

**ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT TOWN COUNCIL**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Revenue & Resources Committee held on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at 7.30pm in Manor House, Lime Kiln, Royal Wootton Bassett.

**PRESENT: Councillors:** Steve Bucknell, Mike Farrow, Paul Heaphy, Mike Leighfield, Marion Sweet, John Wilks

**Also in attendance:** Councillors: Stephan Jarvis, Audrey Wannell, Chris Wannell and Steve Watts.

**Officers in Attendance:** Johnathan Bourne, Town Clerk, Michelle Temple, Administrative Services Manager, John MacIndoe, Grounds Maintenance Team Leader, Emily Maiden, Committee Clerk and Administrative Assistant.

**Question Time**

The Committee was asked whether there had been any announcement from Wiltshire Council's Planning Department regarding the planning application for a community food store in the vicinity of Coped Hall. Councillor Chris Wannell explained that the Planning Officer had indicated that a decision would be forthcoming after Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016, and at the present time there were no further updates.

**27. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Susan Doyle.

**28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive Declarations of Interest in accordance with sections 10 and 12 of Wiltshire Council's Members Code of Conduct, as adopted by Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council at a meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012.

There were no Declarations of Interest.

## **29. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman informed the Committee that the steel poppies have been completed by the Blacksmith, and were temporarily in place at the War Memorial for the Remembrance period. Arrangements are being made with the Grounds Maintenance Team Leader for their permanent installation. The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) have donated the poppies to the town, therefore the cost of construction has been waived. The Town Council had set aside a budget for the steel poppies, therefore £300 will be donated to the REME Welfare Fund and £50 to the Blacksmith as a thank you for the donation of the poppies. The donations will be presented to Colonel Tizzard at a joint cheque presentation ceremony with the Royal British Legion. The remaining funds will be used to renovate the War Memorial.

## **30. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

RESOLVED to confirm and sign minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016 [R&R/3/16-17]. Copies previously circulated.

## **31. WILTSHIRE COUNCIL LIBRARY ALTERATIONS**

At a meeting of the Revenue and Resources Committee held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016, Members discussed Wiltshire Council's proposed alterations to Royal Wootton Bassett Library.

Members advised that any alterations must provide the appropriate level of facilities for the Town Council and community groups if a financial contribution was expected by Wiltshire Council.

At the meeting of Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016 it was felt that there was not enough information provided at that time regarding room sizes and available facilities, and therefore the item was deferred until Wiltshire Council was able to supply this information.

Copies of the required information providing details of the proposal were previously circulated. Laurie Bell, Associate Director of Communities and Communications at Wiltshire Council, gave a presentation detailing the proposals, explaining that the scheme follows the model that has been successfully piloted at Calne Library. Calne Library is now a multi-use space, and several community rooms have been created for groups to hold meetings. This approach has been incredibly popular, with demand for community space outstripping supply. The book shelves can be moved to create a large floor space, with smaller meeting rooms and a kitchen facility also available.

It was explained that a similar scheme could be implemented at Royal Wootton Bassett Library, with two options proposed for creating the required space. One of the options available would be to increase the current footprint of the library building, maximising the space available for community use. It would also be possible to remodel the library within the existing footprint, proposed as option two, which would require internal alterations only.

The Committee was asked to consider whether in principle it wished to work on this scheme in partnership with Wiltshire Council.

RESOLVED to arrange for Councillors Mike Leighfield and Marion Sweet to attend a meeting with Laurie Bell together with the Town Clerk, in order to establish which of these options would be able to deliver a facility which meets the needs of the community and fulfils the requirements of the Town Council. Details of the meeting will then be brought back to the Full Council.

## **32. COMMUNITY MAGAZINE**

The Committee received a request from the Community Magazine for an increase in the amount of funding from the Town Council, correspondence previously circulated.

The Community Magazine is published 4 times per year and distributed to every household in Royal Wootton Bassett. In 2003 the magazine found itself in a position of financial difficulty, which the Town Council addressed by contracting the magazine to publish and distribute its newsletter as part of the magazine.

This contract meant that the Town Council contributed £3,260 per annum to the Community Magazine, with the proviso that the 8 centre pages were under the editorial control of the Council, dedicated to Town Council business, and printed in full colour at a time when the magazine was otherwise produced in black and white.

In 2012, the Community Magazine noticed a drop in revenue due to fewer local businesses placing advertisements in the magazine as a result of the economic climate. The Chair and Vice Chair of the Community Magazine approached the Town Council with a proposal to produce a Winter supplement as well as the 3 regular editions of the Magazine. The Town Council resolved to increase its funding for the Community Magazine from £3,260 per annum to £5,850, which allowed the Community Magazine to stabilise their financial position, as well as improving the quality of Town Council communications by moving to quarterly publication. By publishing the 8 middle pages four times per year, the Town Council's communications met the requirements for the benchmark that all local Councils are encouraged to attain.

In the four years since that resolution was passed, the magazine has felt the effects of inflation whilst also requiring an increased circulation due to the number of new homes in Royal Wootton Bassett. For these reasons, the Chairman of the magazine submitted a request for an increase in funding of 10.25%, which equates to £600 per annum.

The Committee discussed the numerous benefits to residents that are afforded by the Community Magazine, which is very popular. It was noted that volunteers are always welcome in order to assist with distributing copies.

RESOLVED to increase the Town Council funding of the Community Magazine by 10.25%, which equates to £600 per annum.

### **33. REVISED CORPORATE GOVERNANCE**

All Town and Parish Councils are required to produce Corporate Governance documents, outlining the principles, regulations and processes by which a Council conducts its business. Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council's full suite of Corporate Governance documents is separated into 15 sections, running to a lever-arch file of papers. The last full review of these documents took place in 2008, although a number of individual sections have been reviewed and updated since this time.

Over the past 6-months an independent advisor has been reviewing the full Corporate Governance documents, and has produced a short report detailing suggested amendments, copy previously circulated.

Any Member wishing to ask questions about the complete suite of documents was advised to approach the Committee Chairman or Town Clerk in advance of the meeting. All Councillors will receive electronic copies of the full Corporate Governance pack once the documents have been adopted.

RESOLVED to approve the proposed changes and recommend the adoption of the Corporate Governance documents to Full Council.

#### **34. INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT**

The Committee received a report from the Council's Internal Auditor, in respect of internal audit work carried out on 5th October 2016. Copies previously circulated.

RESOLVED to note the report.

#### **35. ANNUAL ESTIMATES OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

The Committee was asked to consider making recommendations to the Full Council for its budgetary position in the 2017-2018 financial year.

Copies of the complete draft budget, including figures for the Amenities Committee as well as for Revenue and Resources were previously circulated, together with explanatory notes, the Total Reserve Summary, Projected General Reserve Analysis (as at March 2017), and proposed Precept calculation for 2017-2018.

Members were asked to note that to avoid problems previously experienced, all recharges have been set to zero for budgetary purposes only.

Members were reminded that the draft estimates represent on-going commitments and service provision at current levels. Changes have only

been incorporated where there is a clear intent by the Council to undertake change following discussion with the Chairman.

The Committee considered the draft budget for the 2017-2018 year, and RESOLVED to recommend the proposed Precept calculation of £877,520 to Full Council, whereby the charge for a Band D property would be £194.81, which represents a 2.63% increase from the previous financial year. This increase is required in order to account for the loss of the Wiltshire Council precept grant, and the cost of taking on the public toilets in Boroughfields after they were closed by Wiltshire Council.

### **36. COMMUNICATIONS**

The Committee was asked whether it wishes to issue any Press Releases or other Communications in respect of the Committee Agenda items.

RESOLVED to issue communications on the £600 annual increase in funding for the Community Magazine, explaining that volunteers are always welcome to help with the distribution of the magazine.

### **37. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Committee was asked that members of the public and press be requested to leave the meeting to allow discussion of the establishment, property and finance matters as it is considered the publicity would be prejudicial by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.