker (Town Mayor)(in the Chair); Councillors Mrs Bailes, Blissett, Cooke, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Hinchcliffe (Minutes 125 to part of 129), Peat, Watson and Wood (Minutes 125 to part of 129).

125. APOLOGIES:- Councillor Mrs Dixon.

126. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with standard local government procedures, 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.

127. FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING – 21ST DECEMBER, 2009 – MINUTES

Resolved – That the Minutes be received.

128. MARKET PLACE PUBLIC TOILETS – PROPOSED RE-OPENING

Submitted - Pursuant to Minute 114/Dec/09, a report updating Members' regarding the proposed re-opening of the Market Place public toilets, including potential costs and the recommendations of the Finance Committee. It was also reported that the Head of Direct Services at Durham County Council had confirmed that he agreed in principle with the project, with that Council's proportion of the cost being met from existing budgets.

Resolved – That the following recommendations of the Finance Committee, as now amended, in respect of the re-opening of the Market Place public toilets be approved:-

- (a) the inclusion of an additional Expenditure item, amounting to £13,000, in the proposed 2010/11 budget, with any potential underspend being transferred into this Council's general reserves; and
- (b) a one-off capital contribution of £4,000 being allocated for the capital refurbishments, thereby reducing the capital allocation transferring to this Council's general reserves.

129. PRECEPT AND BUDGET 2010/11

Submitted – A report summarising the deliberations of the Finance Committee on a prospective budget for 2010/11, incorporating the Committee's recommendations in respect of the rental and charging arrangements and summarising the capital and Cumulative Fund situations. The report concluded with recommendations in respect of the Precept and the overall 2010/11 budget.

Background details for each budgetary item were provided and the budgetary figures for 2009/10 were included for comparative purposes, including projected 'end-of-year' figures for that year. Specific reference was made to the fact that the full Council had, at Minute 110/Dec/09, agreed with the Finance Committee that 13 prospective new items should be included in the 2010/11 budget.

Specific discussions took place at the meeting on a number of budgetary parameters, including the need to build up the Council's reserves, the use of double taxation funding to offset part of the Precept increase, the self-containment of the Allotments budget and the overall need to set a budget which was both realistic and affordable.

It was confirmed that the recommended Precept increase of £28,623 would result in an additional annual payment per household in a Band D property of approximately £14.93, i.e. approximately 29p per week. The annual contribution would be £78.95 compared with the 2009/10 contribution of £64.02.

Resolved – (a) That the following specific courses of action be undertaken:-

- (i) that, in respect of the 2011/12 allotment rental and the prospective self-containment of the Allotments budget, consideration of those associated matters be deferred until the option of incorporating salary costs in the provision of the allotments service is investigated fully, with the matter to be determined before the end of March 2010; and
- (ii) that, in respect of Section 106 agreements, all such agreements be obtained and scrutinised to ensure that all relevant monies have been allocated to the correct recipients.

(b) That the following budgetary recommendations of the Finance Committee be approved:-

- (i) that the following rentals and charges be agreed:-

(A) Ten Fields (Barnard Castle Football Club Rental)

- £60 in 2010/11 (previously determined); and
- £60 in 2011/12 (previously determined);

(NOTE – the current lease is on a ‘hold-over’ basis until a separate review takes place in March 2013 (Council Minute 234/Apr/09 refers);

(B) Allotments (per plot)

- £40 in 2010/11 (previously determined); and
- 2011/12 – see (a)(i) above.

(C) Mini Golf

- Per round - £1.00 for all users (no change);
- Lost ball – 50p (no change); and
- Broken club - £5.00 (no change).

- (ii) that the overall need to increase the Council’s reserves be noted;

- (iii) that a one-off capital contribution of £4,000 be allocated for the Market Place public toilets refurbishments;

- (iv) that, following the decision at (iii) above, the remainder of the capital monies arising from the sale of the Brittons Field allotments site be transferred to this Council’s reserves;

- (v) that the 2009/10 underspend in respect of the Council’s Contingencies be transferred into general reserves, with it borne in mind that the underspend to be used for potential County Council transfers;

- (vi) that the double taxation payment for 2010/11 be allocated as a general income item to offset part of the Precept increase;

- (vii) that a 2010/11 Precept of £151,143 be served on Durham County Council; and

- (viii) that the revenue budget for 2010/11 be as shown on the Appendix to these Minutes.