

## EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at 6.30 pm on **MONDAY 14 DECEMBER 2015** at Evesham Town Hall, Market Place, Evesham

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr C D Homer  
Vice-Chairman Cllr J H Smith OBE

Councillors: Cllr A P Booth (Deputy Mayor), Cllr J Bulman,  
Cllr M D Elliman, Cllr M S Goodge,  
Cllr F Kaler (Town Mayor), Cllr Mrs F S Smith,  
Cllr Mrs R Whiting

Officer: Mr S D Carter (Town Clerk)

Also present was Cllr C Tether and Mr S Riley (Evesham Business Partnerships Manager at Wychavon District Council)

### **28. Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies, all members were present.

### **29. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest (if any)**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **30. Minutes of the last meeting including questions as to the progress of any item**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2015 were circulated with the agenda. It was **RESOLVED** to accept them as a true and accurate record.

### **31. Presentation and Funding Request from Mr Shawn Riley – Evesham Business Partnerships Manager**

Circulated with the agenda was an annual report from Mr Riley detailing where the current years funding had been spent, the projects supported and investment created. It also detailed the request for the forthcoming years funding from Evesham Town Council, Mr Riley had once again requested funding of £15,000.

Mr Riley's report detailed the amount of support it had given local festivals and events. It was emphasised that for almost all these events, the amount specified was not actually given to the organiser but was support in kind, whereby Mr Riley had provided printing services, publicity, road closures, etc. The Town Council also supported many of these events through grants given to the organisers, and Mr Riley was keen to explain the difference and emphasise that the Town Council was not paying twice.

For the coming financial year, Mr Riley was seeking £15,000 from the Town Council. £3,000 for attracting inward investment which aims to attract businesses to Evesham. £3,000 for business support/development grants which is a scheme to aid local small businesses grow by providing financial support. £9,000 for local distinctiveness which is about encouraging events and projects that draws people to the town.

It was noted that Mr Riley had paid for the tree work in the market place after it had been established that it was WDC's tree. This had been done to speed up the process and was a small amount.

It was noted that WDC were contributing £10,000 less than they had previously but Mr Riley confirmed that the impact had been minimal. It meant that Mr Riley had to work harder to find funding from other sources, such as section 106.

It was noted that the grants to businesses were significant and it could be argued that they were not small businesses. Mr Riley stated that the report included successful grants for European funding, which Mr Riley assisted businesses in applying for, therefore it had not come out of Evesham's budget. In addition, any grants to small businesses were vetted by a committee at WDC and not by Mr Riley himself. It was also highlighted that this was match funding, therefore the businesses themselves had to put in at least 50% of what they were seeking.

In response to a question as to what difference the Business Development project makes, Mr Riley highlighted that in the summer there was an event on almost every weekend, much to the envy of other local towns, and this could not be done without this funding. He highlighted the success of the Battle of Evesham event which again, he and WDC and the Town Council had been the main financial supporters of.

It was **RESOLVED** to recommend that £15,000 is included in the budget as a contribution to the budget spent by the Evesham Business Partnerships Manager. One member voted against this recommendation.

### **31. Town Council Budget 2016/17**

Circulated with the agenda was a draft budget and a report detailing the proposed charges for the cemetery and town hall. It was highlighted that much of the budget had been based on the recommendations of the Estimates meeting held in September.

It was reported that the tax base had increased once more, reflecting the continued growth of the town and it was noted that the Council tax support grant from Wychavon District Council was to stay the same. The Clerk reported that there would be significant additional staffing costs incurred mainly due to changes in the rates of national insurance that employers would have to pay from the 2016 financial year.

In response to a question it was confirmed that the income from the Lengthsman scheme had been cut, previously the Town Council had received a temporary increase, but this had not continued.

It was proposed and seconded and **RESOLVED** to recommend to Council on 11 January 2016 that:

- a. The budget as attached at appendix A is approved;
- b. The precept requirement on the rating authority, excluding grant (being Wychavon District Council) of £431,647 (four hundred and thirty one thousand, six hundred and forty seven pounds) is approved. It was noted that in addition WDC would give the Town Council a council tax support grant of £42,718.
- c. The Charges as attached at appendix B is approved.

It was **NOTED** that the funding for the budget would be as follows:

Planned total expenditure	£583,565
Income	£110,200
To be funded from precept	£430,647
To be funded from Council Tax Support Grant	£42,718
Dividing by the tax base	8476.41
Town Component of Council Tax for Band D property	£50.81
Town component for 2015/16	£47.89
Annual increase per band D property for 16/17	£2.91
Monthly increase per band D property	£0.24p
Annual Increase	6.09%

### **32. Investment Update**

The Town Clerk had circulated a report with the agenda advising members of the current value of its investment with the CCLA in their property fund. The Council had invested £100,000 on 31 March 2015, which was now worth £99,794 (up from £97,638 when last reported to the committee). It was explained that the reduction in the value of the investment was because there was a bid/offer charge deducted when the investment was first made, this had almost been recovered.

Interest earned from the investment (not including management fees) was 4.78% in September, 4.75% in October, and 4.72% in November. The overall fund size had increased from £480 million in October to just over £540 million in November. The second dividend of £1,254 was received at the end of October.

Members continued to be pleased with the performance of the investment. The Clerk did reiterate that this investment was considered 'high risk' and long term as it was in property, and that the Council had an investment policy that stated it would not invest more than £100,000 in long term investments. This policy would be reviewed in the near future.

**NOTED**

**27. Matters of urgency raised for information only, at the discretion of the Chairman**

There were no matters raised under this agenda item.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 7.00 pm.

COUNCILLOR C D HOMER  
CHAIRMAN