

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

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22 January 2019

SUMMONS TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Notice is hereby given that a meeting of **Berkhamsted Town Council** will be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted on **Monday 28 January 2018 at 7.30 pm** for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda below and you are hereby summoned to attend.

Mrs J E Mason
Town Clerk

MEMBERS:

Councillors S Beardshaw (Town Mayor)
A Armytage
S Bateman
D Collins
E Collins
G Corry
F Earl
Mrs C Green
J Jones
P B Matthews
B Newton (Deputy Mayor)
Dr I M Reay
T Ritchie
G Stevens
G Yearwood

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE INVITED TO ALL MEETINGS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

FC 01/19 Apologies for absence

To receive apologies for absence.

FC 02/19 Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda.

FC 03/19 Minutes of Last Meeting

To receive and approve the minutes of the Meeting of the Full Council held on 17 December 2018.

FC 04/19 Town Mayor's Communications

- (i) NALC Spring Conference 2019
(15-01-19)*
- (ii) HAPTC Bulletin 15 January 2019
(15-10-19)*
- (iii) BDCC Upcoming Networking Breakfast - Wednesday 6th March 2019
(18-01-19)*
- (iv) New NALC publication shines a light on 150 local councils
(18-10-19)*

FC 05/19 Public Participation

To suspend Standing Orders to allow any member of the public present to speak.

STANDING COMMITTEES

To receive and adopt the minutes of the:

FC 06/18 Town Planning Committee

Held on: * 7 January 2019
** 21 January 2019

FC 07/19 Finance & Policy Committee

- (i) Held on * 14 January 2019
- (ii) NALC Employment Briefing E02-18 | 2018-2019 National Salary Award & December 2018. Minute FP 08/19 refers.

To ratify the authorisation set out in minute FP 08/19 (iii) enabling the Town Clerk to write to each staff member advising them of the 2% increase set out in the above document with effect from 1 April 2019.

*Previously circulated. ** To follow.

SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS

FC 08/19 Allotment Management Team

Held on 8 January 2019*

FC 9/19 Youth Town Council

Held on 19 December 2018*

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FC 10/19 Estimates of Income & Expenditure 2019 – 20 and Precept 2019 - 20

(i) To **approve** the Budget for 2019 - 20

(ii) To **set and approve** the Town Council **Precept for 2019 -20**

Papers attached.

MEMBERSHIP OF OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

FC 11/19 Berkhamsted Castle Trust (FC 110/18 22-10-18 also refers)

(i) To **remind** the Council that it is invited to nominate a trustee as a member of Berkhamsted Castle Trust;

(ii) To **consider** such a nomination and propose a trustee as appropriate in the light of guidance from the Trust and considerations by Cllr D Collins, following the 22 October meeting, when he undertook to come forward with a proposal.

FC 12/19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

To **RESOLVE**

That under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential business to be transacted or for other special reasons stated in the resolution, arising from the nature of the business or proceedings.

FC 13/19 Risk Register and Assessment January 2019

To **review, approve and adopt** the Risk Register and Assessment (to follow)

Staffing Matters

FC 14/19 To discuss and agree any staffing issues arising from discussions under item FC 10/19 above.

JEM 22-01-19

Berkhamsted Town Council
Full Council Meeting
Item FC 11/19
28 January 2019

Approval of budget for 2019 - 20 and setting of Precept 2019 - 20

The Town Council is asked to set the precept demand for the year 2019 -20.

1. DBC Funding Proposals and Tax Base 2019 - 20 for Berkhamsted

The tax base agreed by the DBC Cabinet in December 2019 for Berkhamsted is 8,507.90 (8,443.30 in 2018 – 19).

The grant towards town warden expenditure is £15,761.30 (£15,452) and for Council Tax Support is £2,681.68 (£2,538). The grant towards concurrent services is £3,869.6 (£3,625) .

2. Setting the precept

In 2018 -19 the precept was set at £191,843 which represented an increase of 2.53% to a band D council tax payer and an actual increase in demand to DBC of 3%.

For the coming year, 2019 – 20, it was proposed at F & P Committee on 14 January 2019 to set the precept at £197,165.47. This would represent an increase of 1.98% to a band D council tax payer and an actual increase in demand to DBC of 2.8%.

A extract from the F & P minutes, which incorporates the paper discussed at the meeting, is attached. A further copy of the working papers/excel spreadsheet of the budget will be forwarded by e-mail. In summary, budgeted income is estimated as £262,498.05 for 2019 -20 and budgeted expenditure as £304,861.

2. Projected Reserves to 31 March 2020

On the basis of the budget assuming increase in precept and the predicted outturn figures for 31 March 2020 the Town Council's reserves at the end of the current year and the year ending 31 March 2020 are estimated as follows:

Opening Balance 01 04 18	£ 337,881
Income to 31 03 19	£ 279,048
Expenditure to 31 03 19	£ 256,599
Closing balance 31 03 19	£ 360,330
Opening balance 01 04 19	£ 360,330*
Income to 31 03 20	£ 262,498
Expenditure to 31 03 20	£ 304,861
Closing balance 31 03 20	£ 317,967

*NB includes £72,930 of CIL receipts.

Reserves are currently earmarked into the following categories: General Reserves; Election costs; Alan Dickman Fund; CIL; Fixed Asset Renewal Fund; Allotment Reserve Fund.

3. Precept decision

The Council is asked to

- i. Note the grant figures set out in paragraph 1;
- ii. Approve the precept figure proposed for 2019 – 20;
- iii. Approve the budget for 2019 -20
- iv. Ask the Town Clerk to advise DBC's Group Manager (Financial Services) of the precept decision by returning the Parish Precept form;
- v. Authorise the Town Mayor and Chair of F & P to sign the form, once the Town Clerk has completed it, at a convenient time before the end of the week.

JEM 22-01-19

FP 10/19 Budget preparation 2019/20 - Estimates of Income & Expenditure

The Committee **considered** the draft budget proposals for 2019/20 to be put to Full Council for approval on 28 January 2019. It was **noted** that the Town Clerk had discussed the draft proposals the previous week at meetings with Cllrs B Newton and G Stevens following which a briefing note and working papers (the latter in the form of an excel spreadsheet) had been circulated to Councillors. The briefing note annotated with recommendations made (in italics) is set out below:

1. Discussions prior to the meeting

As agreed at F & P on 10 December 2018, the draft budget proposals for 2019 – 20 have been discussed with Cllrs Newton (on 8 January) and with Cllr G Stevens (on 9 January 2019). Both were broadly in agreement with the proposals.

2. Suggested Precept

Last year's precept was £191,843 which represented a band D equivalent of £22.72. The proposal this year is to increase the band D equivalent by 1.98% to £23.17. Please note that this year's tax base, calculated by DBC, is £8,507.90. Therefore the precept demand to DBC would be £197,165.47.

*Following discussion of the points below, F & P members supported this proposal and it was **RESOLVED** to recommend the above precept to Full Council on 28 January 2019. The budget proposals were also **supported** subject to the discussions set out below and further discussion at Full Council.*

3. Matters for discussion

Income and expenditure at the Town Council is fairly constant over the years. However, there are a number of items that must be drawn to your attention this year as follows:

a. Income

Concurrent Services – DBC have increased these allowances by 2 %.

Noted.

Community Infrastructure Levy – The predicted income is a notional amount at £10,000 because it is so difficult to predict what will actually be collected from developers by DBC given that planning permissions are open for three years; the efficacy of DBC's debt chasing and the vagaries of the building/property markets.

*Predicted CIL income was **agreed** and will be recommended to Full Council.*

b. Expenditure

7000/04 Staff salary costs – There is an agreed 2% salary increase wef 1 April 2019 across all pay scales. In addition, Joanna Harley, Deputy Town Clerk, is on a higher pay scale than the previous member of staff and works longer hours.

*Reasons for increase **agreed**. The impact of the resignation of the Finance and Allotment officer with effect from 28 February 2019 was noted and options for undertaking her workload were discussed.*

7058 Insurance – Renewal is 1 June 2019. However, we are coming to the end of a three year deal and so will need to retender.

Noted.

Allotments Maintenance/projects – Deer fencing project is on back burner as decided need more information on access and egress by deer and whether there are any living on site. Hoping to complete the extension of the water system at Sunnyside New in this financial year – but could be early next year depending on weather, Two contractors visited the site 11-01-19. Quotes awaited.

Noted.

7350 Civic Activities – The mayoral portrait does not seem to have been budgeted for in previous years and this year the costs have been allocated to Mayor's expenses which is not right; it looks as though the Mayor has overspent which is not the case. Therefore a separate budget has been included for both this year and next year.

Noted and agreed subject to approval by Full Council

7550 Festival of Light – We can retender the lighting contract for 2019 and there are some improvements that could be made, subject to HCC and DBC agreeing. HCC have been advised that we may do something slightly different and have responded helpfully. Budget has been increased to £14,000 plus £4,000 from reserves. This year we shall have to have stress testing undertaken on the lighting columns (this will also be dual purpose testing if we go ahead with hanging baskets).

Noted and agreed subject to approval by Full Council. It was further noted that the Town Clerk had now received an estimate of stress testing costs which would have to come from reserves. The estimate is £3,000 but the testing would be valid for 6 years.

7552 High Street trees /hanging baskets - £2,300 has been budgeted for hanging baskets in the summer season from the cross roads to near M & S. This includes care, maintenance and watering. Hurdles with HCC also need to be successfully navigated. The reason only summer planting has been suggested is because we can't have hanging baskets and Christmas lights up at the same time. All year baskets would, for information, be £4,185. Contractor approached is Simon Collins who does our planters. Based in Chesham.

Noted and agreed subject to approval by Full Council. Some councillors would support all year round baskets. The need to remove baskets whilst Christmas lights are installed was also discussed. It was therefore agreed that the Town Clerk should ask the contractor to quote for a shorter winter planting season (late January to the end of May).

7690 PCSO Funding – As mentioned in December, the possibility of PCSO funding has been proposed and £12,000 has been included in the budget.

Following a discussion, it was agreed to leave the amount in the budget and to discuss further at Full Council. In any event, before offering any funding, discussions would have to take place with the higher echelons of the police with a view to establishing that if such funding were made available, the results would be reflected proportionately in Berkhamsted's policing at PCSO level.

7779 Election Costs – the actual cost will be around £13,000 based on the 2015 election cost plus an increase due to inflation. There is money in the budget and ear marked reserve to cover the cost. DBC officers have been asked for a precise amount but no reply as yet.

Noted and agreed.

7695 Astro Turf – Currently seeking further quotes to dig out some of foundations and grass the whole area.

Noted and agreed.

Asset renewal (Finance Software)/Third Party Costs - a verbal update will be given at the meeting.

The costs associated with transferring to the RBS Omega Financial Director Software system were noted and the proposal supported, subject to Full Council approval. The Town Clerk's proposals for employing the temporary services of DCK accounting solutions were also supported on the same basis.

Furthermore, the recent **failure of the electric shutter** that protects the Town Warden's work station was **discussed**. The shutter had been installed in 2003/4 and Cllr Steven's recollection was that it had been installed to protect the computer and confidential information when the Town Warden was out of the office. It was noted that a replacement would be around £5,000. It was also unclear whether a fire shutter was necessary. Indeed, DBC's fire risk assessment for the building makes no reference to the shutter. It was **agreed** that Cllrs Ritchie and Yearwood would inspect the shutter after the meeting and the matter would be further discussed at Full Council.

Action Town Clerk; Cllr T Ritchie and Cllr G Yearwood.

YOUTH MATTERS

FP 11/19 Youth Town Council

Contrary to the agenda, there had in fact been a meeting of the Youth Town Council on 19 December 2019. Cllr Stevens had attended and advised that budgets, recruitment and presentations to Ashlyns and Berkhamsted Schools had been discussed. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 16 January 2019.

FP 12/19 Close of meeting

The meeting closed at 8.47 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....