

Malmesbury Town Council

Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held in Malmesbury Town Hall on Tuesday 6th December 2016 commencing at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors: R E Budgen, S Cox, L G Grant, A J Gundry (Chair), S J Poole & F Vandelli

Apologies for absence: Councillors W R Jones, V L Penfold & H Webb

Public Question Time: None.

Declarations of Interest: None.

26. Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on the 11th October 2016 as circulated, be received and adopted.

27. Income and expenditure

The Town Clerk presented the income and expenditure report and the level of Earmarked reserves, previously circulated as Report No.1. The committee noted the report on income and expenditure and raised a number of questions about the difference between earmarked and general reserves. It was proposed by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Budgen and approved by committee that the Town Council be RECOMMENDED to abandon all previously identified earmarked reserves with the exception of Cloister gardens and assimilate the funds into the general reserves.

28. Auditor's Report

The Town Clerk presented a report from the external Auditor, circulated as Report No.2, confirming that the accounts had been approved and not qualified. However, a number of minor issues not affecting the decision had been identified and these were outlined in the report. The committee noted the report and the action taken by the Town Clerk.

29. Review of draft Communications Policy

The Chair reminded the committee that the draft communications policy had not been accepted by the Town Council and that the major area of concern centred on the monitoring of social media accounts. He proposed that the relevant section 12.3 and 12.4 be altered as follows:

- 1 Deletion of "Users are expected in the first sentence to be replaced with "Councillors are advised"
- 2 Deletion of the final sentence of 12.3
- 3 Deletion of "Users must ensure that they" in 12.4 to be replaced with "Councillors are advised to".

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Grant and approved by the committee that the altered policy should be accepted and resubmitted to the Town Council with a RECOMMENDATION for adoption.

30. Statement from Town Clerk on salaries budget

The Town Clerk had been instructed to provide a statement about the salaries budget and this had been circulated in advance of the meeting. The committee raised no questions concerning the statement.

31. Issues with Wiltshire Council recycling facilities in Station Yard

Councillor Cox expressed his concern about the continuing failure of Wiltshire Council or its agents to maintain the recycling facility in Station Yard in a clean and acceptable condition, especially as it is a gateway into the town.

The committee agreed that the area needed to be kept under review and complaints forwarded to Wiltshire Council with photographic evidence wherever possible. It was proposed by Councillor Gundry, seconded by Councillor Grant and RESOLVED that the Town Clerk contact the Wiltshire Councillor seeking support and that the item be requested for consideration at the Area Board in an attempt to raise awareness and achieve a solution.

32. Draft budget for 2017/2018

The Chair presented the budget report for the next financial year and invited the Town Clerk to comment on the latest information about the consultation paper on restricting increases on the council tax levied by town and parish councils. The report circulated by the Town Clerk contained those requests received from the committees of the Town Council and identified the anticipated level of expenditure for the next financial year. The total expenditure included a sum of £12,750 for projects to include replacement of windows in the Hobbes Parlour, redecoration of areas within the Town Hall, refurbishment of the bar and replacement notice boards.

It was proposed by Councillor Gundry, seconded by Councillor Poole and resolved by the committee that the level of council tax rise to be RECOMMENDED the Town Council for the next financial year should be 2.64% or a level of £194.59 on a Band D equivalent property.

33. Publicity provided by the Town Council.

The committee briefly discussed the format and frequency of communications issued by the Town Council and RESOLVED to place the item before the Town Council with a view to forming a Working Party to consider what, if any, changes are required.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm