



MINUTES OF THE F&GP MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2020 AT 7PM
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, 4 SAFFRON ROAD, BIGGLESWADE

PRESENT:

Cllr H Ramsay (Chair)
Cllr I Bond
Cllr G Fage
Cllr M Russell

Mr Philip Truppin BTC Locum Clerk
Miss H Calvert Meeting Administrator

Members of Public – None

21/0101 1. APOLOGIES

Cllr M North, Cllr F Foster, Cllr D Albone (Vic Chair)

ABSENT

None

21/0102 2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

21/0102.1 a. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – Item 6e – Cllr Bond in relation to the grant application from Biggleswade History Society.

21/0102.2 b. Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – Item 6e – Cllr Russell in relation to the grant application from RAF Air Cadets.

21/0103 3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

There were no public comments.

21/0104 4. MINUTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF MEETINGS

21/0104.1 a. Members received and approved the Minutes of the Finance & General Purpose (F&GP) Meeting held on Tuesday 19 November 2019.

21/0105

5. **MATTERS ARISING**

Members requested a progress update on the Biggleswade Town Council website (Item 6d). It was noted that the setting up of a new website to comply with the Website Accessibility Regulations has not yet been actioned. Councillors considered that a tender process for a new website provider should be commenced.

The issuing of a pre-paid debit card to the Office Manager has not yet been actioned (Item 6e). The Town Clerk will need to initiate the issuing of this debit card.

Members discussed the resolution that salary payments are wholly dealt with by George Hay Partnership LLP (Item 6e). It was agreed that this proposal is progressed to establish a procedure for authorising these bulk payments.

The purchase of a timer and the use of a microphone during meetings has not yet been actioned (Item 6h).

21/0106

6. **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

21/0106.1

a. **Budgets 2020 – 2021 - R**

Members raised concerns over the increase of the precept and certain expenditure figures within the budget.

Members were informed that it is good practice to increase the precept each year to avoid the possibility of having to make larger increases to the precept at a later date. It was noted that increasing the precept also helps to ensure that the budget holds a working balance of at least three months.

It was felt possible that the £20k surplus needed to rectify the shortfall in general reserve level could be found through savings. Therefore, it was suggested to adopt the budget (Option 1) which does not address the deficit by further increasing the precept.

The following was agreed:

- Members to raise any queries regarding the budget at the Finance Training meeting on 28th January 2020.
- Members to pragmatically raise any queries regarding the budget, month on month, to gain a clearer picture of the figures.
- Members to review more closely the setting of next year's budget.

It was **RESOLVED** to discuss the lease renewal of Rose Lane Car Park at the next F&GP meeting on 3rd March 2020. It was noted that a Solicitor would need to write to the Landlord of Rose Lane Car Park to initiate this lease renewal. It was agreed for the Locum Clerk to approach a firm of Solicitors for this work.

It was **RESOLVED** unanimously to continue with the adoption of the Option 2 budget. It was noted that if later savings were to be found then this would reduce the time needed to resolve the shortfall in the general reserve level.

It was further **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** that Council sets the precept for 2020/21 at £1,166,677.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Council that each Committee monitor its budget at each of its meetings.

21/0106.2 b. **Treasury Management Policy**

Members discussed the proposal to adopt the Treasury Management Policy.

It was noted that investing in this way would allow for greater interest than can be earned on the Lloyds current account. It was noted that money can be taken out of the PSDF CCLA account as and when needed.

Members wished to receive regular updates on these investments. It was agreed for further conversations to be had with Derek Kemp, of DCK Accounting Solutions Ltd, in order to understand the process more fully.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to Council that the Treasury Management Policy be adopted and to authorise the opening of both the Lloyds FRTD and CCLA PSDF accounts.

21/0106.3 c. **CCLA**

This item was considered during Item 6b.

21/0106.4 d. **NatWest Bank**

Members reviewed the NatWest accounts.

Members raised concerns that Standing Order and Direct Debit payments were being made from the NatWest Current Account rather than from the Lloyds Current Account.

It was **RECOMMENDED** to close all NatWest accounts and for the funds in these accounts to be transferred over to the Lloyds Current Account.

21/0106.5 e. **Grants and Sponsorships 2020/21 - D**

Members requested that the grant applications are reviewed at the F&GP meeting on 3rd March 2020.

Members requested that the list of grant applications be displayed in the same format as in previous years. Members also requested that a summary of what the grant monies will be used for should be displayed alongside the requested grants.

It was **RESOLVED** for the Locum Clerk to circulate to Committee members the Grant Application forms to go alongside the F&GP agenda for the 3rd March 2020 meeting.

21/0107 7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

No items for information.

21/0108 8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no questions from Members of the Public.

21/0109 9. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

The following resolution will be **moved** that is advisable in the public interest that the public and press are excluded whilst the following exempt item issue is discussed.

(12a Proposed Workshop and Store)

Pursuant to section 1(2) of the public bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Council **resolve** to exclude the public and press by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted.