

**CARTERTON TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN THE TOWN HALL
ON TUESDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2016
COMMENCING AT 7.45 PM**

Present: Cllr P Scott - Chairman
Cllr Mrs M Mead - Vice-chairman
Cllr M Brennan Cllr Mrs L Little
Cllr Miss S Coul Cllr M McBride
Cllr N Leverton

Officer: Ron Spurs - Town Clerk

Apologies: Cllr Mrs D Bulley, Cllr Mrs S Scott-Stovold

In attendance: Cllr J Hayes

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

25 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 13 September 2016, previously circulated, were confirmed as a true record, with the amendment that Cllr Miss Coul had given her apologies and that Cllr Mrs Mead was present until 8pm. The minutes were then signed by the Chairman.

26 ADJOURNMENT FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present.

27 DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2017/18

The draft budget for 2017/18 had previously been circulated. See attached. A number of queries were raised as follows:

4056/115 - Civic Expenses - Cllr McBride queried why this budget head had been increased for 2017/18 and the Clerk said he would investigate.

4530/120 - Grants & Donations - Cllr McBride asked why the grant for the ARRG charity account had been reduced to zero. The Clerk said that the grant no longer applies as costs are now borne by the Town Council in line with the recommendation of the Internal Auditor. Cllr Mrs Mead asked what happens to the ARRG income and the Clerk advised that this is still credited to the Charity Account.

The Clerk informed the Committee at this point that he and the Assistant Clerk had very quickly identified nearly £10K worth of savings - £5K in respect of the payment to WODC for maintenance of their Monahan Way pitches, paid since 2003, a subscription to OALC of £2K and a payment of £1,800 to an HR company as a retainer, when advice had only been sought on one or two occasions.

1205/210 - Squash Club Income - Cllr Brennan asked when the rental was last increased at the Squash Club. Cllr Mrs Mead questioned whether they have sufficient finances to pay more and Cllr Scott said that the profit they make is small and is ploughed back into the Club.

1100/202 - Town Hall Income - Cllr Miss Coul asked if hire of the Town Hall is still feasible as income is so low. The Clerk responded that Council needs to consider whether the hire of the hall to local groups such as the Carers and the Visions Club warrants the issuing of invoices and receipts, the banking of monies and the use of Officer time. Some Councillors felt that free use of the hall could be abused and the premises overrun, but the Clerk said parameters would need to be set.

Cllr Miss Coul queried Town Hall Income next year of £3,000 and whether this was too high and the Clerk said this would be looked at. Cllr Mrs Mead felt that the administration of hiring should not be huge, especially as invoices and receipts are sent by email. Cllr Mrs Little pointed out that free hire is already supplied to the Child Health Clinic and to OXPIP, and she supported the idea of this being expanded to vulnerable local community groups. The Clerk said he would look into the possible costs and terms and conditions.

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** approval of the draft budget subject to the amendments referred to above.

28 DRAFT PRECEPT FOR 2017/18

The Clerk presented his report on the draft Precept for 2017/18. Councillors made various comments on the options included in the report. Cllr Miss Coul said that if it was possible to make savings in the current budget, then why not reduce the precept for next year. The Clerk responded that a saving of approximately £10K had already been identified so a reduction in the precept of 2% would not be impossible.

Cllr McBride was opposed to this suggestion. He still felt in principle that there should be a small increase in the precept to take account of things on the horizon that may need Council funding. Cllr Leverton felt that Council needed to take into account the fact that although we assume we have done well with costs this year, the public may argue that we have not, particularly in regard to grass and hedge cutting. Cllr Mrs Mead said a balance needs to be struck and maybe the Council could save for a year or two. Cllr Miss Coul said that as more houses are built in Carterton, the precept could be increased without any real percentage change so a 2% rise to residents would not be a 2% rise in the precept. The expected increase for district and county councils is 1.99% and one suggestion was that the Council falls in line with that. Cllr Brennan said that if the precept is not increased in 2017/18, there may be a cap thereafter.

Taking all comments into account, it was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council a 5% increase in the precept, amounting to £25,166 p.a. and giving a precept for 2017/18 of £528,498. Cllr Mrs Little asked for her abstention to be noted.

29 CARTERTON MARKET CHARGING POLICY

It was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** to Full Council that the rent-free period for the Carterton Market be continued. General feeling was that the Market needs to be revitalised in the future.

30 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Clerk had previously circulated an Anti-Bullying Policy for consideration. Members felt it was an essential policy and **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** its adoption to Full Council.

31 PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 2960

RESOLVED that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the Press and Public be excluded from the Meeting.

32 STAFF PAY - NJC PAY SCALES – CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

This item was closed to the public.

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

Chairman