

MINUTES OF FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 12 JANUARY 2016
AT THE OFFICES OF BIGGLESWADE TOWN COUNCIL
THE OLD COURT HOUSE, SAFFRON ROAD BIGGLESWADE

Present:

Cllr M North (Chairman)
Cllr D Albone
Cllr Mrs H Ramsay
Cllr Mrs M Russell
Cllr D Strachan
Cllr M Foster

Mr R McGregor, Town Clerk, Biggleswade Town Council
Mr D Kemp (Accounting Solutions)
Mrs J Durn, Minute Taker, Biggleswade Town Council

Also Present: Mr Glyn Chambers of Local Community Solutions Ltd
No Members of Public

1. APOLOGIES

Cllr I Bond, Cllr T Woodward

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

To receive Statutory Declarations of Interests from Members in relation to:

- (a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in any agenda item – None declared.
- (b) Non-pecuniary interests in any agenda item – All Members have an interest in the Precept.

3. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions.

There were no questions.

4. MINUTES OF MEETINGS

For Members to receive the minutes of the F&GP meeting held on 17th November 2015.

Members received and approved the Minutes of the F&GP Meeting held on 17 November 2015.

5. MATTERS ARISING

From the F&GP Meeting 17th November 2015.

There were no Matters Arising from the Minutes of the F&GP Meeting held on 17 November 2015.

6. ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Budgets 2016 - 2017

Members were asked to consider and recommend to Town Council, Budgets for 2016 – 2017.

Mr D Kemp (Accounting Solutions) took the Members through the budgets and addressed the points raised. Mr Kemp was pleased to report that he had achieved a target which was within the 2% increase for the precept. Provision has also been made for additional rent of the upper floor of the Magistrates Court, as a result of a decision to refurbish this area.

Cllr Mrs M Russell was uncomfortable with the proposed amount of £37K for the market, given that fees were reduced by half as an incentive for the last part of 2015. Unfortunately, there has been no impact on the market from this action, and it could be that we will fall short of this figure. Cllr D Strachan also felt that the proposed market income is totally unrealistic.

It was however agreed that there are a lot of uncertainties, and that additional income will provide a surplus which would offset any loss, such as the Orchard Community Centre (once up and running), which will most certainly have a beneficial impact.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the Budgets 2016-2017 be presented to full Council for approval.

b. Local Community Solutions Ltd (LCS)

Following the F&GP meeting on 17th November 2015, it was suggested that Council develop a 4 to 5 year Business Plan to include all future proposals. Using estimated costs, the Plan will create a medium term financial strategy, which when divided by 5 will tell the Council the figure needed to be included for Capital.

Members were asked to consider proposals from LCS as laid out in the attached documents.

Mr Glyn Chambers of LCS gave an overview covering their role and the background and purpose of the proposals being presented.

The basis of this proposal is to support BTC in preparing a Strategic Plan. The plan will include targets, objectives, and priorities. It will form the basis of a new 5 year Plan, and as priorities change it can be adapted by new Council's in the future.

Members discussed the benefits of a Business Plan at length and agreed that there is a definite need for this to be put in place as soon as possible. It is the practice of LCS to hold discussions with Councillors for one full day, usually a Saturday. This was acceptable to Members.

It was **RECOMMENDED** that the proposals as laid out be taken forward to the next full Council Meeting for approval.

c. Grants

Members considered applications for Community Grants. The schedule and copies of grant applications were circulated with this Agenda.

Grants were agreed for 2016 and are recorded on the attached list.

- Item No 10: Ivel Sprinter: this item will be put on to the next Council Agenda.
- Item No 11: MK Community Mediation: This item has been withdrawn.

d. Sponsorship request – Biggleswade Town Cricket Club

Biggleswade Town Council agreed to a request to sponsor match balls as in previous years at a cost of £10 per game for the amount of £50.

e. Grant Application – RBL – Biggleswade Branch

Members agreed to this application, providing that the requested funding of £500 goes to the local branch.

7. **ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

It was **NOTED** that The Orchard Community Centre will be managed by the F&GP.

8. **PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

A period of up to 15 minutes is permitted to allow members of the public to ask questions.

There were no questions.