

CONGLETON TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 27th November 2014

PRESENT

Councillors Mrs D S Allen
P Bates
G Baxendale
R I Brightwell
D T Brown
J S Crowther
G R Edwards (Chairman)
G P Hayes
Mrs. S A Holland
Mrs A M Martin
D Murphy (Town Mayor)
D A Parker
Mrs J D Parry (Vice Chairman)
N T Price
Mrs E Wardlaw
G S Williams

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L D Barker.

2. MINUTES

FAP/32/1415 RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held on 23rd October 2014 be agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members are requested to declare both "pecuniary" and "non-pecuniary" interests as early in the meeting as they become known.

Cllr P Bates declared a non-pecuniary interest in all parts relating to item 5.

Cllr G Baxendale declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items relating to Cheshire East and Congleton Community Projects.

Cllr R Brightwell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 12.

Cllr J Saville Crowther declared a non-pecuniary interest in any item 11.

Cllr G R Edwards declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item relating to the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Cllr G Hayes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Congleton Community Projects. And items 11 & 14.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST continued.....

Cllr A Martin declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item relating to the Citizen's Advice Bureau.

Cllr D Murphy declared a non-pecuniary interest in all parts relating to item 5.

Cllr D A Parker declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items relating to Congleton Community Projects.

Cllr N Price declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items 13 & 14.

Cllr G Williams declared a non-pecuniary interest in all parts relating to item 5 and items 11 & 12

4. OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

There are no outstanding actions.

5. LARGE GRANTS

- Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Liz Shaw of the Citizens Advice bureau provided an overview of activities undertaken by the CAB in Congleton and pointed out that they have drop in sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings, as well as appointments with specialist caseworkers.

The top 5 enquiry areas are debt, employment, housing, relationships and benefits.

- Congleton Community Projects

Jo Money provided an update on the projects being undertaken by Congleton Community Projects, illustrating that the activities of Community Projects dovetailed in with the Town Council's Business Plan.

Many of the events currently enjoyed in the Town are produced by Congleton Community Projects which include the Christmas Lights Switch On, the Food and Drink Festival, the Jazz and Blues festival and others.

- The Congleton Partnership

Steve Foster of The Congleton Partnership illustrated the enormous number of projects that have been undertaken successfully by The Partnership and pointed out that without support from the Town Council, The Partnership would have a funding deficit of £23,396 in 2015-16.

In the period Jan-Sept 2014, volunteers contributed 2100 hours to events and projects in the Town.

6. GRANT APPROVALS AND COMMITMENTS

A summary of grant approvals and commitments was considered by the Committee and it was noted that £11,094 is available for grants in 214-15.

FAP/33/1415 RESOLVED that the grant summary be received.

7. NEW APPLICATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

FAP/34/1415 RESOLVED that:-

i. GR 18/1415 – Congleton Choral Society

A grant of £250 to be approved.

ii. GR 19/1415 – Congleton Harriers

A grant of £250 be approved, subject to the Town Council being able to nominate where any charitable donations are distributed to, to the value of £250

8. NEW GRANT ACTIVITIES MONITORING FORMS

There are no new Grant Activities Monitoring forms.

9. LETTERS OF THANKS

Letters of thanks were received from St Peter's Church and Congleton Building Preservation Trust.

10. MANagements ACCOUNTS FOR APRIL 2014 – OCTOBER 2014

FAP/35/1415 RESOLVED that the Managements Accounts for October 2014 be received.

11. BANK RECONCILIATION

FAP/36/1415 RESOLVED that the bank reconciliation for October 2014 be approved.

12. LIST OF PAYMENTS

FAP/37/1415 RESOLVED that the Payments List between 1st to the 31st October 2014 be approved.

13. THE CONGLETON PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered a request from The Congleton Partnership to release the funds earmarked for them for this financial year.

FAP/38/1415 RESOLVED that the funds ear marked in 2014-15 for The Congleton Partnership amounting to £14,000 be released.

14. VALE ALLOTMENTS

Peter Aston of the Sustainability Group provided an update on the proposal to acquire Vale Allotments. The Community Right to Buy gives the group an option to make an offer for the Allotments up until 25th April 2015, but, the owner has the right to reject any such offer. The group is in the process of raising funds and will hope to make an offer via Beartown Foods.

FAP/39/1415 RESOLVED that the Town Council support the aspirations of the group and encourage them to request group support for the project from the Town Council.

15. AMENDMENT TO FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

This item was withdrawn to allow time for the Working Group to consider some further amendments.

16. SIMNET

The Town Clerk provided a verbal report on the current situation with SimNet, whose proprietor has stated that he is working hard to ensure the unit ordered is supplied early in the New Year.

17. BUDGET 2015-16

The draft budget for 2015-16 was considered. The Town Clerk pointed out that the Rate Support Grant had been reduced less than previously notified by Cheshire East Council. In addition, there had been a refund from Cheshire East Council for some of the overspend in horticultural supplies.

The effect of this was to reduce the shortfall in the budget from £28,735 to £15,676.

FAP/40/1415 RESOLVED that the budget be recommended for approval in the Town Council meeting with the following amendments:-

1. £15,676 to be absorbed into efficiency savings in the budget.
2. Precept payable by rate payers to be kept to a zero increase.

Mr. G.R. Edwards
Chairman