



Redenhall with Harleston Town Council

Clerk: Mrs. L. Ling

Minutes

**of a meeting of Redenhall with Harleston Town Council Finance Committee
held at the council offices, Harleston Leisure Centre
at 6.30pm on Monday 15th January 2017**

In Attendance: Councillors: Ian Broughton (Chairman), Mark Betts, Frances Bickley, and Adrian Brownsea,

Also present: Lynda Ling (Clerk)

- 1. To receive and accept apologies from members unable to attend – None**
- 2. To receive any declarations of pecuniary or other interests in particular matters to be raised at this meeting – Cllr. Betts declared an interest in Item 7 – Senior Section - Grants**
- 3. To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 18th December 2017 – Agreement proposed by Councillor Brownsea and seconded by Councillor Broughton
ALL AGREED**
- 4. To receive a monthly finance report – Members read through the December income and expenditure and there were no questions.**
- 5. Matters arising – Councillor Brownsea asked if the traffic closure for the Christmas market had been paid by the council, as the town council had refused to pay at the last meeting. Cllr. Betts replied that the Christmas Lights group had paid half of the invoice and Harleston Future had paid the other half.**
- 6. Chairman's Report – The Chairman reported that he has spent some time in the office working with the clerk on the precept figures and budget.**
- 7. To note the grant applications received in preparation for consideration of the 2018/19 budget – Nine applications have been received in total so far, and these were discussed at length. The applications this year have been submitted by the following:-**

Organisation	Amount requested	Reason	Recommendation
Harleston Information Plus	£6000	The grant will be used to help with running costs, including staff salaries and overheads	£6,000 agreed
Harleston & Waveney Festival	£1000	Contribution has historically been used to promote a major event and to support the family day	Refused - The Finance Committee felt that the use of the recreation grounds, two members of staff litter picking and free electricity was a sufficient contribution
Waveney Foodbank	£500	Due to a fall in grant funding, income is no longer covering running costs by just over £4000 pa.	£500 agreed but to invite the funding manager to a meeting for further information
Harleston Future Events	£500	To help with lighting and sound equipment and contribution to cost of entertainers	£500 provisionally agreed subject to further information
Harleston & District Historical Society	£520	As in previous years, half of the grant will pay for the annual rent of the museum building and the other half for the storage of the 18 th century Harleston fire engine	Agreed £520
Waveney Valley Community Archaeology Group	£650	To provide a colour illustrated printed and bound booklet and downloadable PDF of a report of the spigot mortar dig on the recreation grounds	Refused, the committee commented that a downloadable version would be more suitable which would negate the need for printing a booklet
Harleston Senior Section Girlguiding UK	£1000	To pay the rent on the hall for one year and to purchase equipment	£650

A further application had been received from Exchange 2 for £5000, which was to finance a new porta cabin. The finance committee agreed that rather than treat the application as a grant, it should be financed from reserves if required. This will be discussed again at the next meeting.

Agreement to put to full town council for approval of the awarding of the above grants was proposed by Councillor Bickley and seconded by Councillor Broughton

1 AGREED

1 ABSTAIN

8. To discuss the reserves of the council and any agreed action – Members spoke about the current levels of reserves and discussed which ones should be looked at in more detail with a view to reducing the current levels, this included maintenance store and CCTV.

This would help bridge the gap between the shortfall between the 2018/19 precept and the income and expenditure if necessary.

9. To agree a signatory for the council's current account and any agreed action - Cllr.Bickley proposed Cllr. Broughton which was seconded by Cllr. Betts. **ALL AGREED**

10. Consideration of the 2018/19 draft budget and precept request for recommendation to full council and agree any action – A lengthy discussion took place with members considering the increased forthcoming expenditure which included:-

- The increased charges for the car parking lease, business rates and the potential toilet costs. These total an additional spend of around £35,000 to £40,000 per annum with the cost of the car park increasing year on year.
- Sick pay and maternity pay are set to increase from 1st April 2019
- Employees whose salaries start at £19,430 per annum will receive an uplift of 2% as of next April, with a further 2% the following year.
- Those on the lowest salaries will also receive increases, unions have suggested that these could be as high as 16% over the two years. The offer also includes the introduction of a new national pay spine on 1st April 2019.

The discussion turned to how best the reserves (and reduction of) could be utilised to cushion some of the deficit the council's finances. Some of the idea's put forward included:-

- Taking out the projects budget altogether
- Reducing the contingency budget
- Reducing the street lighting budget and spreading the renewal of lighting columns over a longer period
- Reduce the maintenance store budget
- Reduce the CCTV budget

Figures were presented by the clerk for consideration taking the known increased expenditure into account and after further discussion on the report, the committee suggested an increase of 13.2% which would give the council an extra £34,651 per annum, equating to an extra 46p per week on the council tax bill. This would go a long way to covering the extra expense incurred from the taking on the toilets, and the car park lease which residents voted for in the summer parish poll. The remainder of the shortfall of £11,555 could potentially be met from reductions in the reserves as it was agreed that the budgets for all the council responsibilities were not excessive and could not be reduced any further. Agreement to put forward to full council a proposal to request a precept request of £340,000 was proposed by Councillor Bickley and seconded by Councillor Betts.

ALL AGREED

11. Update on the car park lease and toilets and any agreed action – The draft lease is now with Sprake & Kingsley and should be ready for signature before too long. There has been no further update on the toilets.

12. Date and time of next meeting – the next meeting will take place on Tuesday 6th February 2018 at 6.30pm in the council offices.

Signed

Meeting closed at 21.10pm

Date.....