



**MINUTES OF THE BRIDGEND TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Tuesday 14th November 2017 at 10.00am at Carnegie House Council Chamber

<u>Present:</u>	Cllr D Unwin, Chair of Finance Committee Cllr A Wathan Vice Chair of Finance Committee Cllr R Porter Cllr S Baldwin (Ex-Officio) Leanne Edwards, Town Clerk Debra Jones, Deputy Town Clerk and RFO
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Absent: Cllr F Bletsoe

Apologies: Cllr G Sassoon-Hales and Cllr M Voisey

1. To Receive Declarations of Interest (if any)

- There were no declarations of interest.

2. To Receive Notes of the Meeting held on 12th September 2017

- The minutes of the Finance & Personnel Committee meeting held on 12th September 2017 were accepted as a true record and duly signed.

3. Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th September 2017

- *Page 1 Look Up Project*
Deputy Town Clerk advised that planning permission had been granted for the final Look Up project and that the artwork would be installed as soon as possible.
- *Page 2 Tesco "Bags for Life Project": Craig-Y-Parcau*
Chair advised that a significant amount of work had been completed and that the project would be completed before the end of the year.
- *Page 2 Tesco Bags for Life Project: Newbridge Fields*
Chair advised that the equipment for the project had been ordered and it is anticipated that it will be installed before Christmas.
- *Page 2 BCBC Bus Shelters*
Town Clerk explained that she did not have an update but would pursue this matter.
- *Page 2 Tourism Initiative Signage Refurbishment*

Town Clerk stated that she had sought a quote for this project and was awaiting costs from a local sign painter.

- *Page 3 Item 9. Christmas Lights*

Town Clerk explained that at the end of September, Bridgend Town Council were advised by BCBC that the catenary wiring used to install the cross street Christmas light features in the town centre needed to be tested before the Christmas lights could be installed. This testing involves load testing wall fixings and wires to ensure they can support the weight of the light features. A private company was asked to provide a quote for this work. The cost was reported at £6,300.

- Members discussed the need for testing and the frequency required for the testing.
- The Town Clerk was asked to obtain guidance on the frequency of testing required from HSE.
- Members discussed the use of alternative column features as a contingency plan if the catenary wiring could not be tested.

RESOLVED: To approve the quote of £6,300 to carry out catenary wiring testing within Bridgend Town Centre as soon as possible or to use budget from the Christmas Lights budget heading to purchase additional Christmas column features as an alternative.

- *Page 4 Item 12. a) Great Western Railway (GWR)*

Town Clerk advised that she had contacted the Bridgend Railway Station architects to ask for the opportunity to meet to discuss the location of the GWR interpretation panels and was currently awaiting a response.

- *Page 4 Item 12. b) Bulb Planting Scheme*

Chair advised that 17 sacks of bulbs had been ordered and distributed at a cost of £600

- *Page 4 Item 12. c) Litter Bin Provision*

Chair advised that 16 bins had been ordered by BTC but confirmed that BCBC will be responsible for emptying the bins.

- *Page 5 Item 12. d) Signage*

Town Clerk advised that she had spoken to the BCBC Conservation Department regarding the interpretation panels and confirmed that BCBC were of the understanding that the Town Council would take responsibility for the panels after they had been installed. RFO to ensure the interpretation panels are included on the BTC fixed assets register.

- *Page 5 Item 12. e) Registered footpath works and associated issues*

Chair advised that quotes for the work had been sought and explained that it will cost more than originally anticipated. He explained that there is an opportunity to apply for grant funding from an Eco Fund available from the Aggregates Levies Board. Members agreed that this funding opportunity should be pursued.

- *Page 5 Item 12. Street Benches Provision*

Chair advised that the Heritage Walkway Project Manager, Mrs Tracy Evans, was meeting with officers from BCBC to discuss proposed amendments to the walkway and bench locations.

- *P5 12. f) Red Telephone Kiosks*

Clerk advised that the transfer process was underway.

- *Page 6 Item 16. Confidential Waste Supplier*

Town Clerk reported that the trial for the confidential waste contract had been successful.

RESOLVED: To arrange a permanent contract for the disposal of confidential waste with the appointed contractor.

- *Page 7 Mini Bowser Scrubber purchase for street cleaning*
Chair reported that he had sourced a street cleaning machine at the Saltex exhibition he had attended. He reported the cost of the scrubber as £3,000 and explained that it would need to be powered by a portable generator. The generator would cost approximately £1,000. Chair suggested that a demonstration of the scrubber could be arranged for the BTC outdoor workers in Bridgend Town Centre.
- *Page 7 Item 18. Town Council website*
Town Clerk reported that due to the heavy work load, staff had been unable to prepare a brief for this project. Chair acknowledged the situation. The brief will be prepared in due course.
- *P7 19. Allotments Report and Review of finances*
Chair noted that the recommendation made by the Finance Committee had been amended at the full Council meeting on 18th September 2017 for an increase in rental.

4. To Consider a request for £2000 to purchase four defibrillators for Bridgend Town Centre

- Members considered a report from Cllr T Wood requesting a budget of £2,000 to purchase four defibrillators for locations in Bridgend, including Dunraven Place, Nolton Street, Caroline Street and Bridgend Tennis Club (Newbridge Fields).
- Details of businesses that had indicated that they could offer funding towards the defibrillators were included in the report; however, the amount of financial contribution from each business had not been finalised.
- It was noted that defibrillators are already installed at the following locations in Bridgend:
 - Bridgend Bus Station (closed after 7pm)
 - Evergreen Hall (closed in the evenings)
 - Train Station
 - Bridgend Life Centre
- Chair read an email from the Bridgend Tennis Club, requesting that a defibrillator is installed on the outside wall of the Tennis Club for the use of members of the public.
- Chair informed Members that he had recently seen an article about defibrillators and explained that the article highlighted that some members of the public would be reluctant to use defibrillators without training.
- Members discussed the possibility of BTC offering public defibrillator and first aid training courses.
- Members considered whether a specific budget should be created for the defibrillators scheme.
- It was suggested that a budget for this project could be allocated from the overall budget for Wellbeing Projects.

RESOLVED: To arrange a meeting between Members of the Finance Committee, Cllr Tim Wood and representatives from the businesses willing to contribute to the scheme to prepare a fully costed plan.

- Mayor highlighted that a previous suggestion for BCBC Councillors to allocate £250 towards the scheme from their Councillors Community Fund would not be possible as the fund had a minimum spend of £500 per Councillor, per project.

5. To Consider a request for £850 for a Blue Plaque Scheme (Cllr S Bletsoe)

- Members considered a report from Cllr S Bletsoe requesting a budget of £850 for the supply and installation of 3 Blue Plaques for the financial year 2018-19.
- Members discussed the request and suggested that BTC should be made aware of the locations that the plaques will be installed and who/what they will commemorate.
- Members considered whether a specific budget should be created for the blue plaque scheme.
- It was suggested that a budget for this project could be allocated from the overall budget for Regeneration Projects.

RESOLVED: To refer the project to the Regeneration Committee and suggest that a budget for the blue plaques scheme is allocated from the precept budget for Regeneration Projects.

6. To Receive a Statement from Carnegie House Management Board

- Members considered a statement from Cllr I Robson, Chair of the Carnegie House Board, regarding the change in direction for Carnegie House Arts Centre and funding requirements for 2018-19.
- It was noted that this should be considered when reviewing the draft precept budget allocated for Carnegie House activities.

7. To receive report from Chair of Evergreen Hall Management Committee (Cllr A Wathan)

- Chair of the Evergreen Hall Management Committee, Cllr Alan Wathan, explained that the Manager of Evergreen Hall was due to finish her employment at the end of December. He explained that the outcome of the grant application would be known on 15th December 2017 and that if the application is successful, the future of the hall would be more secure. He also expressed concern that no arrangements were in place to open and close the hall or carry out basic admin duties from January until 31st March 2018 and suggested that arrangements would need to be put in place to ensure that the hall can still operate pending future developments.
- Chair of the Evergreen Hall Management Committee requested that a provision is put in place to provide funding from the 2017-18 budget to cover the cost of an employee to undertake caretaking duties and general administrative tasks for 15 hours a week from January – 31st March 2018 at an estimated cost of £1,650.
- It was noted that funds could be available from the £20,000 allocated for Evergreen Hall in the 2017-18 budget.
- Chair of Evergreen Hall Management Committee advised that if the grant application is not successful, further discussions would be required regarding the future of Evergreen Hall.

RESOLVED: That the Chair of the Evergreen Hall Management Committee should discuss this requirement with the committee at their meeting on the evening of Tuesday 14th November and report back to BTC as necessary.

8. Review of Budget for the Financial Year 2017/2018

- Deputy Clerk/RFO presented a Quarter 3 budget review report to Members. She explained that she did not have any concerns regarding the expenditure to date.
- The report was reviewed by Members.

RESOLVED: To approve the Quarter 3 budget review; the report was duly signed by the Chair of the Finance Committee.

9. Salary Review for Financial Year 2018/2019:

- *To discuss recommendation from BTC Personnel Committee re- Office Staff Salaries for the forthcoming Financial Year*
- Town Clerk enquired whether she and the Deputy Clerk should leave the room.
- Chair explained that the officers had not been present during the discussions regarding staff salaries at the Personnel Committee meeting. He noted that the recommendations had been fully discussed by the Personnel Committee and followed the National Pay Awards set by the Society of Local Clerks (SLCC). The officers were not required to leave the meeting.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee re- Office Staff Salaries for financial year 2018-19.

- *To Consider salaries for Outworkers in line with the “Real Living Wage” recommendations for the forthcoming Financial Year*

- Chair explained that in previous years, BTC had agreed to pay outdoor workers the Real Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation.
- It was reported that the Real Living Wage had increased from £8.45 per hour to £8.75 per hour.

RESOLVED: To accept the recommended wage increases for outdoor workers for financial year 2018-19.

10. To Receive forward Financial Planning from Finance Chairman

- Chair of Finance presented a report regarding financial planning considerations in relation to precept budget requirements for Bridgend Town Council for 2018-19.
- Chair of Finance invited the Town Clerk to provide a verbal report on proposed changes to the remuneration framework for Councillors which includes significant changes in respect of community & town councils.
- Town Clerk explained that the Independent Remuneration Panel of Wales had produced a draft report recommending that Town Councils with an annual expenditure of over £200,000 should be required to make mandatory payments to Councillors to provide a contribution to costs and expenses incurred by Councillors and reimbursement of the costs of care. She referred to Determinations 44 - 51 of the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales Draft Annual Report 2018.
- Town Clerk explained that if the draft report was accepted in February 2018, the Town Council would not be able to opt out of the scheme; however any individual member could make a personal decision to elect to forgo part or all of the entitlement to any of these payments by giving notice in writing to the Clerk.
- Members discussed the remuneration proposals and agreed that BTC should allocate a budget for the cost of Determination 44 and 45 in the 2018-19 precept and costs related to Determination 50 would need to be allocated from the contingency fund if any Members wished to claim this allowance. Members noted that with a change to the Mayoral allowance, the Civic Service would also need to be budgeted for separately in 2018-19.

RESOLVED: The Town Clerk is request to prepare a report to Council to highlight the impact of the changes proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales.

11. To consider draft budget for the 2018/2019 Financial Year and to thereon make recommendations for the 2018/2019 Precept

- Chair asked the Town Clerk to provide an update regarding the Resource and Policy review currently being undertaken by a representative of One Voice Wales.
- Chair noted that further to initial conversations with the representative responsible for the review, a budget for additional staff resource had been included in the draft precept budget, pending the full recommendations of the review.
- Members considered an email submitted by Cllr Gary Sassoon-Hales, regarding comments on the draft precept budget.
- Chair explained that it is unlikely that a van share arrangement suggested by Cllr G Sassoon-Hales could not be considered for the BTC van as the vehicle is used for the disposal of dog waste during the day, used by the caretaker to travel to the building to open and close in the evenings and is also used to transport equipment used by the outdoor workers.
- Members discussed the storage arrangements for the van when it is not in use. The Town Clerk was asked to speak to the outdoor worker/caretaker to confirm the details, check the insurance policy and report back to members at the next meeting.
- Members reviewed and discussed each individual budget heading and relevant proposed budget for 2018-19.
- Members discussed budget requirements for Evergreen Hall and the possibility of conducting Legionella testing in-house in 2018-19 subject to appropriate training.

- Members discussed the Community Skip Scheme and acknowledged that in the past, it had been suggested that members of the public from outside the area had dumped rubbish in the skips provided for the Morfa ward.
- Members noted that the Community Skip Scheme provided a valuable service to those unable to drive to the BCBC amenity sites to dispose of large items of refuse.

RESOLVED: To continue with the Community Skip Scheme but review how the scheme is promoted to local residents in 2018.

- Chair explained that the general reserves for Bridgend Town Council are too low for a Council of its size.
- Members discussed the need for general reserves. It was noted that best practice guidelines recommend that as a minimum, the Council should have an amount equivalent to three months expenditure, which equates to approximately £118,000.
- Members discussed Christmas lights for Bridgend Town Centre and in particular, a situation that had arisen regarding the need to test the catenary wires used to install Christmas cross street features. Members considered the risks associated with the use of catenary wires and it was suggested that in future, the Council may need to consider moving away from the use of cross street features and solely use Christmas column features. This would need to be budgeted for in the 2018-19 precept.
- Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk reported that they would undertake a full inspection of Christmas lights in December and record a photographic record for review by Members.
- Members discussed the possibility of leasing Christmas lights in future.

RESOLVED: Town Clerk to produce an up-to-date inventory of BTC Christmas lights and provide costs for both a Christmas scheme using cross street features with catenary wire testing and a Christmas lighting scheme using only column features for Christmas 2018.

- Members discussed budget allocations for Town Twinning activities and agreed that a budget should be provided for civic hospitality.
- Members considered the need to budget for election costs. Member suggested that an amount of £1,000 could be allocated each year, so that the entire cost of the 5-year elections would not need to be budgeted for in one go.
- Chair provided an overview of landscaping projects for Bridgend Town Centre. Members discussed the need for improved landscaping at the area at the bottom of Coity Road. It was also noted that there is very little landscaping near the new Rhiw Car Park development.
- Members discussed the budget allocated for the summer play scheme in Bridgend Life Centre. It was noted that children from outside the BTC wards use the play scheme; however members felt if funding for the scheme is withdrawn, it would penalise children within the wards that use the scheme.
- Members discussed the shopmobility scheme. It was noted that when the scheme was established in 2000, there were very few privately owned scooters; however, times had changed and many members of the public now own scooters. Members reviewed shopmobility usage statistics and highlighted that the figures show a downward trend of 1,000 less users in a 12-month period.
- Member suggested that with the re-introduction of traffic to the lower part of town, this could reduce the requirement for mobility scooters even further.

RESOLVED: That the Finance Committee are not minded to fund the shopmobility scheme in 2018-19 and recommend to full Council that BTC should enter into discussions with BCBC to seriously consider suspending a BTC contribution to shopmobility from 1st April 2018.

- Mayor suggested that some of the budget headings on the precept spreadsheet could be consolidated. RFO explained that the budget headings were historical and reflect the way the

budgets are configured on the AdvantEdge financial ledger. She suggested they could be reviewed and amended in future.

- Members discussed the method of creating budget heading for new projects and proposed that it may be better to create a Town Centre Improvement fund for future use.

RESOLVED: Members unanimously agreed to recommend to Council for their consideration a precept budget of £553,849.00 for Bridgend Town Council for financial year 2018-19 to be submitted to Members at the November Town Council meeting.

12. To consider a public statement regarding the Precept for 2018/19

- Members reviewed a draft precept statement for 2018/19 and agreed that the statement should be updated to reflect the discussions and resolutions of the Committee Meeting and submitted to full Council for consideration.

Meeting closed at 1.15pm

Signed:..... (Chair of Finance Committee)

Date:.....