

EVESHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE** held at 7.00 pm on **MONDAY 19 OCTOBER 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)

22. Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies, all members were present.

23. Declarations of pecuniary or other interest (if any)

There were no declarations of interest.

24. Minutes of the last meeting including questions as to the progress of any item

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2015 were circulated with the agenda. It was **RESOLVED** to accept them as a true and accurate record.

25. Budget Estimates for the 2016/17 financial year

Circulated with the agenda was a report explaining that the Council would shortly be required to set its budget for the forthcoming financial year. Under the new committee system, the Clerk was keen for Members to take a greater role in formulating the budget, hence the meeting. It was noted that this meeting was not making formal recommendations to Council at present, but instead would help feed into the budget preparation which would be formally considered by this committee at a meeting on 14 December, and then recommended to Council.

Also circulated with the report was a draft budget. The draft budget was as of the current financial year apart from budget headings which were known in advance, for example wages as it could be forecasted what the increase would be because of the contractual and cost of living increments had been incorporated into these figures.

The following comments were made regarding specific budget headings and cost codes.

Cost centre 2 Interest on investments

It was noted that the investment in the CCLA continues to perform well and that the Council should review its policy regarding long term investments.

Cost Centre 3 Town Hall

The Clerk was asked to investigate a bid for New Homes Bonus monies in order to meet the cost of decoration, new floor, and new projection screens at the Town Hall. The Clerk did state that he was of the opinion that the maintenance budget for the Town Hall should be increased just to meet the annual costs of meeting the various issues associated with the town hall. Any underspend could then be earmarked for future projects.

Cost Centre 4 Cemeteries

It was noted that income from the Cemetery lodge should increase in the forthcoming financial year.

Code 83 Grounds maintenance, increase by £1,000 to £13,000

Code 86 New Equipment – increase by £500 to £1,500

Code 87 Buildings maintenance. It was highlighted that the Council would need to consider what it does with the Cemetery Lodge, which at some point in the near future will require significant investment. Members agreed that the Clerk should get a survey of the building so its condition can be established. Increase by £1,000 to £2,000

Code 88 Cemetery Lodge Maintenance - the Council had invested a lot recently in the cemetery lodge; it was therefore felt this budget could be reduced by £1,500 to £2,000.

The Clerk highlighted that the paths in Waterside and Bengeworth cemetery were beginning to deteriorate and that medium term the Council would have to begin to think about re-tarmacking.

It was commented that the mess room for the outdoor staff appeared to be in a poor state. The Clerk informed Members that he had spoken staff recently regarding their mess room facilities and they had insisted they were happy. The Clerk would however look to have the room painted in due course.

Cost centre 10 Shelters seats and signs

Code 211 Seats & signs - this budget included the maintenance of bus shelters. The number of shelters that the Council as responsible for was to increase. The Clerk also asked Members to consider new signs at the cemeteries and allotments, as at present there were either none or they were in very poor condition. It was stated that residents of HM Prison Long Lartin do sign making and that the Clerk should contact them. Increase by £400 to £1,000

Cost Centre 12 Enhancement

Code 250 – The Council had made savings by switching supplier of the plants, and the Council received a lot of praise for its floral displays. It was noted that the costs have risen. Increase by £500 to £10,500

Cost Centre 15 Almonry TIC

Code 341 Repairs and Maintenance. The Clerk stated that he believed the maintenance budget for such a large and historical building was inadequate at present. Recent work to the back office was likely to use the entire remaining budget, and continued issues associated with these old buildings continually arise. Increase by £1,200 to £5,000.

Code 343 Cleaning. It was explained that the Almonry would like to take on a professional cleaning contract to ensure the museum is looking its best all year round. At the moment, staff were required to clean their own toilet, and the rooms themselves were hardly cleaned due to lack of resources. Members agreed that a cleaning contract for the Almonry should be included. A price had been obtained of £2,400 per annum. Increase cleaning budget by £2,000 to £2,400.

Cost Centre 16 Christmas Decorations

Code 360 Christmas Lights. It was explained that the Christmas Light contract would be up for tender after this coming Christmas. It was commented that Christmas lights were an emotive subject but also very subjective. Increase by £1,500 to £18,000.

17 Administration

Cost Code 398 Elections. This code was significantly increased in the current financial year because it was an election year. Reduce by £6,000 to £5,000.

New Code Town Plan – assign £6,000 formally in elections to Town Plan.

18 Insurance

Cost code 450 Annual Insurance. With the Council looking to add additional items to the insurance, bus shelters etc., the premium was likely to rise. Increase by £400 to £9,000.

22 Public Clocks

Maintenance and winding. The Council had made significant savings by changing the company that maintained the clocks. Members commented that a clock winder was hard to come by and it maybe that the Council should look to increase the amount he is paid, which was currently £100 per quarter. One of the clock faces at Hampton may also need some attention. Increase by £1,000 to £3,000.

There were a few additional items that the Clerk would double check such as the contribution to the contact centre, market rates and a few others.

NOTED

26. Event Grant Application – Port Street Fayre

A completed grant application form had been circulated along with the Town Clerk's covering report regarding the 2016 Port Street Fayre. It was noted that a representative from the Festival of Brass Committee was on hand to answer any questions.

It was explained that the organisers were applying for a grant of £500. The Town Council had never financially assisted this event before.

It was **RESOLVED** that a grant of £500 be awarded, in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 s137.

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 9.00 pm.

COUNCILLOR C D HOMER
CHAIRMAN