

Minutes of the Meeting of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Four Clocks Centre, Bishop Auckland on **TUESDAY, 19th MARCH 2013 AT 4.00 P.M.**

Present: Councillor Anderson (in the Chair) and Councillors Golightly, Laurie, Lee and Wilson.

Also Present: David Anderson (Town Clerk).

FIN 103/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kay

FIN 104/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lee declared an interest in Item No 3a 'Applications for Donations – Auckland Youth and Community Centre' as she attended meetings of the Centre as a ward member. (Minute No 109/12 refers).

Councillor Laurie declared an interest in Item No 7 'Application to Purchase an Allotment Plot at Toronto' as she was related to the applicant. Councillor took no part in discussion or voting on this item. (Minute No 113/12 refers)

FIN 105/12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public in attendance.

REPORT OF TOWN CLERK

FIN 106/12 ACCOUNT BALANCES AS AT 19th MARCH 2013

The Town Clerk reported account balances as follows:-

Deposit Account	£25,783.93
Current Account	£8,742.41
Allotments Account	£6,434.44
Mayors Charity Account	£568.79

RECOMMENDED: That the information be noted.

FIN 107/12 AUTHORISATION OF CHEQUES – DELEGATED POWERS

In accordance with Delegated Powers, the Mayor and Chair of Finance had authorised payment of cheque nos. 866 - 877 from the Current Account and cheque number 120 from the Allotments Account, as detailed in the report.

RECOMMENDED: That the action taken be confirmed.

FIN 108/12 CHEQUES PRESENTED FOR AUTHORISATION

No cheques were presented for authorisation.

Signed:
Chair

FIN 109/12 APPLICATIONS FOR DONATIONS

Applications for financial assistance had been received from the following organisations:-

- a. Bishop Auckland St Mary's U16 FC
- b. Auckland Youth and Community Centre

Members noted that the budget for donations for 2012/13 had been spent and therefore the applications were deferred until a future meeting. This would provide an opportunity for the policy relating to donations to be reviewed with comparisons being made with policies of other local councils within the County.

- RECOMMENDED:**
- 1. That the applications from Bishop Auckland St Mary's U16 FC and Auckland Youth and Community Centre be deferred.
 - 2. That the policy relating to donations be reviewed with comparisons being made with policies of other local councils in the County.

FIN. 110/12 CHANGES TO PAYROLL SERVICES

Members were reminded that at the previous meeting of the Committee consideration was given to a report relating to the introduction of 'Real Time Information' (RTI) by Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs, and an associated increase in charges by Durham County Council for the provision of a payroll service. At this meeting it was agreed that DCC be requested to continue to provide a payroll service for the Town Council at the increased cost and that necessary arrangements be made to prepare for the introduction of RTI.

Following this meeting further investigations were made to identify alternative methods used by other local councils in the area to pay salaries and Members Allowances and whether these would be more cost effective and feasible for Bishop Auckland Town Council.

It has been identified that other Town Councils of a similar size to Bishop Auckland carried out their own payroll service using software purchased from SAGE. The most appropriate package was Sage 50 Payroll RTI edition, which would:-

- Automate payroll calculations
- Electronically pay employees and HMRC
- Securely store employee records
- Create and print payslips and P60s
- Keep up to date with the latest payroll legislation
- Submit and receive data from HMRC online

References had been taken from a nearby Town Council that confirm that the software package was suitable for the needs of Bishop Auckland Town Council, was cost effective and easy to use with no previous payroll experience being required.

The cost of the software, including telephone support, was £260 (+VAT) per year. The payroll service provided by DCC will increase to £7.20 per employee/Member per month from April 2013. Total cost per annum would therefore be £1,209.60

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Chair

which meant that a saving of £949.60 could be made by providing this service in-house using the Sage 50 software.

Durham County Council had requested a decision on whether the Town Council wished to continue with their payroll service by 15th March 2013. In addition, if the Town Council were to provide its own payroll service, arrangements would need to be put in place for preparation of RTI.

Due to the timescales involved the issue was discussed with the Mayor and the Chairman of Finance Committee who agreed that Sage 50 Payroll should be purchased to enable the payroll service to be brought in-house, securing a substantial saving.

RECOMMENDED: 1. That the actions of the Mayor and Chairman of Finance to purchase Sage 50 to enable the payroll service to be brought in-house be endorsed.

FIN 111/12 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In accordance with the provisions of Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, as amended by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council excluded the press and public for the remaining items on the agenda by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted since publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

FIN. 112/12 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

In accordance with normal practice the Council was required to appoint an Internal Auditor to carry out an interim internal audit and the final internal audit for the year ending 31st March 2013.

Mr. Mike Ackroyd has carried out the Town Council's audit over the last 6 years and it was therefore suggested that his services be commissioned again to carry out this work. Members noted Mr Ackroyd fees.

RECOMMENDED: That Mike Ackroyd be appointed to carry out an internal audit for the year ending 31st March 2013

FIN. 113/12 APPLICATION TO PURCHASE ALLOTMENT PLOT AT TORONTO

Members considered a report relating to a request to purchase an allotment plot at Toronto.

As there was no policy in place regarding disposal of allotment plots, consideration was also given to the adoption of a policy that could be used in future to respond to such requests.

Members were of the opinion that in general allotment plots should not be sold, however plots at Toronto were regarded as an exception to this as individual plots had previously been sold by Wear Valley District Council, leaving only 3 plots on the site in Council ownership. The legal position with regard to the sale of these plots would need to be clarified.

The value of the plots at Toronto were likely to be relatively modest and possibly less than the costs that would be incurred by the Council in selling them. It was

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therefore suggested that the purchaser should bear the Council's costs associated with the sale.

- RECOMMENDED:**
1. That in general the Council would not dispose of allotment plots.
 2. That allotment plots at Toronto be sold to tenants on request, subject to the legal position being clarified, and terms and conditions being agreed by the Town Council, with the purchaser paying all Town Council costs associated with the sale.

Signed:
Chair