



## MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2015** at **7.00PM**

### **PF/92 PRESENT**

Chairman: Councillor Holcombe

Councillors: Cobley; Draper; Gill; Ginger; Lyle; Sheward; Smithers

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk  
Sarah Hughes, Finance Assistant

### **PF/93 HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Chairman informed Councillors and members of the public of the fire exits, fire assembly point and asked that everyone sign the attendance log.

### **PF/94 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kemp and Mold.

### **PF/95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

#### Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
D. Lyle	10	Payroll from South Shropshire Housing

#### Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
A. Cobley	10	Involved with Rockspring & umbrella organisations

#### Declarations of Personal Interest

C. Sheward	Item 10 Item 14a	Member of Churches Together Pension with Shropshire Council Pension Scheme
P. Draper	Item 10	Homestart is Mayor's Charity
All Councillors	Item 9	Revenue for the Town Council
G. Ginger	Item 9	Personal friend of Phillip Dunne

**PF/96 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)**

There were no members of the public or press present.

**PF/97 UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION**

There were no Unitary Councillors present.

**PF/98 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/GG**

That the open and closed session minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**PF/99 ITEMS TO ACTION**

**RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/DL**

That the Items to Action table be noted.

**PF/100 FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

Councillor Sheward had submitted a query regarding a payment to Shropshire Council, prior to the meeting and the Town Clerk clarified the matter.

**RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/CS**

That the Payments and Income Reports, Barclaycard Statement and Bank Reconciliation for October and November 2014 be received.

**PF/101 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT GRANT**

The Town Clerk explained the situation that the Town Council is in with regards to the proposed reduction in funding, and informed Members that she will be attending a Clerks meeting regarding the issue the next day (20<sup>th</sup> January).

The Chairman thanked the Town Clerk for the letter to Phillip Dunne MP.

Councillor Ginger expressed his disappointment that the response from Phillip Dunne had not been personally signed and his frustration at not receiving funds from Shropshire Council that have been ring fenced for Town and Parish Councils. He commented that we should still honour grant awards that we have promised as a Council. He felt we should protect these awards and the services we provide.

Councillor Gill disagreed and stated that we must rethink awarding grants if funding is cut and savings must be made.

Councillor Sheward noted that cuts similar to this have been made in the past, and it is important that The Council fight it to avoid it reoccurring.

Councillor Lyle asked that The Town Clerk update Members following the Clerks meeting. She added that the public must be made aware of what is happening at that it is out of the Town Councils control.

Councillor Draper stated that we must respond strongly as a council and show the impact it will have upon the community.

#### **RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/PD**

That:-

- i) The loss of the Council Tax Support Grant (CTSG) in 2015/16 equates to £34,594.00.
- ii) Members attend SALC CTSG Conference on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015
- iii) The Town Council respond to the SC budget consultation to explain the impact of losing £34,594 and the increasing pressure on local services
- iv) Issue a press release to explain that Shropshire Council cabinet voted not to pay the CTSG to Town and Parish Councils and explain the impact of the loss of the CTSG.

#### **PF/102 LUDLOW UNDER PRESSURE**

Neil Richardson and Michael Day gave a presentation regarding their report as part of Churches Around Ludlow Together. They began their research in 2010, looking at the groups in Ludlow who were hardest hit by the recession. Michael talked about the growing crisis of transport, housing and youth services within the town, and the churches role in supporting vulnerable people within the community. They stressed the importance of organisations such as 'Hands Together Ludlow' in encouraging volunteers to fill in where cuts are being made.

They asked for the Town Council's support and active promotion of the report in the wider community. They added that Phillip Dunne MP is attending a meeting at the Methodist church on the 30<sup>th</sup> January at 11am to discuss their report.

Members thanked Churches Together Around Ludlow for their presentation.

**RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) GG/PD**

That:-

- i) The Town Council adopts and endorses the Ludlow Under Pressure report
- ii) The Town Council issue a press release to publicise their support of the Ludlow Under Pressure Report.

**PF/103 NATIONAL SALARY AWARD**

**RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) GG/PD**

That the National Salary Award be adopted.

**PF/104 LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME**

Town Clerk gave an explanation of each award and stated that The Council had achieved all the criteria for the Foundation Level Award.

**RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) GG/JS**

To apply for the Local Council Foundation Award.

**PF/105 POLICY REVIEW**

The Town Clerk explained that the Disciplinary & Grievance Policy had been reviewed and amended by Ellis Whittam.

**RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) JS/GG**

That the Disciplinary & Grievance Policy be adopted

Councillor Draper left at 8.20pm

Councillor Draper re-entered at 8.24pm

**PF/106 CONSULTATIONS****a) Shropshire Council Budget Proposals Consultation****RESOLVED (Unanimous) CS/GG**

To respond to the consultation:

Shropshire Council Cabinet decision to withhold payment of CTSG to Town & Parish Councils is unacceptable. The decision was communicated in the week before Christmas when Councils were finalising their own budgets only to discover a £34,594.00 funding deficit imposed by Shropshire Council.

Ludlow Town Council had already made commitments to fund local organisations and had relied on the CTSG within their calculations.

Shropshire Council had put Ludlow Town Council into a difficult position and forced it to consider a higher rise in the Council Tax to continue to provide local services.

Ludlow Town Council is always mindful that prudent stewardship of public money is essential; and local services are important to support the town. The loss of over £34,594 will have an impact on the council's ability to maintain the standard of services that Ludlow deserves and to continue supporting the community and improving facilities.

Ludlow Town Council budget setting for 2015/16 had begun in October 2014 and The Council had made budget reductions and efficient savings. Council will have to review the proposed Action Plan for 2015/16 and the provision of existing services. However, there is a strong commitment to working to achieve the best for Ludlow.

**Grants to local organisations**

- Some proved on a service level agreement on a fixed time scale usually over three years
- Annually reviewed grants to local organisations

**Youth**

- Investment and refurbishment of Wheeler Road Play Area
- Investment and refurbishment of Houseman Crescent Play Area

**Information Technology**

- Improved IT security and business continuity planning

**Property & Asset Management**

- Improved Property Asset Management Plan – Buttercross
- Improvement Programme to refurbish town centre street furniture

**Tourism**

- Opening and running the Buttercross Heritage Interpretation Centre & Museum

**PF/107 b) Police Crime Commissioner Precept Consultation**

**RESOLVED (Unanimous) NH/GG**

That the Police Crime Commissioners Precept be noted.

**PF/108 c) Shropshire Council's Consultation on Drug & Alcohol Services**

**RESOLVED (Unanimous) NH/GG**

That the Shropshire Council's Consultation on Drug & Alcohol Services Precept be noted.

**PF/109 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

The Chairman moved that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**RESOLVED (Unanimous) NH/PD**

That the public be excluded and the meeting continue in closed session.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm

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Chairman

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Date

N.B. Closed Session Minutes will be issued.