

BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held in the Council Chamber at Arms Everytne House, Blyth, NE24 2AS on Tuesday 21st May 2013 at 6.30pm

Present:

Councillors

B Elliott, K Ellis, A Gibbs-Barton, G T Knox, R Parker, J R Potts, O Potts and J Reid (arrived 6.35pm).

Officers

S Noddings (Town Clerk, Corporate Services)

Forsyth L (Committee Clerk)

Members of the Public

None

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Kath Nisbet.

2. Disclosures of Interest

Cllr Gibbs-Barton proposed that the Councillors present declare an annual dispensation as Council Tax payers.

3. Minutes of Finance Committee held on Thursday 14th March 2013

Cllr Elliott raised concerns regarding point 4.2 in the minutes, in particular concerning the concentration of funds associated with the Briardale Community Centre.

Councillor Potts outlined that funding was associated with the Councillors Allowance and that financial support was allocated following application.

Councillor Gibbs-Barton outlined that at the Annual Meeting and Council it was agreed that a Community Grants Committee was established, and that this Committee would provide an area to further discuss concerns as this section of the Agenda is primarily concerned with the veracity of the minutes as record of the Committee Meeting.

Councillor G T Knox raised a Point of Order concerning the discussion of issues out with the confines of Blyth Town Council.

Cllr B Elliott raised an issue with the Finances as published on the Town Council website. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) outlined that this will be investigated immediately, whilst outlining issues experienced by the Officers during the process of bringing the websites management in house. **Action Sue Noddings**

Cllr J R Potts enquired as to whether the County Council had provided a costing breakdown of the renovation and establishment of the Gateway Roundabout at South Beach. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) confirmed that the request for a breakdown had been made; however a response was still awaited and is to be pursued. **Action: David Westwell Assets Officer**

4. Updates on Financial Reports

4.1 Update on the 2013-2014 Investment Accounts

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) provided an update on the 2013-2014 Investment Accounts including recommendations received.

Councillor J R Potts outlined that the membership of the Review Committee was to be clarified.

Councillor Ellis informed the Committee that himself, Cllr J R Potts and Cllr R Parker had met with John Harrison (National Manager – Public Sector Relationships), a representative of the Co-operative Bank to discuss concerns regarding the stability of the bank. Cllr Ellis confirmed that reassurances were provided and all concerns were addressed.

4.2 Introduction to the Management Control Report

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) provided an outline of the Management Control report and outlined the effect of the report in providing the Committees with the responsibility for control and related actions.

5. Update on Office Move

An update of the Office Move was provided by the Town Clerk (Corporate Services). The outline included discussion of progress and potential for expansion due to the new office facilities.

An outline was also provided on previous purchases including furniture and telephone/IT provisions and the conclusion of agreements with the previous landlord at Ebor House.

Councillor O Potts noted that there has been a notable improvement in the health of the Officers following the move from Ebor House and wished to thank the Officers for assisting and accommodating the move.

Councillor J R Potts questioned whether a list had been generated or processes enacted to cover gaps in office inventory. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) confirmed that an inventory audit was currently being conducted.

The Chair, Councillor K Ellis outlined that the Officers were seeking a decision from Councillors on how to display assets and that any suggestions and recommendations would be more than gratefully received.

Councillor Gordon Knox wished to place on the record that the Officers have done very well in terms of delivery costs and facilitating the move.

6. Proposal regarding control of contractual agreements

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) briefed the Committee of a proposal to review contractual agreements in order to assure a more professional relationship with Northumberland County Council, in particular concerning services and inspection of Town Council Assets.

Councillor K Ellis provided an outline of the current relationship and a wider overview of the role of Blyth Town Council.

Councillor A Gibbs-Barton proposed that the Procurement Policy be carried forward to the Policy Working Group. Cllr O Potts seconded this motion.

7. Items for information and urgent matters

7.1 Plants/Refreshments

An outline was provided concerning the possibility of plant and refreshment facilities within the Council Offices. A quote has been received for the service provision and is to be circulated to all Councillors for comments. **Action: Sue Noddings**

7.2 Town Clerk (Democratic Services) Report

The Committee then considered a report titled 'Support for Town Councillors' from the Town Clerk (Democratic Services). It was enquired how many laptops are being used by the Councillors. Councillor O Potts replied that at present 3 Councillors have laptops from the Town Council.

The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) noted that the laptop computers are to be audited by the Internal Auditor in June/July.

Councillor Elliott enquired regarding the trialling and provision of tablets. The Town Clerk (Corporate Services) confirmed that she was trialling an iPad and that a report was to be produced.

A discussion was held concerning the possible testing of an Android tablet in order to test compatibility for Microsoft Hardware. It was resolved that the Committee Clerk is to trial an Android tablet and report back to the Committee. **Action: Liam Forsyth**

8. Date of next meeting

8.1 It was agreed that the next meeting is to take place on Thursday 11th July 2013 in the Council Chamber at Arms Everyne House at 6.30pm.

Meeting closed at 7.20pm

Confirmed as a true record

and signed by the Chair.....

Date.....

DRAFT