

BRIDGWATER TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
MEMBERS' ROOM, TOWN HALL, BRIDGWATER
HELD ON TUESDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2009 AT 2.15PM

PRESENT: Cllr Turner (Chairman), Cllrs. Cresswell, Downes, Granter, Mrs Slocombe and Smeed

Also present Cllr Baker

Apologies: Cllrs Parker and Richards

16 MINUTES:

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 October 2009 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

17 MATTERS ARISING:

- i. **Taunton Road Toilets** (Min 03) – The Town Clerk confirmed that counters had now been fitted and results over two periods provided. Monitoring would continue on a regular basis but so far showed a worthwhile usage.

RESOLVED: That the outstanding accounts be paid and contribution included in the estimates for 2010/11 subject to usage figures remaining at the current levels.

- ii. **Allotments** (Min 04 i) – The information on potential costs of laying out plots on the additional land at the Kidsbury Road site were still awaited from the BATA.

18 MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL 12/11/09:

The Town Clerk confirmed that matters referred were picked up elsewhere in the Agenda.

19 DRAFT ESTIMATES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2010/2011:

Draft estimates had been prepared and circulated together with background information based on 2008/2009 and 2009/2010, the estimated out turn at 31/03/10, inflation at a 3% figure, and decisions taken by the Finance Committee in recommendations to the Council during the previous year. The tax base for the town had been provided by SDC provisionally estimated at £10322.52 Band D equivalent for 2010/2011. Full information was also provided on the current levels of Precept and recovery of Special Expenses from 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 following closure of the accounts for cemeteries agreed to be recovered over the two years 2009/10 and 2010/2011.

The Town Clerk invited Members to consider the items individually, providing explanations for significant variations and additions within the figures, including those arising from the decisions taken by the Committee or Council through the year. Confirmation was still awaited from SDC in relation to the second tranche of the finance provided for Memorial Testing in the cemeteries (£24K) and any additional expenditure in the current financial year although invoices were provided for 2009/10 and it was established that income was lower.

Members noted the position with the money set aside for service support and facilities and in relation to the Blake Museum. Balances had been built up to a reasonable level since the creation of the Town Council but also reflected the increase in activities and services.

The Chairman with the Town Clerk had met with the Leader and Chief Executive of SDC regarding the District Council's funding position in the next and successive financial years. As a result follow-up correspondence had been received (similar discussions were taking place with all Towns and Parishes in Sedgemoor) requesting contributions in specific service areas from the Town Council. The items covering cleansing and dog fouling bins,

Christmas Lights, the Arts Centre and CCTV were fully discussed together with the funding of PCSO's but it was concluded that further clarification was needed and more detailed information.

Members also discussed the implications of the various issues raised in the schedule of draft estimates provided taking particular account of ear-marked funds and additional items ie: call for National Grid 'fighting fund', Business and Industrial Directory proposal, Civic pew cushions, and Bridgwater Carnival Centre funding request (see Minute 21 below). With relatively minor changes introduced, Members requested the Town Clerk to bring forward the Town Council estimates based on a continuation budget, whilst maintaining the current level of precept pending discussion at Council on the requests from SDC etc..

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

1. That the draft estimates be put forward to the next meeting of the Town Council for the purpose of securing the precept for 2010/2011 of £445552 for Town Council purposes, including cemeteries, and facility and service support and ear-marked funds inclusive of special expenses recovery, equating in total to £43.16 per band D property;
2. that following the closure of the Special Expense accounts for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 a Special Expense of £14557 be levied for 2010/2011 (second tranche as recovered in 2009/2010), equating to £1.41 per band D property;
3. that the Council determine those outstanding items as listed with the benefit of further information being obtained specifically:
 - I. National Grid – pylon/line routes and effect on Bridgwater and attitude of other local councils;
 - II. SDC requests – breakdown of costs, double taxation issue and attitude of other Sedgemoor local councils;
 - III. Cemeteries – out turns and memorial testing
 - IV. Regional Carnival Centre (as recorded below).

20 EXEMPT ITEM – EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC:

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the business recorded in Minute 21 on the grounds that this will involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in section 100.1 of the Local Government Act 1972.

21 BRIDGWATER CARNIVAL COMMITTEE – REGIONAL CARNIVAL COMMUNITY CENTRE:

Members considered a report by the Town Clerk based on the submission of the business plan, sources of funder approaches, effect on others in terms of both venues and local partner organisations , need for facility, other commitments, on costs and advantages and disadvantages as amplified in further discussion with the applicant representative.

Ways in which the Town Council might be able to support the project were examined both grant aid and part interest in project.

RESOLVED: That the request and application as submitted be declined on the information available due to uncertainties in the project.

(Cllrs Mrs Slocombe {personal and prejudicial interest} and Cresswell declared an interest in this item and took no part in the consideration and decision and did not vote thereon – Cllr Mrs Slocombe left the meeting before the decision was taken)

The meeting finished at 4.33pm

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Signed
Chairman