

Bishop Auckland Town Council

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee

3rd October 2023

Held at 5pm in Town Council Offices, Kingsway Court, Bishop Auckland

In attendance: Cllr D Wilson (Chair) Cllr A Zair, M Siddle, M Harker, A Zair, Cllr Blackburn

Also In attendance: Mrs Sarah Harris, Town Clerk, Mrs Vicki Booth, Assistant Town Clerk

PR0029/23 Apologies for Absence – no apologies were required

PR0030/23 - Declaration of Interests – Cllr Blackburn declared interest of the room hire due to his work location also providing room hire. He also declared an interest in the water charge for community groups.

PR0031/23 Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting 5th Sept 2023

Resolved: that the members noted the minutes for reference purposes as ratified at Full Council

PR0032/23 Public Participation – no members of the public were in attendance.

PR0033/23 – Finance Report

PR0033.1/23 Account Balances (see file Copy) were presented.

Lloyds Current Account	£8,556.16
Lloyds - Deposit Account	£26,941.47
Darlington Building Society	£85,000.00
Nationwide Building Society	£85,512.31
Santander Account	£85,000.00
North East First Credit Union	£85,085.00
Unity Trust Bank	£45,186.86
Total	£421,281.8

Resolved: Reviewed and noted of movement still to commence to move £512 from Nationwide & £85 from First Credit to deposit account

PR0033.2/23 – Q2 report

Resolved: that members noted the expenditure and remaining balances in Q2

PR0033.3/23 Budget Preparation Timeline for 2024-25 budget. Last years agreed budget was shown, asking Members to consider areas where they would like adjustments.

Resolved: that members agreed these items should be taken to the relevant committees and brought back for consideration. It was noted that going forward Remembrance budget will need to be increased due to rising costs. That the use of the auditor for budget prep may be advantageous. Community focus needs to be considered in the forthcoming budget. That members discussed the cut backs at the principle authority and the impact that has on BATC including LCTRS.

PR0033.4/23 Card Payment facilities – following the last meeting costings have been sought. (see report in file).

Resolved: that members agreed for a card payment machine to be purchased for in person payments only and agreed on which one to purchase to include a receipt printer, from SUMUP at a cost of £139.00 plus VAT, which is one off payment with Transaction Charge of 1.69%.

PR0033.5/23 Authorisation of Payments - payment report (see file Copy) was presented

Resolved: that members approved the payment as attached in appendix 1.

PR0034/23 – IT Website provider - DCC have served notice to say that the contract and support for parish council websites from next year therefore a new provider will need to be sought.

Resolved: that members noted the notice period given and that as well as CDALC looking for a collective new supplier the Clerk to also look into costings of an independent supplier to maintain the website and domain.

PR0035/23 – Asset Management

PR0035.1/23 Car Park Works Update regarding signage quotes. Contractors for the building signage has been asked to provide quotes, despite several chasing emails only two quotes were obtained.

Resolved: that members agreed to go with contractor A but would also like the Clerk to explore the option and costings of having a down or up light to illuminate the sign.

Contractor A have provided a quote for £1844.22 plus VAT

PR0035.2/23 Use of Meeting Space by third parties

Resolved: that members agreed for each group to approach BATC and room hire to be reviewed and evaluated on its own merit, and that the VAT advice be sought from the Parkinson partnership and brought to full council.

PR0035.3/23 Christmas Town – Whilst being the main partner in the event the Council has via the Community Committee agreed to pay for two larger attractions rather than issuing a grant to the CICs coordinating the event. The price excluding VAT would take the Contribution to £10,080, where as previously £10,000 had been agreed.

Resolved: that members agreed to pay the two items discussed and go over budget by £80 for this noted

PR0035.4/23 Allotments – an update paper was presented (see file Copy) on allotment topics.

- i) **Water charge** – Remained a hot topic with allotment tenants. A discussion was had regarding community group tenants as well as the request from an association to have the charge removed and their water supply turned off following a ballot of members.

Resolved: that members agreed for community groups who have a peppercorn rent are to pay full water charge as it is a utility.

That association tenants will still be charged at the standard water rate, as the site has historically had water and it would be cost prohibitive to pay for it be removed. Whilst is in place to cover the cost of water, it is in place to ensure that other funds can be used for maintenance, therefore members agreed it be called a water and maintenance levy.

ii) **Plot charges for 2024/25** – a report on tenancy rates for 2023-24 was discussed.

Resolved: that members confirmed that there will be no rise in the sqM charge for the year of financial year of 24/25, and that those with large animal plots would not have any discounted rates.

PR0035.5/23 Remembrance 2023 the rising cost of the event was highlighted to members, along with a note that the costs would exceed the budget for the 2023 event.

Resolved: that members noted the rising costs of events and that Remembrance will be over budget this year.

PR0028/23 – Planning

PR0028.1/23 Planning Applications

Resolved: that members noted the reports sent weekly and agreed to write a letter of objection to DCC regarding the 5G network proposed for Woodhouse Lane

PR0028.2/23 Under Delegated Authority

Resolved: that members noted the reports