

**MINUTES OF A MEETING  
OF THE  
FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE  
HELD ON  
THURSDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015  
IN THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**

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**PRESENT:** Councillors: A Harrison - Chairman

D Baker	R Barnes
P Bettington	M Eager
E Harvey	A Manns

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs K Mitchell, Clerk to the Council  
Mr Mark Davies, CCLA (part)

**F.34 - 09.15 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors, A Crowe, M Mackness, N Morris, A Warmington and R Yeoman.

**F.35 - 09.15 INTERESTS**

There were none declared at this point in the meeting.

**F.36 - 09.15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present.

**F.37 - 09.15 PRESENTATION - THE PUBLIC SECTOR DEPOSIT FUND.**

1. Members received a presentation from Mr Mark Davies, of CCLA (Churches, Charities & Local Authorities) in respect of The Public Sector Deposit Fund and were circulated with relevant literature. Mr Davies summarised the company background and covered key details about the fund:

- Minimum initial investment of £25,000
- Low risk, AAA rated money market fund with priorities of security, high liquidity and yield
- Same day withdrawals – 11.30 am cut-off time for instructions
- Monthly interest

Following a question and answer session Mr Davies was thanked for his informative presentation and he then left the meeting.

2. Members considered depositing cash reserves in The Public Sector Deposit Fund.

**Recommendation to Full Council:** That the second half of the precept for 2015/16 be deposited in The Public Sector Deposit Fund, and that the F & GP Committee consider a strategy for longer term deposit of static reserves.

### **F.38 - 09.15 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015, copies having been circulated, were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **F.39 - 09.15 FINANCIAL MATTERS**

1. Summary of Receipts and Payments

Members were circulated with a summary of receipts and payments from 1<sup>st</sup> July to 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2015.

**RESOLVED: That the summary, as presented, be approved and adopted.**

2. Invoices for payment

Members considered a list of invoices for payment, copies having been circulated.

Re: invoice no.9 S Large, (new cemetery fence) The Clerk was asked to investigate the removal of ivy emanating from the public footpath/chainlink fence immediately behind the new fence.

**RESOLVED: That the invoices, no.s 1-15, as presented, be approved for payment.**

3. Specified Grants 2015/16

Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB)

In view of the withdrawal of the services in Ledbury (refer F13.06.15) and the uncertainty over the future of Herefordshire CAB, it was agreed to defer the release of grant funding until further information is made available.

Ledbury Poetry Festival

Members agreed to release the grant for 2015/16, however, in view of the Poetry Festival vacating the offices in the Town Council Building, it was decided to remove the budget line from the five year forecast.

**RESOLVED: That the following grant funding, as allocated in the 2015/16 budget, be released to the following recipients.**

Carnival Association	1,000
Community Association	2,500
Community Action Ledbury	7,000
Age Concern	2,750
Poetry Festival	2,000
Ledbury Primary School	700

4. Bank Account Reconciliation

The bank reconciliations from July to August 2015 were noted.

5. Precept 2016/17

Members were advised that Herefordshire Council has requested that the Town Council submit its precept request for 2016/17 by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015.

**F.40 - 09.15 HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Councillors Harrison and Harvey presented a budget briefing outlining Herefordshire Council's financial plan for the period 2016 to 2020. (slides circulated by email) Herefordshire Council has advised that unprecedented changes to services will need to be made in order to achieve savings estimated at £42million by 2020.

Potential impact on parishes due to service cuts, to include:

- loss of Council Tax Relief grant (10% of precept in 2014/15)
- Lengthsman Scheme
- Local services, toilets, car parks, libraries, transport, open space maintenance.

**F.41 - 09.15 BUDGET 2016/17**

1. The Chairman presented a draft budget information/consultation leaflet for consideration, copies having been circulated. Taking into consideration the expected Herefordshire Council cuts, Members were asked to bear in mind which services the Town Council might wish to deliver itself, when budget setting for 2016/17; this to include new initiatives such as identified in the town plan action plan and the youth drop-in centre.

2. Participatory Budgeting

The chairman spoke about the principles of participatory budgeting and gave examples of how the process might be implemented by the Town Council.

Councillor Harvey advised that permission had been obtained for use of space at the Barrett Browning Institute (BBI) to showcase the Town Plan actions plans and to hold consultation events on the Neighbourhood Plan and Town Council budget, over a three to four week period.

Members reviewed the 2015/16 budget lines earmarked for participatory budgeting.

**Recommendation to Full Council:** To proceed with the introduction of participatory budgeting in respect of the following budget lines:

4856 Design award	100
4860 JMHS	550
4865 Busy Bees	550
4870 Youth Budget	1,500
4875 Awards	250
4890 Unspecified Grants	<u>2,000</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,950</b>

**That a participatory budgeting event be held in the BBI.**

Members were asked to review the draft budget leaflet and to make comment on whether it might be suitable for distribution as a leaflet or alternatively to be used as consultation material for the above event.

It was **RESOLVED:** That Councillors be invited to comment on the draft leaflet and that further discussion be held at the next Full Council meeting.

#### **F.42 - 09.15 TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES**

1. Members considered a quotation to construct a paneled cupboard to hide telephony /electrical equipment in the Ceremony Room.

**Recommendation to Full Council:** To accept the quotation in the sum of £220.

2. Non domestic rates

Members considered applying for separate listings of the two rental offices on the first floor for Non Domestic Rates, in order to allow prospective tenants to claim for small business rates relief.

**RESOLVED:** That the matter be deferred in order to obtain further information on costings.

**F.43 - 09.15 CORRESPONDENCE FOR INFORMATION**

A letter from Herefordshire Libraries Support Group to Jesse Norman MP and Bill Wiggin MP, regarding proposed cuts to Herefordshire Community Service and Libraries was circulated to members via email.

**RESOLVED: That this be noted.**

**In view of the lateness of the hour and the amount of business still to be transacted, the remaining agenda items were deferred for consideration at the next meeting.**

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.47pm.

Chairman..... Date.....