

## Witham Town Council

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### MINUTES

Meeting of: **Policy and Resources Committee**

Date: **Monday, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

Present:	Councillors	M.C.M.	Lager	(Chairman)
		J.C.	Goodman	
	Mrs.	J.A.	Kempf	
	Mrs	A.	Kilmartin	
		T. A.	Pleasance	
		R.	Williams	
		M.	Squire	(Town Clerk)
	Mrs	G.	Kennedy	(Committee Clerk)

#### **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C.J. Bailey, P. Horner, Mrs J.M. Money, R.P. Ramage and W.J. Rose.

#### **79. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held 15<sup>th</sup> February 2016 be confirmed as at true record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **80. INTERESTS**

Councillors J.C. Goodman and Mrs A. Kilmartin declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute 91 – River Walk, as Members of Braintree District Council.

Later in the Meeting at Minute 87 – Business Plan, Councillor R. Williams declared non-pecuniary interests as he helped set up the Town Team and is also the Chairman of the Witham Community Initiative Company.

At Minute 88 – Witham Ambulance Trust, Councillor Mrs A. Kilmartin declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Chairman of the Witham Ambulance Trust.

**81. QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no members of the press or public present.

**82. TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on matters arising.

He explained that he had received a request to investigate a microphone system in the Council Chamber as some Members had difficulty hearing the debate. It had been investigated in the past and found to be too expensive but he would undertake further enquiries.

He said that the lights in the Town Hall are awkward to replace and he will investigate changing to a LED system and report back to Committee.

He gave his best wishes to everyone walking over the O2 for the Mayor's Charity on Friday.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and the Town Clerk undertake investigations regarding LED lighting and a microphone system in the Council Chamber.

**83. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

(a) **BANK RECONCILIATION**

The Bank Reconciliations to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 were received.

Members were concerned that the current system meant that staff had to use their own money for some purchases and then had to wait to be reimbursed. It was suggested that more use should be made of the Petty Cash and the Town Clerk was asked to make enquiries of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

**RESOLVED** That the Town Clerk make enquiries of NALC regarding purchase of items when the Town Council has no account with a shop or a company requires immediate payment.

**RESOLVED** That the Bank Reconciliations to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 be received, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

(b) **BUDGET STATEMENTS**

The Budget Statements to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 were received.

The construction of budgeting was discussed. Historically when not all individual budget categories had been used, there would be surpluses returned to reserves at the end of the year, thus providing an up-turn in the final financial year end position. There are specific examples of over budgeting e.g. River Walk and Gateway projects and also of overspend e.g. unexpected repairs in street lamps. It was noted that whilst the vast majority of budget headings proved accurate, there is a case to be even more stringent when setting the budgets to hopefully provide closer forecast predictions, although this may mean in some cases more individual budget headings are exceeded.

The Town Clerk explained that as part of the Quality Council status, there will be an exercise on providing 3 year long term budgets and Members considered that with the Town Council's finances being tightened this is important.

The suggestion was made that a fund be set aside for repairs, which would cover such items as street light repairs. The Town Clerk said that there is a budget for major repairs and renewals which could include the repairs to the Town Hall. He said that the overspend on street lighting could legitimately be covered by this budget.

**RESOLVED** That the draft Budget Statement to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 be received, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

(c) **SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS**

The Schedule of Payments and Receipts for the period ended 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Schedule of Payments to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 totalling £49,384.01 and the Schedule of Receipts to 29<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and totalling £12,369.72 be received, agreed and signed by the Chairman.

**84. STAFFING AND ACCOMMODATION SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Minutes held in Public Session of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes be received and noted.

**85. MEETING SCHEDULE 2016 – 2017**

The draft Meeting Schedule for 2016 – 2017 was received.

The Town Clerk explained that the Schedule was set in consultation with the District Council's Meeting Schedule. He said that an additional Town Council Meeting had been set for January specifically to discuss the Budget for 2017 - 2018 and its implications.

Members said that it was understood that the District Council had undertaken to check with Parish and Town Councils before setting additional Meetings.

**RESOLVED** That the Meeting Schedule for 2016 – 2017 be received and agreed.

**86. MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

Details of Members' Attendance at Meetings were received.

**RESOLVED** That the details be received and noted.

**87. BUSINESS PLAN**

An update on the Business Plan for the Policy and Resources Committee was received.

It was noted that future outdoor accommodation maybe dependant on whether a lengthsmen scheme was put in place. A meeting to discuss town centre improvements was to be held on Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

Members spoke about the need to merge or align the Town Team and Strategy Group.

Councillor R. Williams declared non-pecuniary interests as he helped set up the Town Team and is also the Chairman of the Witham Community Initiative Company.

It was explained that the Town Team was set up as the one group the District Council was prepared to talk to and had representatives from other organisations, businesses and retailers. The Portas money was purely for establishing a street market.

With regard to infrastructure needs it was considered that these aspirations could merge with monitoring the Local Plan.

It was thought that the triggers for Section 106 Agreement monies must have occurred as the Maltings Lane estate is almost completed. It was agreed to ask Councillor Mrs J. Money to make enquiries of Braintree District Council regarding the implementation of Section 106 Agreement. The Town Clerk would support her in these requests.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and information noted.

**88. WITHAM AMBULANCE TRUST**

An update on the Witham Ambulance Trust from the last Trustees' Meeting dated 16<sup>th</sup> February 2016 was received.

Councillor Mrs A. Kilmartin declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Chairman of the Witham Ambulance Trust.

The Town Clerk said that the Trust is only used sporadically even though it had been marketed widely. He said that he had tried previously to contact the Strutt Family regarding the continuance of the Trust. It was noted that only a small number of people had been helped in four years and better use could be made of the money and officer's time.

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes be received and information noted.

**EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** That under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public be excluded from the Meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest.

**89. CAR PARK LICENCE**

A report was received.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

**90. PLAQUE**

A report and quotations for a plaque for the Town Hall were received.

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Mayor asked whether a plaque could be commissioned for the Council Chamber.

Members agreed logistically there was no place to hang such a plaque and that the matter should not be taken forward.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and no further action taken.

**91. RIVER WALK**

Councillors J.C. Goodman and Mrs A. Kilmartin had declared interests.

A report was received.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

**92. OPPORTUNITIES IN THE TOWN CENTRE**

A verbal update was received.

**RESOLVED** That the information be received and noted.

**93. ELECTRICITY CONTRACT**

A report was received.

**RESOLVED** That the report be received and noted.

**94. STAFFING AND ACCOMMODATION SUB-COMMITTEE**

The Minutes held in Private Session of the Staffing and Accommodation Sub-Committee Meeting held 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 were received.

**RESOLVED** That the Minutes be received and noted.

**95. PUBLIC DOMAIN**

Members considered that Minute 90 – Plaque, could be moved into the Public Domain.

**RESOLVED** That Minute 90 – Plaque, be moved into the Public Domain.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the Meeting at 8.57 p.m.

Councillor M.C.M. Lager  
Chairman

MS/GK/13.4.2016