



## SHAFTESBURY TOWN COUNCIL

# GENERAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Minutes of a General Management Committee meeting of the Council held in the Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, High Street, Shaftesbury Dorset SP7 8LY on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 commencing at 6:00pm.

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### Members Present:

Cllr R Tippins (Chairman)

Cllr Pestell

Cllr Madgwick (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr K Tippins

Cllr Hicks

Cllr Proctor

### Officers Present:

None Present

### In Attendance:

Cllr Dibben

3 Members of the public

DCllr Jefferson

### Minutes written by:

Cllr K Tippins

YouTube Recording for GEM:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsFwYbo-MHo>

## MINUTES

### PART 1 (PUBLIC ITEMS)

#### 01. Public Recess

Members of the public were invited to make representations to Shaftesbury Town Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council or to raise any issues of concern. (Public Bodies (admission to meetings) Act 1960). The following matters were raised:

- **Monument.** Statement made by a member of the public: 'The local people of Shaftesbury feel a line cannot be drawn under the monument being placed on Castle Hill Green. After following the many comments and attending the parish meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov 2014, emotions from local Shaftesbury people are running high. I am here tonight to extend those feelings to ask the Mayor, Win Harvey and Councillors not to put the monument on Castle Hill Green as it is one of a very few public green, open spaces we have left in our historic town. Please can you consider this? I also feel you owe this to Shaftesbury people to regain some respect.' This statement will be submitted to the Town Hall by a member of the public.

#### 01Apologies

No Apologies. All councillors in attendance

## 02. Declaration of Interests and Dispensations

- a) Members and staff were reminded that at the start of the meeting they should declare any known interests in any matter to be considered, and also during the meeting if it became apparent that they had an interest in the matters being discussed. There were none declared.
- b) No dispensation requests had been received for consideration.

## 03. Minutes

Approved the minutes of the General Management Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> Nov. **AGREED** 3 for; abstain 3.

## 04. Budget and Precept – Report 1214/GEM/04

### a) **PROPOSED:**

- i) Obtain date from NDDC on when the Precept figures are to be presented to them by, GEM members thought it may be as early as Jan 2015;
- ii) Reject the budget report submitted by the Town Clerk and the recommendation of Option 1, 28% increase in Precept was also rejected.
- iii) Obtain a further breakdown of the financial figures from Barbara Carter especially surrounding the Staff Costs and issued out to the GEM members (Schedule of the Staff costs required).;
- iv) overall aim is to re-work in the budget figures in Dec/Jan to look into achieving a **target of a maximum 5% increase** in precept with the capital projects re-prioritised and capital project costs phased over time. All **AGREED**.

ACTION: GEM MEMBERS AND FINANCE OFFICER

- b) Little Giants request for SLA is to be submitted to the SLA/Grant working party and will form part of the budget figures Barbara Carter will be working on. **AGREED**.

ACTION: SLA WORKING PARTY AND FINANCE OFFICER

## GEM members review comments on the Budget Report and Recommendation.

- c) The GEM members determined that the recommendation by the Town Clerk to accept option 1 which proposes a 28% increase to the precept, is predicted to have an adverse reaction from the Town. The resolution made at Full Council to the Town Clerk was to keep the Precept within inflation.
- d) The personnel costs of 30% from 2013/4 with an increased value of £52,800, these financial figures stated in the budget report do not look credible to some GEM members.
- e) Up keep of this building, Guildhall (Town Hall), is missing from the budget. Financing of capital projects needs to be looked at closely, however, personnel costs needs to be 100% zero based budgeting, expect settlement costs included in these figures
- f) It is unclear on why there is a dramatic increase in Personnel Costs, unclear as to why the figure is £230k. This is determined to be the biggest issue of the presented figures. It was noted that in 2010 the wages were shown as £123.7k and now have been budgeted as £190k without there being a known increase in staff numbers.
- g) Budget proposal to be re-worked on by Barbara Carter, taking the precept to a maximum of 5% increase and the budget figures are presented in a further broken down to ensure that there is no double counting. There is a requirement to re-prioritised the capital costs (£105k), with the Bell St Toilets being higher priority. Need to look into the financing of these large capital projects and whether the work can be done in a phased manner or

whether it is better to take out a loan rather than assuming the payment is to be extracted on a large one off payment.

- h) It is suspected that there has been double counting in the budget figures presented to GEM members and also the fact that one-off (staff settlement) costs may have been added into the budget figures, when it should only include ongoing costs around staff costs.

#### 05. Telephone (1214/GEM/05)

- a) Recommendation - **REJECT**. The members did not understand or trust the financial figures and terminology stated in the report. (E.g. enhanced functionality, what exactly is meant by this statement?) Also, it was unclear on whether this was purchasing a new phone system or a lease agreement. Statement in the report Section 3.4 looked incorrect regarding one-off charge of £669. Need to have the figures checked and also check whether there is an alternate system with another supplier which is cheaper. Terminology listed in the report needs to be checked, for example, what is meant by purchase outright, if it is still a lease. Unclear on whether an alternate solution which is cheaper has been looked into; overall costs were determined to be around £1500 – Cllr Pestell offered to come into the Town Hall to look if he could come up with a better solution. **ACTION**. Reject recommendation, review proposed solution by Cllr Pestell; Cllr Pestell to propose way forward back to GEM. All **AGREED**.

ACTION: CLLR PESTELL AND ADMIN OFFICER

#### 06. Bankline (1214/GEM/06)

- a) **PROPOSED: REJECT** recommendations in the report, as recommendation does not seem to follow the original GEM resolution regarding obtaining a Procurement Card.
- b) **ACTION** explanation of the benefits – Cllr Pestell and Cllr R Tippins will be meeting with Trevor Savage and therefore, will discuss this paper and will email back to all of the GEM members the **benefits** of this proposed solution. Need to also look into the segregation of roles between payment authorisation and what does Bankline offer as far as governance? **AGREED**.

ACTION: CLLRS PESTELL AND R TIPPINS

#### **GEM members review comments on the Bankline Report and Recommendation.**

- c) Originally the GEM resolution was for the Town Clerk to look into obtaining a Procurement Card; it is unclear on how this remit from GEM has changed into Natwest Bankline Lite which effectively allows the officers make BACs payments.
- d) Online banking with businesses is free, so it was unclear on where the estimated charges for £25 p/month has come from, it appears to be based on an estimate of writing 20 cheques a month, which is known not to be a correct estimate. STC writes about 50 cheques a month. It is unclear on how this has evolved to this solution from the remit of obtaining a Procurement Card.
- e) The new financial regulations have allowed for a Procurement Card. Online payments are easy and free. Suggestion is to show the paper to Trevor Savage for his feedback and request that he explains the benefit of this solution and to see if it is to be interfaced with the new SAGE system. It was noted that Section 3.7 of report 1214/GEM/06 did not make sense.

#### 07. Internal Audit Report (1214/GEM/07)

- a) **PROPOSED:** It was agreed to **REJECT** the Recommendations to recommend the report for adoption at this time and that the Audit report is **QUERIED**.
- b) To ask the auditor for supporting evidence regarding the statement and conclusion made by the auditor in A.1, social media, and to determine why the Internal Auditor has put this as a high. **ACTION**.
- c) List of questions are to be submitted to the Auditor and these are to include the query surrounding why the Internal Audit report is not addressing the statements made in the External Audit report by LBO. A number of queries need to be made back to the Auditor. **AGREED** 5 For; 1 Abstention

**GEM members review comments on the Internal Audit Report by R Darkin-Miller.**

- d) Illegal staff overtime payment of £5k is not listed in this report and any statement regarding the whether there has been any action from the Responsible Finance Officer regarding the recovery of the illegal payment.
- e) £250k in a current Bank Account, which is not earning interest, there was an action back in May 2014 on the Town Clerk to come back to GEM on how we can earn interest on this money. This action has not been completed.
- f) Member of public reported STC to External Auditor BDO and this Internal Audit report has not picked up on any of the specific actions and recommendations listed in this report. It is unclear why there is a mis-match between the two Audit reports. External auditor report does not appear to be given to the Internal Auditor.
- g) Questions outstanding that need to go to the auditor. As the audit is continuing the questions can be introduced. List of questions need to be submitted to the Internal Auditor to see if these questions have been considered.

**08. NJC Agreement (1214/GEM/08)**

Nationally agreed. Recommendation Accepted. **AGREED. ALL.**

End of Meeting