

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2016

Present : Councillor J Criddle (Vice Chair)
Councillors A Farina-Childs, D Davies & W Baber

Members observed a minutes silence in memory of Councillor Glyn Erasmus, Chair of this Committee who had died suddenly last Friday evening.

It was unanimously agreed that Councillor J Criddle Chair the meeting.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies had been received from Councillor G Hale

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor A Farina-Childs declared an interest in Item 5 (e) Applications for Financial Assistance as Chair of Governors for Blackwood Comprehensive School

Councillor D Davies declared an interest in Item 5 (a) (c) (i) Applications for Financial Assistance as a Member of the Royal British Legion and The Moose

Councillor W Baber declared an interest in Item 5 (a) Applications for Financial Assistance as a Member of the Royal British Legion

3. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 28th. October 2015

It was resolved the minutes be received.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

5. Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk presented his report on applications received and also informed members of an application received earlier in the day from Libanus Life Centre for a grant of £500 towards the cost of removing an overgrown conifer in the grounds of the Centre.

Each application was considered in some detail. Those members who had declared an interest took no part in discussion or decision making on the relevant applications.

After much discussion it was agreed to recommend to Town Council the following grants be awarded –

	£
(a) Blackwood & District Branch Royal British Legion	150
(b) Cefn Fforest Angling Society	100
(c) Moose Lodge 11 Blackwood	200
(d) Fleur-de-Lys Institute	50
(e) Blackwood Comprehensive School	250
(f) Cefn Fforest Boys & Girls Football Club	100
(g) Rhymney Valley Athletics Club	100
(i) Wales Air Ambulance	100
(j) Mayor's Charity	250

It was further agreed that in respect of (h) St. Thomas's Church, Cefn Fforest the application be deferred until future meeting

Also in respect of (k) Libanus Life Centre it was agreed this be deferred until the next meeting and that members present make enquiries regarding possibility of other avenues in removal of said conifer.

6. ***Budget Monitoring Report 2015/2016 & Budget and Precept Requirements 2016/2017***

The Clerk presented his monitoring report for the current year, which indicated a number of variances to the original budget, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £11,790 (this including £17,339 on new Xmas Lights, £2,500 Sponsorship in respect of Children's Literature Festival and a provision of £1,250 in respect of planned purchase of defibrillator).

Underspends/ savings in respect of Clerk/Typist salary (£600), Grants to Voluntary Organisations (£500), Christmas celebrations (£1,165), Carnival (£900) together with several smaller savings amounting in total to £835 helped to achieve this position.

Members then discussed likely budget requirements for the coming year.

The Clerk presented a budget which reflected current spending patterns, plus inflationary increases on some expenditure heads, but also reflecting the Council's decision to continue the provision of hanging baskets, the sponsorship of the Children's Literature Festival and the remainder of the committed provision for new Xmas Lights.

With the current precept level, it was anticipated this would result in a deficit of £5,300 for the year. Furthermore, it was anticipated that balances at 31st. March 2017 would amount to £36,830.

After much discussion, and bearing in mind the additional ongoing funding required for the hanging baskets and potentially the Children's Literature Festival, it was ***unanimously agreed to recommend*** to Council that the Precept for 2016/2017 be increased by £2 to £19 per annum for Band D properties, thus generating an additional £5,790 per annum.

Members placed on record their thanks to the Clerk for organising a card and flowers being sent to Carol expressing Town Council's sincere condolences on the death of Glyn.