

Witham Town Council

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MINUTES

Meeting of: **Estimates Sub-Committee**

Date: **Monday, 13th January 2014**

Present:	Councillors	M.C.M.	Lager	(Chairman)
		R.	Williams	(Vice Chairman)
		S.J.	Goodfellow	
		J.C.	Goodman	
		M.	Squire	(Town Clerk)
	Mrs G.W.	G.W.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J.M. Money and Mrs C. Thompson.

1. INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

2. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

No member of the press or public were present.

3. ESTIMATES 2014/2015

(i) Administration/Central Services

The budget for Central Services Expenditure was received.

The Town Clerk explained that there are now separate gas and electricity budgets so that costs can be monitored. He said that £8,000 was in the budget for Repairs and

Renewals (i.e. regular maintenance/repairs of the Town Hall) and £26,550 in earmarked reserves for major renovation costs.

The Town Clerk said that the recently revised split of general costs between the Information Centre and Town Hall should be phased out altogether. It was considered illogical to split these costs, particularly as the new accounting system can now identify specific costs relating to the Information Centre and that a more meaningful split of all general Information Centre costs can be provided when required.

Members after discussion agreed that £4,000 should be allocated to Repairs and Renewals and the additional £4,000 be added to the Policy and Resources earmarked reserves, particularly as a major survey of the Town Hall was due.

RECOMMENDED That the following amounts be approved for the Administration/Central Services for 2014/2015 –

Expenditure

Salaries, Tax, National Insurance	-	£130,500
Pensions	-	£23,000
Payroll charges	-	£450
Town Hall	-	£29,000
Gas	-	£2,500
Electricity	-	£3,500
Repairs and renewals	-	£4,000
Travel Expenses	-	£500
Photocopying	-	£900
Postage	-	£2,100
Stationery	-	£2,300
Publications	-	£200
Office equipment	-	£8,000
Website	-	£1,800
Telephone/fax	-	£2,900
Insurance	-	£11,000
Sundry Expenses	-	£3,200
Audit and legal	-	£3,000
Affiliation fees	-	£3,000
Members - Conferences and training	-	£1,000
Staff – Conferences and training	-	£1,000
Petty Cash	-	£600
<u>Total Expenditure</u>	-	<u>£234,450</u>

Proportioned across Committees

Community Committee (40%)	-	£93,780
Environment Committee (40%)	-	£93,780
Policy and Resources Committee (20%)	-	£46,890

Income

Sundry Receipts	-	£4,000
Car Park Licence	-	£9,293

Total Income - **£13,293**

Proportioned across Committees

Community Committee (40%)	-	£5,317
Environment Committee (40%)	-	£5,317
Policy and Resources Committee (20%)	-	£2,659

(ii) **Committee Bids**

Members considered bids made by the Committees.

Community Committee

The Town Clerk said that he would highlight those areas in the budget that had altered since the original Committee proposals.

The Information Centre budget had been amended to £30,000. He had made enquiries of Essex Police as he had been informed that there was likely to be some changes in the future arrangements for match-funded Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Today he had discovered indirectly that Essex Police were withdrawing from the agreement and information on the Police Commissioner's website indicated that all participating councils had been informed.

Members agreed that it would be appropriate to write to Mr Alston, Essex Police Commissioner, expressing concern that the Town Council had not been informed of this decision. It was agreed that at this time it would be appropriate that the £34,000 budget allocation for the PCSOs be withdrawn and held in General Reserves. Members realised that it would be necessary to be proactive with regard to policing future events such as the Puppet Festival.

It was agreed that £1,000 should be allocated for the World War I Commemorations.

RECOMMENDED That the following budget be set for the Community Committee for 2014/2015 –

Expenditure

Town Clock	-	£770
Bus Shelters/seats	-	£1,000
Litter bins	-	£1,000
Christmas Decorations	-	£9,000
Christmas Dickensian Event	-	£400

Information Sales Expense	-	£90,000
Information Centre	-	£30,000
Community Grant Aid	-	£20,000
Citizens Advice Bureau	-	£10,000
Other Community Support & Youth		
Engagement	-	£6,500
Puppet Festival	-	£25,300
WWI Commemorations	-	£1,000
Administration/Central Services	-	£93,780

Community Committee Total Expenditure

£ 288,750

Income

Christmas Dickensian Event	-	£200
Information Sales Income	-	£104,000
Puppet Festival	-	£7,300
Administration/Central Services	-	£5,317

Community Committee Total Income - **£116,817**

Environment Committee

The Town Clerk said that originally a budget for the Neighbourhood/Town Plan had been allocated to the Environment Committee but was now under the Policy and Resources Committee.

Members discussed funding of the CCTV system and monitoring. It was difficult to gauge how effective the cameras are with regard to crime prevention and the Town Clerk undertook to make enquiries of Chelmsford City Council who monitor the images 24/7.

RECOMMENDED That the following budget be set for the Environment Committee for 2014/2015 –

Pensions	-	£16,350
Manual Equipment	-	£9,500
Lighting of Footpaths	-	£5,000
Period Garden	-	£2,000
Trees/Commemorative/Memorial	-	£1,500
CCTV	-	£15,000
Open Spaces	-	£90,000
River Walk Projects	-	£10,000
Lavatory – Town Park	-	£9,000
Witham in Bloom Support Grant	-	£10,000
Witham Gateways	-	£4,000
Local Conservation Listings	-	£1,000
Administration/Central Services	-	£93,780

Environment Committee Total Expenditure

- **£267,130**

Income

Administration/Central Services - £5,317

Environment Committee Total Income - **£5,317**

Policy and Resources Committee

The Town Clerk explained that he wanted to increase the income from hall lettings.

Members spoke about the costs of the Newsletter and the Town Clerk explained that currently for the purposes of the Quality Council Status, four issues per annum were required and that it is important to reach all of the local community. It was agreed that this could be reviewed in the future.

Members then spoke about the proposed groundwork with regard to a Neighbourhood Plan and the need to be prepared for the costs of any by-election and to allocate funds towards the next local elections.

It was agreed that enquiries should be made of Steve Daynes, Braintree District Council with regard to possible costs to the Town Council for the local elections in 2015.

RECOMMENDED That the following budget be set for the Policy and Resources Committee for the 2014/2015 –

Mayor's Fund	-	£100
Civic Receptions	-	£600
Christmas Expenses	-	£2,500
Mayor's Allowance	-	£2,500
International Relations	-	£500
Newsletter and Publications	-	£10,000
Joint Working with BDC	-	£2,000
Members' Allowances	-	£3,200
Neighbourhood/Town Plan	-	£10,000
Administration/Central Services	-	£46,890

Policy and Resources Committee Total Expenditure

- **£78,290**

Income

Administration/Central Services	-	£2,659
Hall Hire	-	£12,000
Bank/Investment Income	-	£3,000

Policy and Resources Committee Total Income

- **£17,659**

(iii) **Earmarked Reserves**

Members were asked to approve transfer of reserves to and from the General Fund.

It was noted that the figure for Major Repairs and Renewals would be increased by £4,000 and Members agreed to earmark £13,000 for election costs.

RECOMMENDED That the following earmarked reserves be approved –

Community Committee

Puppet Festival - £9,032

Environment Committee

CCTV - £5,000
Maldon Park Funding - £26,000
Vehicle Replacement Fund - £18,000
Car Park Key Deposits - £125

Policy and Resources Committee

Major Repairs and Renewals - £30,550
Election Expenses - £13,000

Total Earmarked Reserves - **£101,707**

(iv) **Puppet Festival**

An updated final schedule was received.

RESOLVED That the details be received and noted.

4. **PRECEPT 2014/2015**

A proposed precept was received.

The Town Clerk explained that a Band D tax base of £52.77 would produce a precept of £392,845, ensuring that there would be no increase in Council Tax for a Band 'D' equivalent.

The Support Grants had been replaced with the Local Grant Entitlement. He said that it was the general consensus to have reserves at the end of the Financial Year to allow business to progress for a minimum of three months.

Members commented on the expense of a Neighbourhood Plan and the need to ensure value for money.

RECOMMENDED That a precept of £392,845 be agreed for 2014/2015, a Band D equivalent of £52.77.

The Town Clerk undertook to email the changes in the budget figures to Estimate Sub Committee Members.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.45p.m.

Councillor M.C.M. Lager
Chairman

MS/GK/14.1.2014