

Minutes of the Finance & General Purposes Meeting held on Wednesday 24 February 2016 at 6.00pm at Seaton Valley Council Offices.

PRESENT:

Committee members: D Mullen (Chair), B Nixon, L Bowman and B Swinhoe

IN ATTENDANCE:

S Potts – Clerk

No members of the public

The meeting commenced at 6.15pm

FGP071/15 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor S Dungworth

FGP072/15 2. Disclosure of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

FGP073/15 3. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 18 December 2015 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

FGP074/15 4. Bank Reconciliation as 31 January 2016

The Committee agreed to receive the report and noted that the balances on the Council's bank accounts had been successfully reconciled to its financial records.

FGP075/15 5. Budgetary Control Update

The Committee received the Clerks' report and noted that a net projected underspend of approximately £10,000 was anticipated in 2015/16 after adjusting for balances to be transferred to earmark reserves.

The Committee further noted that income and expenditure levels are more or less in line with budgets and that where variances do exist, explanations for those variances are readily available.

FGP076/15 6. Village Events 2016/17

The Clerk presented the Engagement and Development Officer's report which sought to agree a new simplified method of allocating Village Event Grants in 2016/17. Rather than seeking applications for such grants his report proposed that the Council should simply allocate £1,000 to each of the events it normally supports subject to the receipt of a detailed monitoring report after the events have been delivered.

The Committee agreed that this method should be used to allocate grants to Seghill, New Hartley, Seaton Delaval and Holywell as only one suitable event is held in each of these villages each year. However, with respect to Seaton Sluice the Committee felt that this method wouldn't really be appropriate as the Council has tended to support more than one event in the village each year. Rather the Committee felt it would be better to ask previously supported groups to come together to submit a joint proposal on how the Seaton sluice Village Events budget should be allocated.

Consequently the Committee **RESOLVED** To allocate monies directly to help fund the following events in 2016/17 and beyond:

- **Seghill Gala Day - £1,000**
- **New Hartley Summer Fayre - £1,000**
- **Seaton Delaval Gala Day - £1,000**
- **Holywell Summer Fayre - £1,000, and further agreed to**
- **To write to all organisations in Seaton Sluice that have received village events funding in the past to ask them to coordinate a single proposal on how the £1,000 allocation can be used to support an event or events in Seaton Sluice”.**

FGP077/15 7. Seghill Play Consultation

The Clerk again presented the Engagement and Development Officer’s report which sought approval to commission a survey to inform the future of play provision in Seghill.

The cost of the survey would be £2,750 which would be met from the existing Support for Village Plans budget and because of the urgency of the necessary consultation exercise; the report also sought approval to appoint Eljay Research Ltd to carry out the work without seeking an additional quote for the work.

The Committee were happy with officers reassurances that the price quoted offered value for money and agreed that the exercise was necessary so as to ensure that Seghill residents are given the opportunity to have a say in the development of play provision in their village.

The Committee RESOLVED TO agree to

- **Use £2,750 from the existing Support for Village Plans budget to meet the cost of the consultation exercise,**
- **Waive financial regulations (requirement to seek two quotes for works valued up to £5,000) in this instance due to the urgency of the required work, and**
- **Agree to appoint Eljay Research to carry out the work**

FGP078/15 8. Dates of Future Meetings

20 January 2016, New Hartley Memorial Hall, 6.30 p.m. – Planning

20 January 2016, New Hartley Memorial Hall, 7.00 p.m. – Council

18 February 2016, Seaton Valley Council offices, 6.00 p.m. Planning

24 February 2016, Seaton Valley Council offices, 6.00 p.m. – F&GP (inc. Staffing)

17 March 2016, Seaton Valley Council offices, 6.00 p.m. – Planning

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of items 9. and 10. on the Agenda as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Act relating to personal staff affairs and commercial matters.

FGP079/15 9. Seaton Valley Partnership - Apprentices

The Clerk presented his report which raised issues both about the funding of apprentices employed on works carried out under the Seaton Valley Neighbourhood Partnership Agreement between the Council and Northumberland County Council, and about the potential for the scheme to be continued beyond 2016/17.

The Committee asked the Clerk to write to the County Council to seek clarification of the points raised in his report.

FGP/080/15 10. Playgrounds Preferred Supplier Arrangement

The Clerk's report set out arguments, supported by recent market data, in favour of entering into a preferred supplier arrangement with a leading national supplier for the provision of playground equipment. The report argued that this process was likely to lead to achieving better value for money than a traditional process of seeking bids for individual projects as and when they arise.

The report highlighted the Council's commitment to develop a renewal and replacement policy for all of its play parks and the likelihood of significant expenditure in this area over the next five years.

The Committee RESOLVED TO recommend Council to:

- **Enter in a five year preferred supplier agreement with Kompan Plc to deliver the Council's playground improvements on the terms specified in the Clerk's report, and**
- **Waive Financial regulation 17 (Contracts) in this instance because the Council has reliable market evidence to suggest that by entering into this arrangement it will be securing the best available supplier at a competitive market rate.**

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed by the Chair:

Dated: