

ELLESMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Town Council held in Ellesmere Town Hall on Monday 29th January, 2018 at 12.30pm.

PRESENT: Town Mayor (Chair): Cllr R Hartley
Councillors: Cllrs Mrs J Clayton, G Elner, J Frost, P Goulbourne, Mrs E Peers, B Reincke and Mrs J Williams
Town Clerk: Mandy Evans
Assistant Clerk: Phil Smith
Members of the Public: 0
Press: 0

Public Question Time No members of the public were present.

194/17 **To Receive Apologies and Reason for Absence.**

RESOLVED - that the apologies received from Councillors I Ward – prior engagement – and Mrs A Wignall – attending conference - be approved.

195/17 **Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests in Items on the Agenda**

Cllr J Frost declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to a grant application by Ellesmere In Bloom.

Cllr P Goulbourne declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to a grant application by the Plantation Wood Group.

196/17 **Grant Dispensations**

The Town Clerk advised that the view of the National Association of Local Councils was that all or most Members of a Parish/Town Council will hold a disclosable pecuniary interest at a meeting setting the Council's precept. It was therefore recommended that all members of the Town Council be granted a dispensation to allow the precept requirements for 2018/19 and for the following three financial years to be discussed and determined.

It was moved by Cllr P Goulbourne, seconded by Cllr Mrs E Peers and

RESOLVED – that in accordance with S.33 of the Localism Act 2011, a dispensation be granted to all members of the Town Council in relation to the setting of the Council Tax precept for 2018/19, and for the following three financial years.

197/17 **Response to Public Questions**

None received.

2018/19 Budget

The Finance, Asset & Resources Committee had looked at the 2018/19 budget proposals in detail on 22 January 2018, and the draft minutes of that meeting had been circulated. The Committee had made a number of recommendations for consideration by the Full Council. The Town Clerk suggested an additional recommendation that £3,000 be taken from reserves to cover a projected deficit for the Section 106 Public Realm project to refurbish/replace benches in the Town Centre (for which the Council had received a £6k allocation)

The following information had been circulated to Members:

- Draft budget estimates for 2018/19;
- Budget explanations document;
- Outstanding bank loans;
- Bank Balances and Earmarked Reserves;
- Breakdown of Income and Expenditure;
- Band D Council Tax Base

The Council went through the draft budget estimates, and questions were asked in relation to the Joint Burial Committee and the Council Tax Base. The Town Clerk confirmed that the necessary adjustments had been made to the budget to take account of the Council's responsibilities for the Joint Burial Committee from 1 April 2018. The Council Tax Base for 2018/19 had increased by 2.36% which, with a zero increase in the council tax charge, would equate to a precept requirement of £202,780 for 2018/19.

In relation to Ellesmere Library, the Town Clerk advised that no formal request had been received for financial assistance over the next twelve months.

There was a discussion regarding the recommendation from the Finance, Asset & Resources Committee to increase the budget by £4,056, equivalent to a 2% increase in the Council Tax precept. It was felt that it would be prudent to budget for a small increase, particularly bearing in mind the likelihood of additional spending on maintenance works to keep the Town Hall up to a reasonable standard of repair. The Town Clerk stated that she would look to undertake a Maintenance Plan for the Town Hall that would identify the priorities for works.

It was moved by Cllr Mrs E Peers, seconded by Cllr P Goulbourne and

RESOLVED (unanimously) -

(a) that the total Town Council budget for 2018/19 be increased by £4,056 (equivalent of 2% increase in the Council Tax precept) to £206,836;

(b) that the Town Hall Maintenance budget be increased from £43,000 to £47,056;

(c) that all the grant applications for £250 be approved, except for the Rotary Club;

(d) that the Grants budget be reduced by £250 to £15,720, with the Christmas Lighting budget being increased by £250 to £8,027;

(e) that £3000 be taken from reserves for the re-varnishing of the Main Hall floor at the Town Hall;

(f) that £3000 be taken from reserves for the Section 106 Public Realm project to refurbish/repair the Town Centre benches;

(g) that the following loans be taken out with the Public Works Loan Board:

- £10,000 for the deficit on the cost of the new Town Hall lobby;
- £16,000 towards the installation of new SOX lamps in all the Council's 83 street lights.

199/17

Council Tax Precept Request 2018/19

Further to the discussions and recommendations above, it was

RESOLVED -

(a) that a precept request of £206.836.00 be approved, and that this precept request be made to Shropshire Council with the following financial statement: "Ellesmere Town Council continue to look for ways to ensure best value and service for the community. The increasing demands on the use of Ellesmere Town Hall by local community groups and the need to maintain an aging building to a standard expected by users has necessitated a 2% increase in the precept for 2018/19";

(b) that the Band D Council Tax increase is 2.0% from £145.09 to £147.99 = 0.06p per week.

The meeting closed at 12.43pm

Mayor:

Date: