



BISHOP'S CASTLE TOWN COUNCIL



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THE TOWN HALL
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MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & RESOURCES COMMITTEE TUESDAY 10th MAY 2016 AT 7.00 PM

Council Chamber, Bishop's Castle Town Hall

Present: Cllrs K Bavastock, J Carroll, S Harris, and R Houghton

In attendance: Meg Gwilliam (Assistant Clerk)

No members of the public were present.

FIRE PROCEDURE

22.16F APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Cllr J Magill.

23.16F DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- To declare any disclosable pecuniary interests: None declared.
- To declare any personal interests: None declared.

24.16F MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of 12th April meeting were **approved** as accurate.

ACTIONS OUTSTANDING FROM MINUTES

- This item heading (Actions Outstanding from minutes) to be included on **every agenda** from now on (action, **Clerk**).
- Re 14.16.F (Council Audit)*, in order to review the status of Bishop's Castle Town Council within the Local Council Awards Scheme, the Committee asked that the **Clerk circulate details** of this scheme to Finance Committee members asap, and that Cllrs **Carroll** and **Bavastock will lead on a review** of BCTC status within the scheme. Does BCTC comply, what needs to be done in order to comply / gain higher status, etc. *Aim:* report back to Finance Committee at June meeting, with a view to reporting to full Council at July council meeting.
- Re 14.16F R4 (financial risk assessment)*, in order to progress this action, could the **Clerk provide a copy** of the most recent assessment to Committee members, and **this item to be on the agenda** for the June Finance Committee meeting.
- Re 14.16F R5 (check of staff salaries)*, this item to be a fixture on the **Staffing Committee agenda** (action, **Clerk**).

- *Re 14.16F c (letter to internal auditors)*, **Clerk** to inform Finance Committee when this has been auctioned.
- *Re 15.16F (Utility Providers)*, **Clerk** to inform Finance Committee when competitive quotes have been obtained.
- *Re 16.16F (Risk Assessment/Register)*, deferred to next meeting.
- *Re 17.16F (Asset Register)*, Cllr Carroll has the list of assets at BCHRC and will circulate.

25.16F COUNCIL AUDIT

Re Internal Audit Report 2015 – 16 Final update, The Finance Committee received and discussed the report. Under the heading “Precept Determination and Budgetary Control”, members expressed concerns about and asked the **Clerk for clarification** on the whole of the final paragraph, starting “The total reserve balance actually equates..” and finishing with “...a negative General Reserve balance”. The paragraph mentions planned future project spend of £50,000 – what is this referring to? Could the **Clerk** explain to the members exactly what the Internal Auditors mean with regard to this whole paragraph. **The Finance Committee resolved to accept the report, subject to satisfactory clarification of this query.**

26.16F END OF FINANCIAL YEAR

The Finance Committee commended the Clerk on a very clear well set out report/financial statement. Members particularly appreciated the percentage breakdowns.

Members noted as a concern that on page 2 the total spend is given as £88,209.92 whereas the total income is given as £77,529.26, an £11,000 shortfall.

On page 3 (Earmarked Reserves) members noted that the clerk had drawn attention to the internal audit report concerns. Some members had thought that because it has been stated that there are Earmarked Reserves totalling £46,715.98, this meant that BCTC holds funds of £46,715.98 to cover the Earmarked Reserves. Why is BCTC stating it has earmarked reserves of this amount if BCTC does not hold this amount in funds available to cover these earmarked reserves? **Members asked that the Clerk clarify** how much money is there in reality. **Members further asked for this clarification asap** because they felt that the excellent report cannot be recommended for adoption by Council until this question has been resolved. It appears that BCTC is short on reserves. An HLF payment is expected, will this change the financial picture? It appears that BCTC does not have in funds what it should have.

Members commented that financial training for all councillors would appear to be essential and urgent. Clerk to arrange this for as soon as practicable.

Page 4 (Budget and actual outturn): under Receipts, could the **Clerk please clarify** what is ‘Other’ (budget 400, outturn 2134). Under Payments, could the **Clerk please clarify** the figures for Playing field (budget 8000, outturn 12304); the Town Hall renovation (outturn 9508), and Others (outturn 6492). Could the **Clerk please also give further clarification/details** on the Lottery loan. Where are we with it, how much is there left to pay, and when.

Comparison of pages 4 and 7: members were perplexed that the figures do not tally. Members thought that the figures on p4 budget and outturn should relate to figures on page 7 receipts and payments summary, and they were unable to do this. Cllr Bavastock suggested that it might help if the headings matched – is this possible? **Clerk to respond.**

On page 7 members noted that payments for playing fields maintenance were much higher in 2015/16 (15574.26) than in 2014/15 (6765.27) and asked that the **Clerk clarify this.**

It was again noted that there was a deficit of nearly £11000 between receipts and payments.

Re page 8, members felt that they needed to have sight of the bank statements to approve the bank reconciliation. **Clerk to arrange.**

On page 9 (Annual Return information), members asked that **the Clerk clarify/give details** for the figure of 43750 shown under 2016/17 box 8 total cash and investments. How is this arrived at?

Members thought that they could answer ‘yes’ to all questions on page 10.

Page 11 Statement of responsibilities for the statement of accounts: Members suggested that this could be approved subject to satisfactory answers to their points above.

27.16F SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Members noted that this item will be a recurrent item for each meeting.

It was reported that the meeting with Shropshire Council officers had been cancelled but that it is hoped to re-schedule it for sometime next week.

Members suggested that the 'blue sheet' comes to the Finance Committee meeting each time. **Clerk to arrange.**

It was recommended that Halls or another auctioneer might give a free valuation on the pictures held in storage at BCHRC and in the Clerk's office (including the very large grim portrait behind the door). Council could choose to sell one or more rather than keep them shut away, and use the funds to improve the reserves situation. A valuation should also include the Golf Cup. **Clerk to arrange valuation of items.**

The Golf Cup could possibly be given as an annual award. Or sold?

28.16F OTHER FINANCIAL MATTERS

There was no other report tabled from the Clerk. The Financial Statement has already been dealt with under item 26.16F.

Cllr Bavastock gave her apologies for the next Finance Committee meeting on 14th June, she has a prior commitment.

Meeting closed at 8.10pm.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING:
Tuesday 14th June 2016**