

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE **FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE** HELD ON **WEDNESDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2019** AT 7.00 P.M. AT THE TOWN HALL, GREAT WESTERN HOUSE, 9 DEVON SQUARE, NEWTON ABBOT

**PRESENT:** Councillors C N Parker (Chairman) Presiding  
D Corney-Walker (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors Mrs C Bunday Mrs A Jones  
Mrs J Cleave M Joyce  
C Coyle-Moore K Purchase (Mayor)  
R Hayes Ms L Roberts  
M Hocking M E Ryan  
D Howe Mrs L Sheffield  
R Jenks (Dep Mayor) T Ward

Officers in Attendance: Phil Rowe – Town Clerk  
Sam Scott – Deputy Town Clerk  
Sally Henley – Town Development Manager  
Alex Robinson – Committee Administrator

**322. APOLOGIES AND WELCOME**

No apologies were received; all Councillors were present at the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Sergeant John Dingle, recently appointed as Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Team Leader, Devon and Cornwall Police to the meeting.

**323. INTERESTS**

Councillors Mrs Carol Bunday, Richard Jenks, Mrs Ann Jones and Mike Ryan gave notice of their intention to declare an interest in Minute 328 C (1);  
Councillor Ken Purchase and the Town Clerk gave notice of their intention to declare an interest in Minute 328 C (2) and  
Councillor Mike Joyce and Mike Ryan gave notice of their intention to declare an interest in Minute 328 C (3).

**324. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2018, were received and signed as a correct record subject to Minute 18/11(268) it being noted that the Chairman and the Town Clerk had received confirmation from Teignbridge District Council that there would be no further Council Tax Support Grant.

**325. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None.

**326. UPDATE ON LOCAL POLICING**

The Chairman invited Sergeant John Dingle, Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Team Leader, Devon and Cornwall Police to provide Members with an update on local policing matters in Newton Abbot.

Sergeant Dingle reported that he had been appointed to the post of Newton Abbot Neighbourhood Team Leader in August 2018 and would update Members on the crime statistics in for the period of December 2018 to mid-January 2019 as compared to the same period for 2017/18. Sgt Dingle raised the following points:

- Violence without injury (includes harassment) up by 25%, the rise was attributed to additional recording of incidents;
- Possession of drugs is up by 59% (which includes young people in possession);
- Vehicle crime had made the biggest increase and was up by 192%, with cars being broken into for small change and items of value.
- Assault and rape had reduced by 33% (two incidents).

Sergeant Dingle reported that the judicial system was keen to avoid criminalising young offenders and the process encouraged intervention and drug awareness groups rather than issuing custodial sentences. Members were concerned that the young offenders were aware of the little or no apparent consequences and this may be counterproductive in encouraging more serious crime as they move into adulthood. Sgt Dingle added that despite reduced resources within the unit that the local team had continued to concentrate on the youth antisocial behaviour and were working with some parents through support and advisory groups amongst other measures to resolve the ongoing issues in the town.

Councillors raised their concerns at the apparent leniency of the judicial process, coupled with the reduced policing resources nationally and the consequential rise in crime and the affect on towns across the region. Members noted the proposed increase in Precept to be raised by Devon and Cornwall Police to increase the number of police officers by 85 across the force but were concerned that this would be insufficient to meet the demands of policing in the area.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant John Dingle for his thorough and informative update to Members where upon Sergeant Dingle was invited to leave the meeting.

## **327. INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

### **A. INCOME & EXPENDITURE STATEMENTS**

The Committee received the Income and Expenditure Statements for October and November 2018 (previously circulated). The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there had been some minor queries in advance of the meeting and the Chairman invited further questions from Members. Members appreciated the supplementary papers prepared by the Deputy Town Clerk, previously supplied, which identified the larger expenditure items made by the Council and a breakdown summary of expenditure and income on Newton's Place. Members thanked the Deputy Clerk for the valuable additional information.

**31<sup>st</sup> October 2018**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>£1,327,459.05</b>
Misc. Income	£ 4,496.58
CIL Income	£ 97,435.90
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£1,429,891.53</b>
<b>LESS:</b>	
Expenditure	£ 80,456.46
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 80,456.46</b>
<b>BALANCE 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018</b>	
<b>Business Call &amp; Current Account:</b>	<b>£1,349,435.07</b>

Balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

Current Account	£ 100.00
Business Call Account	£1,349,335.07
Petty Cash Account	£ 200.00
<b>Total Cash in hand at bank</b>	<b>£1,349,635.07</b>
<b>Total:</b>	----- <b>£1,349,635.07</b>

**30<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

<b>Opening Balance</b>	<b>£1,349,435.07</b>
Misc. Income	£ 17,293.58
VAT refund 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter	£ 18,583.41
Heritage Lottery Fund grant income	£ 22,311.00
HB Allen Charitable Trust grant income	£ 250,000.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£1,657,623.06</b>
<b>LESS:</b>	

Expenditure	£ 95,588.46
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>£ 95,588.46</b>

**BALANCE 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018**  
**Business Call & Current Account: £1,562,034.60**

Balances as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Current Account	£100.00
Business Call Account	£1,561,934.60
Petty Cash Account	200.00

**Total Cash in hand at bank £1,562,234.60**

**Total: £1,562,234.60**

Accordingly, it was,

**RESOLVED** that the statements of income and expenditure for October and November 2018 as submitted to the Committee be hereby approved and signed by the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee.

**B. FINANCIAL BUDGET COMPARISON**

The Committee received and approved the Financial Budget Comparison summary and report which detailed Income and Expenditure by Account for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 (previously circulated). Following a discussion, accordingly, it was;

**RESOLVED** that the budget and accounts report as detailed by Account for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 be hereby, approved and signed by the Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee.

**328. BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2019/20**

**A. SUB COMMITTEES/WORKING PARTIES/FORUMS**

**(i). STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM – 14<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

Arising from the consideration of the report of the meeting it was,

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum – held on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018 be hereby approved and adopted.

**(ii). STRATEGIC PLANNING FORUM – 28<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2018**

Arising from the consideration of the report of the meeting it was,

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Strategic Planning Forum – held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 be hereby approved and adopted.

## **B. TOWN CLERK REPORT – PRECEPT & BUDGET REPORT 2019/20**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to brief Members on his report on the Budget and Precept 2019/20 (previously circulated), as recorded under Minute 18/11(SP23) which contained a recommended Budget and Precept for 2019/20.

The Clerk reminded Members that the Council had a statutory obligation to put in place a budget and precept that would deliver the Council's objectives, vision and priorities.

The Clerk noted the familiar format of the Financial Budget Report but highlighted that additional consideration would need to be given to the fact that the Newton's Place Project should be completed during the financial year 2019/20 and therefore some elements would have to be estimated based upon the project forecasts and business plan. Mr Rowe guided members through the document and explained that the budget made provision for the delivery of all the Council's statutory and non-statutory commitments and all services could be delivered.

Members were reminded that a recommendation from the Committee was required to be submitted to the Council for approval at its meeting to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019. Members noted their sincere thanks to the Town Clerk and his Deputy Clerk for the excellent report and the high degree of clarity that it offered Members in giving their consideration.

Arising from a lengthy and detailed discussion on the report Members noted that the rise in precept was attributed to the cessation of the Council Tax Support Grant earlier than originally advised. Therefore the Council needed to recover the shortfall but were pleased to note that the Newton's Place Project had had no affect on the Precept and the project remained on track for delivery by early 2020 as planned. Accordingly, it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Council at its meeting to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019 be **RECOMMENDED** to adopt a Precept of **£828,539 for 2018/19** representing an increase of £6.28p p.a. (0.12p per week) or 6.76% for a Band D property in Newton Abbot and that Teignbridge District Council be therefore requested to collect on the Town Council's behalf the **sum of £828,539**.

## **C. GRANT APPLICATION – JANUARY 2019.**

The Chairman invited Members to consider applications for Grants and Financial Assistance, a summary of which had been previously circulated. The differing financial contribution was clarified as a Grant being awarded for a specific project or task and Financial Assistance to support ongoing running costs.

The Committee received the following Applications for consideration:

### Grants

1. Newton Abbot Twinning Association	£250.00
2. Newton Abbot Scout Group - (Explorer Unit)	£950.00
3. Buckland Surgery Support Project	£450.00

Following consideration, it was

**RESOLVED** that

- a) Applications for **Grants** listed as 1. 2. and 3. be hereby approved and
- b) the remainder of the budget allocation be divided equally between the three applications and the sum of £516.66 be hereby awarded to each.

*Councillors Mrs C Bunday, R Jenks, Mrs A Jones, K Purchase, M Ryan and the Town Clerk; having previously declared personal interests on the respective applications listed under 1 -3 abstained from the discussion and voting thereon; Councillor M Joyce withdrew from the meeting during the discussion and voting thereon.*

**329. TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECK**

The Chairman referred Members to the report from Teignbridge District Council on the Town Centre Economical Health Check, previously circulated and invited the Town Development Manager to update Members on the position for Newton Abbot.

The Town Development Manager welcomed the suite of reports to focus on how Town Centres were performing within Teignbridge. Given the economic difficulties facing towns it was valuable to have evidential based information with which to form strategic plans for the town. As Mrs Henley guided Members through the reports, she noted her concerns and caution at the validity of some of the data and its relative value based upon insufficient sampling methods and data capture. Members expressed their concern that the report did not meet the required standard to effectively clarify the position of Newton Abbot and likely trends for the future. Mrs Henley suggested additional information and data that could have been included in the reports, such as figures for car park usage and regular footfall indicators that would have provided a valuable insight into a realistic measure of the town's performance overall.

Mrs Henley invited comments and questions from Members who discussed the content and findings contained within the report.

The Chairman thanked the Town Development Manager for her insight and explanation to the reports. Following a lengthy discussion, it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Town Development Manager, in consultation with Councillor Richard Jenks, be delegated authority to make a response on behalf of the Council to Teignbridge District Council on their report on the Town Centre Economical Health Check.

**330. NEWTON'S PLACE PROJECT - UPDATE**

**A.** The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to provide an update to Members on the key areas of the Project. The Clerk noted that Members had received regular updates on the Newton's Place Project, but he highlighted the following key points:

- The Construction Contractor, Pollards had completed the initial demolition inside the building;
- The excavation of the floor area for the lift and signals had commenced;

- The roof tiles had been removed from one side of the roof and new felt and batons were being installed;
- The Museum Design team had made good progress and once finalised Leach Studio would prepare a 'rendered' set of images which would be the basis of the final design and used for delivery;
- The team were still finalising the location of the proposed suspended Lethbridge Diving Machine and the final design for the model train and railway track;
- The colourful hoardings produced from designs by local school children had been installed at the site and there would be a publicity event on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 2pm.

Members were pleased with the continued progress on the project and requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Mrs Katy Bennie, Museum Volunteer and the local schools involved in the design and production of the hoardings. Following discussion among Members, accordingly it was;

**RESOLVED** that the verbal update from the Clerk on the Newton's Place Project be hereby, noted.

**B.** The Chairman introduced a report from the Town Clerk on a replacement Telephone System for Newton's Place, previously circulated.

The Clerk explained the necessity to review the Council's telephony arrangements due to the move to Newton's Place in order to meet the technical requirements and ensure adequate service provision for the new building. Following his thorough research and investigation the Clerk had secured a fixed price lease contract with an appropriate provider and he sought approval from the Committee for the new contract.

Following a considered discussion among members, accordingly it was:

**RESOLVED** that the Finance and Audit Committee endorsed the action taken by the Town Clerk in purchasing a Horizon hosted telecommunications platform with polycom handsets and CISCO 24 port LAN switch.

### 331. **BUCKINGHAM PALACE GARDEN PARTY NOMINATIONS 2019**

The Mayor reminded Members that further to Minute 18/01(319) that Councillor David Howe's name had been submitted to DALC as the Town Council nominee and although he was not selected by DALC last year his name would be resubmitted until he was selected, accordingly it was

**RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be authorised to resubmit Councillor David Howe as the Town Council nominee eligible to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party and for his name to put forward to DALC prior to the deadline of 1<sup>st</sup> February to be included in their selection process.

### 332. **LATE CORRESPONDENCE**

None.

### 333. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Finance & Audit Committee would be held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

334. **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following item of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

335. **TOWN HALL, 9 DEVON SQUARE**

The Chairman invited the Town Clerk to update Members on the disposal of the Town Hall. Councillors noted the update. Arising from the discussion, accordingly it was;

**RESOLVED** that the Council at its meeting to be held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019 be **RECOMMENDED** to authorise the Town Clerk to accept the financial offer received and proceed to dispose of the Town Hall, subject to contract.

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Chairman