

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE – REP 7.17

Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and Governance Cttee held on Tuesday 17th October 2017 at 10.00am in the Committee Room at the Town Hall.

Present; Cllrs Betts, Bradbury, Horwood. Also present the Town Clerk.

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence – Apologies were received from Cllrs Allen and Windell.
2. Declarations of Interest – There were no Declarations of Interest.
3. Matters from the public – There were no members of the public present.
4. Finances to 30.08.17 - the month 5 finances were discussed on a line by line basis against budget with underspends and overspends for the quarter discussed individually. There are presently no matters of concern to highlight to council. Full details of the 6-month expenditure will presented to council within the budget meetings/discussions scheduled for November 2017.
5. Donations – to receive requests. No donation requests had been received.
6. Audit 2016.17 report and action plan. The external audit for 2016.17 has been completed and there are no matters under Section 3 para 2 or para 3 to bring to council attention. One minor issue has been noted as follows “Section 2 of the annual report does not add up by £1”. The Town Clerk advises that this is due to the rounding up/ down of pence. Action plan has been drawn up to alter manually any inaccuracy due to rounding up/down in future years. The software advisers have been contacted to ensure that they are aware of this matter. Year end audit and action plan to be presented to council.
7. Financial questionnaire report – next action. It was agreed that the survey results be published in the local magazines and on the website. The results themselves will also be incorporated within budget discussions/ considerations for budget setting for 2018.19.
8. Precept consultation ‘The 2018/19 Local Government Finance Settlement Technical Consultation Paper – Government consultation regarding possible capping of precept.

SALC advises that *all councils are potentially affected by the outcome of the consultation and will wish to consider making a response to this important consultation.... Even if the community has been fully consulted and wants an increase, the taxpayer would be forced to pay for the additional cost of an automatic referendum in order to be able to raise its own money for its own needs based on a blanket threshold set centrally by Government.*

SALC encourages all councils to respond and provides guidance as to the response in favour of no cap of precept for local town / parish councils. **The Finance and Governance Cttee recommends that the Town Clerk responds appropriately against the setting of a cap on town /parish precepts. Consultation deadline of 28th October.**

9. Sale of old Shuttle bus – where / how much for? Advice has been sought and the suggested price for sale is £1250. **The Finance and Governance Cttee recommends that an advert be placed in Organ, Gazette and Lowestoft Journal to sell the old community shuttle bus for £1250 ono.**

10. Water damage – implications for Town Hall rooms / hire of rooms. Due to the flooding from the burst pipe at the Swan Hotel, the Council Chamber is presently being dried out and is therefore not available for use by Town Council or for hire by third parties. All meetings booked for the Chamber have therefore been cancelled for the foreseeable future and this will result in a loss of income from room hire. Where possible users will be accommodated in the cttee room, but as this is now the only spare room available at the Town Hall, there is great demand for its use by staff, councillors and third parties. Some third party bookings have also had to be cancelled for the cttee room which will again result in loss of income.

11. Staffing levels. These are due to be considered by the employment working group in October 2017.

- 12 *Governance matters*
'Civic' – meaning of civic – which occasions apply? To be considered further.

12. Date of next meeting – Thursday 16th October 2017

The Finance and Governance Cttee recommends that the Town Clerk responds to the Precept consultation explaining why Southwold Town Council would be against the setting of a cap on town /parish precepts. Consultation deadline of 28th October.

The Finance and Governance Cttee recommends that an advert be placed in Organ, Gazette and Lowestoft Journal to sell the old community shuttle bus for £1250 ono.