

MIDDLEWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council's Finance, Policy and Governance Committee, held in Room 3A, Victoria Building, Lewin Street, Middlewich on Thursday 26th October 2017, commencing at 6.00pm.

PRESENT

Councillor S Moss (in the Chair) and Councillors MA Hunter, K Kingston, DJ Latham, SN McGrory, B Walmsley and W Walmsley

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor JD Parry (for item 195)

OFFICERS PRESENT

DJ French, Assistant Town Clerk

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor PJ Farrell (family reasons)

193 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Declarations of Interest were made:

- Councillor K Kingston declared an interest in minute 197 Town Council budget 2018 – 19 as a member of Middlewich Heritage Trust;
- Councillor DJ Latham declared an interest in minute 197 Town Council budget as a supplier of services to the Middlewich Mexon market.

194 MINUTES

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4th September be confirmed as a correct record.

195 COUNCIL EXPENDITURE

The Committee considered the item below referred from the Town Council on 16th October

Members' Item - Councillor JD Parry:

“Middlewich Town Council pledges that it is important that Middlewich taxpayers' money is used effectively and openly. All expenditure over £2,000 and not deemed essential for the running of the council will be debated and voted on at full council”

Councillor Parry updated the Committee on research carried out among other local Councils regarding their thresholds for full Council approval of expenditure; some examples he had found specified all expenditure above £2,000 had to be approved by full Council whereas other councils stated items over £4,000.

Members discussed the current Town Council Financial Regulations which specified:

“Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is determined by:

The council for all items over £5,000...”

It was noted that the Financial Regulations were approved on an annual basis.

Members discussed the current arrangements whereby expenditure that was within the approved Town Council budget could be spent by the appropriate committee but expenditure that was not in budget or over budget would be considered at full Council

RESOLVED:

That:

- (a) a statement be prepared from this Committee in plain English to be placed on the website outlining the current financial rules regarding expenditure as contained within the Financial Regulations;
- (b) the Town Council’s Financial Regulations be reviewed at an early stage with the Responsible Financial Officer; and
- (c) the website be amended to include a separate section for financial information to provide greater clarity.

196 CHAINS FOR THE DEPUTY MAYOR AND THE MAYOR’S CONSORT

The Committee discussed repairs and adjustments to the Mayor’s chain and Deputy Mayor’s chain and a replacement for the consort’s chain. It was noted that the consort’s chain was lost and an insurance claim had been submitted. Proposals and costings had been received from Vaughtons.

RESOLVED:

That

- (a) the list of repairs to the Mayor’s Chain be approved subject to a maximum cost of £500 but the pendant on the Deputy Mayor’s ribbon is not placed on the Mayor’s Chain, as it will be too cumbersome and the pendant will be at risk of further damage;

(b) the Deputy Mayor's ribbon be replaced with a simple gold chain and lapel clips with the existing pendent included and repaired, subject to a maximum cost of £500 for all the works; and

(c) any action regarding the Consort's Chain be deferred to await information from the insurance company.

PART TWO

RESOLVED: that the meeting be moved into Part 2 session on the grounds that the matter to be discussed involves financial and staffing matters

197 TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET 2018-19

The Committee considered the first version of the draft budget for 2018-19.

The Chairman reported a letter from Cheshire Constabulary regarding PCSO support and the option to fund additional PCSO support.

Members went through the budget raising the following points and queries:

- Ticket sales, book sales, advertising – why was the income amount increased to £2500?
- Sponsorship – clarification was sought as to where the sponsorship came from;
- Events mobile – this was on a contract and the contract end date would be confirmed;
- Contacts list – why had this been reduced to zero?
- Hospitality had been reduced to zero but it was noted that this came out of individual budgets;
- Shires Payroll Services – Why was this reduced by £500?
- Bank charges – could this figure be reduced as online banking had been introduced and cheques were used less frequently;
- Power of General Competence Grants – apart from schools what did this cover?
- Over 70s Party – it was noted that the proposed amount would not cover the costs as already allocated for this year's party so would need to be reviewed;
- Cemetery Grant – reduced to zero – clarification sought;
- PCSO – this would be clarified with Cheshire Constabulary;
- Neighbourhood Plan support – it was noted that funding had been achieved but the sum of £1000 was required as contingency;
- Signage strategy and banners etc – why was this amount reduced? Was best value sought for banners and other printed materials?
- Vision working budget and events – why was this reduced by £2,500?

- Christmas lights – the contract amount with the new supplier was £14,000 per annum. The amount for the Christmas tree would be confirmed and the expansion/contingency amount could be removed.

RESOLVED: that the matters raised at the meeting be clarified and the draft budget be considered further at the next meeting.

Date of next meeting –Monday 6 November 2017 at 6.00pm

Cllr S Moss

Chairman

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