

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 31ST. JANUARY 2018

Present : Councillor A Farina-Childs (Chair)
Councillor D Davies (Vice Chair)
Councillors W Baber, Z Hammond, A Short & P Cook

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillors J Weeks & J Edwards

2. Declarations of Interest

Declarations of Interest were made by Councillor W Baber in respect of Item 5 Consider Applications for Financial Interest as a members of one of the organisations

3. To Receive the Minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee Meeting held on 10th. October 2017

It was **agreed** the minutes be received

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising

5. To Consider Applications for Financial Assistance

The Clerk presented his report on the applications received since the last meeting. Councillor W Baber who had Declared an Interest took no part in the discussion or decision making relating to the Islwyn Comrades application.

All applications were discussed in some detail, and after deliberation it was **agreed to recommend** to Town Council that the following grants be awarded -

Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod - £50

Relate Cymru - £50

Urdd National Eisteddfod - £100

Tenovus Cancer Care (South East Wales) - £100

Islwyn Comrades - £150

An additional application was handed to the Clerk on the evening from Blackwood & District Branch British Legion seeking assistance towards the Great Pilgrimage 90th Anniversary trip to the Battlefields of Belgium – August 2018.

It was **agreed** this be deferred to the next Policy & Finance Committee scheduled for late March

6. Budget Monitoring Report for Period 9 – to 31st. December 2017 and Consideration of Budget & Precept Requirements for 2018/2019

The Clerk presented his monitoring report for the current year, which indicated a number of variances to the original budget, resulting in an anticipated surplus of £11,225 (with savings of £278 on Audit Fees, £305 on Insurance, £200 Salaries, £3,370 Xmas Lighting, £1,500 Newsletter, £35 Civic wards, £297 Carnival, £900 Christmas Celebrations, £1,707 Elections together with £3,273 increased income (amended accounting treatment of BLT Loan per Audit advice)

It was ***unanimously agreed to recommend*** to Town Council that the Budget Monitoring Report as presented be accepted.

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, potential continued sponsorship of Blackwood RFC Firework Display and the ongoing Event Programmes and our Grants to Voluntary Organisations. A contribution of £2,000 is also included towards a Replacement Fund for Christmas Lighting (in addition to the £1,730 remaining of the original £25,000 which is earmarked for the 2nd. Cross Street).

After some discussion, it was ***unanimously agreed to recommend*** to Town Council the Budget as presented and that the Precept for 2018/2019 remain at £20 per Band D property.

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