

Droitwich Spa Town Council

MINUTES of the **RESOURCES COMMITTEE** held at St Richard's House, Victoria Square, Droitwich Spa on Monday 12 October 2015 at 7.02pm.

PRESENT: Councillor G R Brookes (Chairman)
Councillor A Humphries (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor R G Beale (Ex-officio)
Councillor L Evans
Councillor A H Laird
Councillor Mrs M A Lawley
Councillor R E Murphy
Councillor T J Noyes
Councillor A M Sinton

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Ms J Bolton, Mrs C Bowden, Mrs S Harris, Mrs A Hawkins, R J Morris, Mrs C Powell and A Roberts.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – Councillor Mrs K Tomalin

135 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

136 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 AUGUST 2015

RESOLVED That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Resources Committee held 3 August 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

137 NEW HOMES BONUS

As previously advised (Minute No 88 refers, Resources Committee meeting 3 August 2015) Wychavon District Council had lifted the hold on 2015/16 New Homes Bonus (NHB) payments to parish and town councils, giving a further tranche of any of the allocations for Years 2 to 4 available to draw down, plus the first tranche of Year 5 allocations. In total the sum was £69,706.

Submissions had been received from:

- Fortis Living - Westlands Play Area Project
- King George V Sports CIC – Salwarpe Pavilion Refurbishment
- Droitwich Council for Voluntary Services – Community Garden
- Droitwich (St Peter's Fields) Sports Association – Community Pavilion (*supplementary item*)

Councillor T J Noyes suggested that the matter be deferred to enable all Members to study the options available and to enable comments from the general public to be obtained upon the submitted projects. This proposal was seconded by Councillor G R

Beale. Councillor Mrs C Powell advised that a timescale would assist and therefore it was

RESOLVED That the matter be deferred to the next meeting of Resources Committee on 7 December 2015 to enable all Members to study the options available and to enable comments from the general public to be obtained upon the submitted projects for New Homes Bonus monies.

138 EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT

Grant Thornton UK LLP had given the Council an unqualified report and had confirmed that the information in the annual return was in accordance with proper practices and no matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements had not been met. The formal notice had therefore been displayed.

However two matters that did not affect their Audit Opinion but which they wished to draw to the attention of Droitwich Spa Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2014 were

- To update the Financial Regulations in line with NALC 2014; and
- To consider Business Interruption Insurance

The Town Council had obtained a copy of NALC's Financial Regulations (the Town Council was not a member of this organisation). Please see Minute No 140 below in this regard.

The Town Council's insurers had quoted an annual increase of £87.10 plus tax based on the following:

- Loss of revenue – Community Hall £37,500 for 18 months
- Loss of revenue – Council Chamber £1,500 for 18 months

It was therefore

RESOLVED That the report be noted and that the Business Interruption insurance be obtained.

139 INTERNAL CONTROL POLICY

Each year the Council reviewed its Internal Controls Policy. The Committee noted that last year there were changes to improve the Heritage Centre's procedures and to increase the number of Councillor Signatories. These changes had been successful. There are no further changes to the Internal Control Policy recommended at present.

RESOLVED That the report be noted and no changes be made to the Council's Internal Control Policy at the present time.

140 STANDING ORDERS AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

There was a commitment to review these annually. The Committee noted that with regard to the Standing Orders, recent changes related to, inter alia, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, which gave the public new rights to film and report council meetings, including meetings of committees and sub committees, using digital and social media, together with the recording of significant decisions.

With regard to the Financial Regulations, as referred to in the External Auditor's comments (see Minute No 138 above) the Committee reviewed its Financial Standing Orders with particular reference to the NALC model and the Governance and Accountability (England) - Practitioners Guide 2014. There was no longer a legal requirement for two councillors to sign every cheque. Statutory Instrument 2014 No. 580 gave details of the Legislative Reform (Payments by Parish Councils, Community Councils and Charter Trustees) Order 2014 which removed the requirement for every cheque or other order for the payment of money by a parish or community council to be signed by two members of the council. (The Order also removed a similar requirement for every cheque or other order for payment of money by charter trustees to be signed by two charter trustees). This was made under the provisions of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 (c. 51) and removed a burden on parish and community councils and charter trustees and facilitated the use of electronic means of payment.

The Committee considered that robust financial checks and oversight was still of great importance and previously there had been no changes to the requirement for two Councillor Signatories on each cheque/direct debit/standing order. The Committee then considered reducing the number of councillor signatories but noted that this gave an additional control and that expediency had been assisted by the increase in the available signatories as per the amendment made last year to the Internal Control Policy.

With regard to electronic payments, the Town Council had a 'Council Credit Card' following consideration of this matter by the Resources Committee on 10 June 2013. This was issued to the Town Clerk to give more options for effective purchasing, with existing controls on spending to remain and any purchases included in the normal payment listing presented to Council or to the Resources Committee.

At present the Town Council did not use internet banking. The Committee confirmed that this was not a banking arrangement that the Committee wished to adopt at the present time and that therefore the current Financial Regulations were applicable.

That, having reviewed the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, plus the NALC Model Financial Regulations, no changes be made at the present time.

141 RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

This document was also reviewed annually and previous changes reflected the staffing redundancies/new structure and that payroll administration was now dealt with by Wychavon District Council.

Pursuant to Minute No 138 above and subject to the inclusion of the Business Interruption Insurance the Committee considered the documentation.

It was noted that the identification of the financial risks facing the Council should inform and enable councillors to have regard to such matters when considering future expenditure and setting its budgets.

RECOMMENDED That the Council's Financial Risk Management Policy, amended where appropriate to incorporate the inclusion of Business Interruption Insurance, be approved.

142 AGENDA ITEM 9 – NATIONAL LIVING WAGE

For information as from April 2016, the Committee noted that the Government was to introduce a new mandatory National Living Wage (NLW) for workers aged 25 and above, initially set at £7.20 – a rise of 70p relative to the current National Minimum Wage (NMW) rate, and 50p above the increase that came into force in October. The adult NMW rate was currently £6.50 and increased to £6.70 from October 2015. From April 2016 the premium would come into effect on top of the NMW, taking the National Living Wage to £7.20. The NMW would continue to apply for those aged 21+, with the premium added on top for more experienced workers taking the total hourly rate to the National Living Wage.

The Town Clerk advised that this and any agreed increase in the payscales from April 2016 will be made in the Council's Budgets at the time the Estimates are considered.

143 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Creditor accounts in the sum of £2,699.27 were considered for payment, along with supplementary payments in the sum of £689.57 as appended.

RESOLVED That the statement of accounts appended be received and the expenditure totalling £3,659.26 (£2,699.27+£959.99) be approved and duly passed for payment.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

Chairman of Committee
12 October 2015

Chairman of Council
28 September 2015

RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING 1 JUNE 2015 – MINUTE NO 143 REFERS

10688	Tea Cups Tea Room	£436.90
	Refreshments for Civic Service - Sunday 27 September 2015	
10689	John Ellis Associates Limited	£625.00
	6 Monthly Health & Safety Consultancy Services	
10690	GCD Consultancy	£310.00
	New PC office workstation, replacement WIFI access point and connection card for TIC noise monitoring system	
10691	County Security Limited	£239.40
	Security duties - Community Hall & St Richard's House	
10692	Scribe 2000 Limited	£354.00
	Accounts Annual Software Licence	
10693	PR Support Services	£487.97
	Handyman duties - September 2015	
10694	St John Ambulance	£246.00
	First Aid at Work requalification - P Craney	
	TOTAL	£2,699.27
	SUPPLEMENTARY CHEQUES	
10694	St John Ambulance	£246.00
	Additional invoice for First aid at work requalification: M Keld (Amount included on cheque No 10694 = £492.00)	
10695	Smart Office Solutions (Cotswold) Limited	£284.81
	Photocopier Use: July to September 2015	
10696	Herefordshire & Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce	£158.76
	DW Membership for October 2015 to September 2016	
10697	Zurich Management Services Limited	£114.00
	LCAS Membership renewal	
10698	Star Editions Limited	£156.42
	TIC Purchases	
	TOTAL	£959.99
	GRAND TOTAL	£3,659.26