



Kingswear Parish Council

Minutes of the Finance Committee Meeting of the Council held at the Sarah Roope Trust Rooms on 11th September 2018 at 6.00pm.

Present: L Maurer, L Payne, B Longland

Apologies: E Jones, J Henshall

In Attendance: Mrs Melissa Trudgill – Clerk to the Council
Miss Sue Balsdon – Asst Clerk / RFO

F/11.09/1 - The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

F/11.09/2 - To receive any apologies for absence from the Meeting.

The Council Meeting was suspended to allow members of the public to ask questions and make representations to the Council:

Questions from the public:

A member of the public referred to the updated forecast report which now shows a shortfall of £6.2k in comparison to the previous forecast of a £17.4k shortfall and asked what the difference relates to. The RFO explained that the forecast now includes £6.5k additional income – At the Precept meeting held on 23 January 2018, the council resolved to approve a transfer of £6.5k from reserves to cover additional expenditure. The previous forecast included pension costs calculated at LGPS contribution rates, however the new forecast includes costs based on membership of a NEST Pension – The Council have yet to make a final decision on which pension provider to opt for, and the lower cost was included in the updated forecast as being a more affordable option. A question was also asked of the council as to whether they had carried out any research on the Local Government pension scheme – The member of public voiced their concerns about the LGPS deficit and the impact that would have on the contributions paid by the Council.

Another member of public referred to their letter in the Dartmouth Chronicle asking the council to explain why Kingswear Parish Council's staff costs are so high in comparison to other comparable councils. The Chairman stated that Councillor Jones would respond to this request in due course.

The Council reconvened to discuss the following items:

F/11.09/3 - To undertake a review of the expenditure for the period to 31.8.18.

Councillor Payne asked for clarification as to the final cost of the upgrade to the Waterhead Creek pontoon. The RFO confirmed that the total expenditure for the pontoon amounted to £4683, however this cost is offset by £1000 already held in the budget for pontoon expenditure and £2,465 to be received from S106 funds – The additional cost to the council is therefore £1,218. The RFO agreed to send a breakdown of spend and income to Councillor Payne.

F/11.09/4 - Document attached for consideration and discussion – Updated forecast report 2018/19.

The RFO provided details of the difference between the forecast provided at the EGM meeting in July compared with the updated forecast. The increased income (£6.5k) and reduced pension costs (£3.9k) mentioned above are the main reasons for the estimated shortfall reducing from £17.4k to £6.2k. The RFO stated that £3k had been included in the previous forecast for repairs to the Chapel and Cemetery Lodge – It has been determined that these repairs are affordable within the existing budget, and they have therefore been excluded from the forecast. The RFO asked whether there would be any further costs relating to Jubilee Park in addition to the costs for lowering drains, pollarding and moving the MagPost. It was confirmed that there would be no further costs and the RFO advised that a sum of £2k could be removed from the forecast, reducing the anticipated shortfall from £6.2k to £4.2k. The Clerk advised that there are further costs which need to be considered by the Council which may affect the forecast position going forward i.e. Specialist renovation of the fire engine / toilets.

F/11.09/5 – Monthly finance meetings (Oct to Dec) – To discuss how the council can reduce costs and maximise income in preparation for the precept meeting in January 2019.

It was agreed that the working party would include all members of the finance committee. Meetings will be held in Oct, Nov and Dec to discuss funding opportunities, new income generation schemes and ways to reduce existing expenditure. An 'initial ideas' meeting will be held on 18th September 2018 at 8pm.

F/11.09/6 - Document attached for consideration and discussion re employee pension.

- Cost of Independent Pension Advice – The RFO advised that she had contacted 8 financial advisers of which two had replied. The first company charged £485 for recommending a provider, establishing the pension scheme and advising employees. The second company could provide an off the shelf package for £199 plus an ongoing charge of £50 per annum.
- The RFO provided a document showing a comparison of pension costs. These costs have been calculated based on the employee's pensionable pay. The RFO advised that the council could decide to use qualifying earnings as an alternative to pensionable pay and that this may reduce the cost to the council. In order for a pension scheme to be set up the council need to decide which pension provider to opt for, what earnings basis to use, the employer contribution rate and whether to pay contributions for employees who do not have qualifying earnings.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the Meeting.

Minutes approved

Signed: Chairman of the Council