

## NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance Committee held on Monday 15 December 2014 at 7.00 pm at The Gallery Woodhorn Villa Newbiggin by-the-Sea.**

### PRESENT:

Councillors: M Cholerton (Chairperson)

M Boon W Rogers A Thompson S Todd

Officer: D Earl – Town Clerk

Also present: Councillors L Burns R Dixon and M Peden.

#### **FC01/14 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRPERSON**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor M Cholerton be appointed Chairperson for the Municipal Year

#### **FC02/14 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 March 2014 be approved as a true record

#### **FC03/14 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

No new interests were declared.

#### **FC04/14 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:** That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to employment and financial and business affairs.

#### **FC05/14 EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL AUDIT**

The Town Clerk advised on changes in the national audit arrangements with the Government appointment of external auditors ceasing at the end of 2014/15 with a general requirement for audit to be undertaken depending on the level of expenditure. BDO llp had undertaken most local council audits for the past five years and the National Association of Local Councils was looking to put new arrangements in place hopefully to avoid individual councils having to make separate arrangements with external auditors.

The Town Council's Internal Auditor Richard Slater had retired but would complete the current year audit requirements to sign off the accounts for 2014/2015. A replacement Internal Auditor with extensive local government experience was available to take over responsibilities on 01 April.

**RECOMMENDED that: Malcolm Wilkinson be appointed as Internal Auditor with effect from 01 April 2015 and the Town Clerk make the necessary arrangements for the transition.**

#### **FC06/14 INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT AND PROJECTIONS FOR 2014/15**

Income and expenditure for the current financial year was reported to Members by the Town Clerk together with projections to the end of March. Most budgets would be spent as anticipated although there were some changes necessary as a result of the local and enhanced services arrangements entered into after the budget and Precept were set to be covered by service delivery and repair and replacement budgets overall. There were projected under-spends on salary provision again and on projects that would produce a likely contribution to balances around £10,000.

**RESOLVED that: the income expenditure and projections be noted**

#### **FC07/14 ENHANCED LOCAL SERVICES**

The Partnership arrangements with the County Council for the previous summer had been reviewed by the Environmental Working Group and despite being late in getting underway at the end of May the partnership had been very positive and the two dedicated employees very well received in the town. While Members felt that expectations had to be managed there was unanimous agreement to seek to have a similar arrangement for the summer months of 2015 but to commence in April so that improvements were in place for the main season.

**RECOMMENDED that: an Enhanced Services Agreement be negotiated with County Neighbourhood Services for a six month period from April 2015**

#### **FC08/14 ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS**

The year had seen some significant improvements along the bay and around the town and some further schemes were planned in conjunction with County Neighbourhood Services. It was hoped that areas around Atlee Park and the Horseshoe Steps could be implemented with new planting by next spring. Other areas would be looked at when the budget position was certain.

**RESOLVED that: the environmental schemes for Atlee Park and Horseshoe Steps be implemented as soon as practically possible**

## **FC09/14 BUDGET PLANNING – PROPOSALS FOR 2015-16**

Taking account of previous discussions the Town Clerk circulated a document containing a possible draft budget for 2015 – 16 for consideration focusing on consolidating the local enhanced services arrangements and the need to address the repair and replacement budget for Town Council assets. These included play areas; bus shelters; seats; waste bins and The Bungalow which would shortly be transferred to the Town Council and required some repair.

There were opportunities to enhance the strategic Atlee Play Area and additional Christmas Lighting in tandem with contributions from the Portas Team. Each new feature required an increase in revenue budget to cover annual inspection and installation and the proposed increases would cover both capital and revenue costs with detailed schemes to be looked at early in the year.

Members wished to continue to improve the environmental impact for quality of life and encourage increases in return visitors to the town. Discussions would take place with Neighbourhood Services to repeat the Enhanced Service arrangements for the summer period and further environmental projects and it was intended to extend some floral bedding to Woodhorn Road. The Committee agreed to include the individual increases within the base budget proposals so that the environmental and repair works were adequately funded and Atlee Park and Christmas Lighting could be improved further.

**RECOMMENDED that: the proposals set out in Appendix 1 form the basis of the Budget for 2015-16**

## **FC10/14 PROPERTY BASE AND PRECEPT FOR 2015-16**

Northumberland County Council had published its Council Tax Support Scheme and adjusted its Council Tax Base for 2015-16. The total of 3,116 properties in the town had been adjusted for exemptions, discounts, disabled bands, empty homes premium, council tax support and an allowance for losses on collection and the 'Band D equivalent' total for Newbiggin by the Sea Town Council for 2015-16 was 1,369. However 85% of properties in the town were in Band A leading to a much lower than average property base for the calculation of the Precept.

The Committee considered a range of Precept calculations extrapolated across the property Bands taking into consideration the additions to the budget proposed during earlier discussion. With a contribution of £10,000 from balances towards the next Budget a Precept of £178,795 would be required and it was noted that the proposed increase amounted to £15.75 or 30 pence per week for the majority of households being in Band A.

**RECOMMENDED that: a Precept for 2015-16 be agreed at £178,795**

The Town Clerk declared an interest and withdrew during consideration of the next item.

**FC11/14 NATIONAL PAY AWARD 2014 – 2016**

A national pay award had been agreed by NALC and SLCC to cover two years but implementation of the new grades delayed until January 2015. A non consolidated gross payment of £80 would be made for 2014 and the grades increased by 1% in 2015 and again for 2016.

**RESOLVED that: the National Pay Award 2014-2016 be approved**

The Mayor confirmed to the Committee that Christmas Cards had been sent on behalf of the Town Council to the elderly residents in care homes around the town.

He also took the opportunity to thank the Town Clerk on behalf of the Council for all the work undertaken throughout the year.

Signed by the Chairperson: .....

Date:.....2015

<b>Summary Budget 2015.16</b>	<b>Proposed Budget 2015.16</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>37,150</b>
<b>OFFICE/MEETING COSTS</b>	<b>7,955</b>
<b>FEES &amp; CHARGES</b>	<b>4,590</b>
<b>CIVIC &amp; MEMBERS EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,350</b>
<b>LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	<b>63,350</b>
<b>REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENTS</b>	<b>27,500</b>
<b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b>	<b>5,000</b>
<b>PROJECT FUNDING</b>	<b>41,900</b>
	<b><u>188,795</u></b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>	
Salary provision	30,000
NI contributions	3,000
Pension Gratuity	4,000
Travel/Subsistence	50
Training/conference	100
	<b>37,150</b>
<b>OFFICE/MEETING COSTS</b>	
Rates	1,755
Building costs – The Bungalow	2,630
Telecommunications	700
IT Domain Web & Equipment	470
Room Hire – meetings	250
Printing & Stationery	450
Postage	100
Equipment & Furniture	100
Insurances	1,500
	<b>7,955</b>
<b>FEES &amp; CHARGES</b>	
Audit – internal and external	750
Subscriptions – NALC	670
Professional Fees	200
Publications	2,500
Publicity	250
Bank charges	220
	<b>4,590</b>
<b>CIVIC &amp; MEMBERS EXPENSES</b>	
Councillors expenses	600
Training costs	200
Town Assembly	100
Civic Expenses	100
Remembrance Day	350
	<b>1,350</b>
<b>TOTAL ADMIN EXPENSES</b>	<b>48,045</b>

<b>LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY</b>	
Enhanced Services Partnership	
Environmental work including	
Public Seating maintenance	
War Memorial maintenance	
Bus Shelter maintenance	
Improvement Projects	
Play Area Inspections	
Floral Bedding displays	
Newbiggin Nipper service contribution	
Christmas Lighting	<b>63,350</b>
<b>ASSET REPAIR AND REPLACEMENT</b>	
Bus Shelters	
Play Areas	
Public Seats	
Public waste bins	
The Bungalow	
Atlee Park upgrade	<b>27,500</b>
<b>SPECIAL EVENTS</b>	
Gardens Competition/N in Bloom	1,000
Newbiggin Triathlon	2,500
Music events programme	1,500
	<b>5,000</b>
<b>PROJECT FUNDING</b>	
Bay Environmental Schemes	5,000
Town Environmental Schemes	5,000
Town Centre and Gateway Projects	5,000
Bursary - Wansbeck Music Festival	300
Holiday and leisure schemes	14,400
Youth and adult support schemes	3,000
Community volunteering support projects	2,500
Events Leaflet	700
Small Grants scheme	6,000
	<b>41,900</b>
Total budget	<b>188,795</b>