

Holme Valley Parish Council

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY, 19 NOVEMBER 2018

Those present:

Chairman: Cllr D Hall

Councillors: Cllrs DK Bellamy, K Bellamy, T Bellamy, JG Cropper, P Davies, RP Dixon, DM Firth, CR Greaves, R Hogley, J Roberts, JB Sweeney and T Walshaw

Clerk to the Council: Mrs S S Barber

1819 63 Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 amended by the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014

As Council meetings can now be recorded, the Chairman checked if anyone wished to do so, to enable reasonable facilities to be provided if necessary. No-one wished to do so, other than the Clerk who would be recording the meeting for Minute purposes (only) but the recording would be deleted once draft Minutes had been ratified.

1819 64 Public Question Time

No members of the public or press were present.

1819 65 To accept apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were accepted from Cllrs S Baggott, J Brook, E Bunbury, G Christofi, TW Dixon, SN East, M Pogson, R Rogers, D Yates and R Young.

1819 66 To receive Members' personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda and to consider any written requests for new DPI dispensations

None received.

1819 67 To consider whether items on the agenda should be discussed in private session

RESOLVED: That Item 10 (Staffing Matters) be taken in private session, owing to the confidential nature of the matters to be discussed.

1819 68 To confirm the Minutes of Council Meetings

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 October 2018, numbered 1819 47 to 1819 62 inclusive, be approved subject to the addition of Cllr K Bellamy to the attendance list.

1819 69 To confirm the Committee Minutes under delegated powers

(1) RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Community Asset Support Committee meeting held on 12 November 2018, numbered 1819 46 to 1819 59 inclusive, be confirmed.

(2) RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting held on 5 November 2018, numbered 1819 94 to 1819 107 inclusive, be confirmed.

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(3) RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Publications & Communications Committee meeting held on 12 November 2018, numbered 1819 38 to 1819 52 inclusive, be confirmed.

(4) RESOLVED: That a brief verbal report of the Service Provision Committee meeting held earlier this evening be noted.

(5) RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Special Staffing Committee meeting held on 15 October 2018, numbered 1819 26 to 1819 36 inclusive, be confirmed.

1819 70 Reference from a Committee

(1) Members considered a recommendation from the Publications and Communications Committee on a number of proposed statements.

RESOLVED: That a statement regarding a recent police investigation be published on the Parish Council's website immediately.

(2) The Chairman of Publications and Communications Committee reported that the new website was not yet live, but the Officers would be receiving training on updating it in the next few days.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

1819 71 Standing Committees

RESOLVED: That the resignation from the Publications & Communications Committee by Cllr R Young be approved.

1819 72 Exclusion of Public and Press

RESOLVED: That the business of the Council now to be transacted be not open to the public or press on the grounds that the matters to be considered are of a confidential nature.

1819 73 Staffing Matters

The Chairman of the Staffing Committee updated Members on various staffing matters and recommendations of the Staffing Sub-Committee, following a meeting on 23 October 2018.

RESOLVED: (1) That Mrs Angela Haigh be appointed Administrative Support Officer, with effect from 1 November 2018, on NJC Scale Range LC1 18-22 and entitlement to join the Local Government Pension Scheme, with a probationary period of six months, within which time the Officer be encouraged to complete the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) at the Council's cost; the Clerk be authorised to provide a formal letter immediately, followed by a written contract of employment and job description within two months after the start date (in accordance with current legislation).

The Clerk left the meeting during parts of this item at the request of the Council.

Members discussed the process whereby the Clerk should have been consulted prior to the meeting with the name of any councillors who were likely to be proposed a Staff Development Review Co-ordinator. The Chairman made it clear that the Clerk had been

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quite right to point out that Standing Orders instruct this; it would also be sensible for the Clerk to feel comfortable with the Co-ordinator, to allow free discussion of any problems or concerns.

It was further RESOLVED: (2) That it be noted that a complaint about the Clerk had been investigated but no evidence had been found of any minor misconduct, under the Council's Disciplinary Policy.

(3) That delegated authority be given to the Chairman of the Council and Chairman of the Staffing Committee to liaise with ACAS on another staffing matter and to seek quotes and instruct a solicitor to provide any legal advice as necessary.

1819 74 Re-admittance of the Public and Press

RESOLVED: That the public and press be re-admitted to the meeting.

1819 75 Budget & Precept

(1) Council Tax Support Grant: The Chairman of CASC reported that Members had been made aware, at the meeting on 12 November 2018, that the Council Tax Support Grant would no longer be paid over to the Parish Council, from Kirklees Council in 2019-20. It was £19,820 in 2018-19 and a communication dated 13 November 2018 from Kirklees Council, explaining the situation for 2019-20, had been distributed. The correspondence would be referred to the Finance & Management Committee for further consideration, but full Council should be aware that in order to mitigate this reduction, the Council would need to use existing reserves to fund the shortfall, increase the precept (@ approx. £1.96 per year per household – Band D property), or reduce expenditure by the amount of the grant.

It was agreed that the Valley's community assets at risk should be saved wherever possible and, as other Councils around the country are doing, the Council wold have to raise the precept to do so, if necessary. The Council had already made a commitment to support the Civic Hall longer term through the original Business Plan, but also needed to support its communities, tourism and businesses in a responsible and ethical manner.

(2) VAT situation in current financial year:

RESOLVED: That due to a possible £7,500 ceiling on VAT which can be reclaimed in any one financial year, the Clerk be authorised to seek advice from the VAT advisor at the Society of Local Council Clerks and to report back to Finance & Management Committee.

(3) Budget and Precept 2019-20: The Clerk reported that preparation of the Budget is one of the most important annual tasks the Council must undertake and is required as part of 'proper practices' as set out in the Practitioners Guide. In addition, it is not lawful to set a precept unless a Budget has been prepared and approved. This is because the precept is not a figure arbitrarily set by the Council but is the balancing figure (referred to in legislation as the 'council tax requirement') after taking into account estimated expenditure, other estimated income and any amounts proposed to be taken to or from reserves.

All Members of the Council should be involved, at an early stage, in preparation of the Budget. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is expected to advise on normal annual running costs such as staffing costs, insurance and business rates, but it is the Members who need to consider what services the Council intends to deliver, and in particular whether the

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Council intends to undertake any new projects. It is too late for Members to come up with ideas for new projects once the Budget has been approved and the precept set.

The sharing of ideas on new projects usually takes place at the Committee meetings and the Council's Committees put forward their budgetary requirements for 2019-20 which will be referred to the Finance & Management Committee to consider the first draft of the Budget.

However, Members of CASC had requested guidance from the full Council as to its budgetary policy for 2019-20, whether to increase, reduce or freeze the precept, bearing in mind that the Council Tax Support Grant is to be withdrawn by Kirklees from 2019-20.

CASC had agreed a notional list of community assets that could be supported in 2019-20 to be presented to full Council; such funds to be included in the Budget 2019-20 if full Council agrees with the CASC recommendation to increase the Precept by £5 per household.

Holmfirth Public Conveniences	£15,000	
Honley Library	£15,000	To be ring-fenced
Holmfirth Adult Education Centre	£25,000	
Holmfirth Civic Hall	£25,000 £25,000	Staffing costs Capital projects
Other community assets, including Honley Cricket Club and Holme Village Hall	£20,000	
Say	£125,000	

As mentioned above, the £15,000 for Honley Library to be ring-fenced for that community asset, but the rest of the Budget (excluding funding towards the Public Conveniences) to be made available on a first come, first served basis through the CASC grant scheme. Any income generated through the honesty box and rentable space within the public toilets building would be factored into the draft Budget in due course and, depending on completion and availability of the rentable space, the amount required to fund the public conveniences could then be significantly reduced.

The Council uses 'incremental budgeting' to prepare the Budget which involves looking at last year's expenditure and income, this year's estimated out-turn, and then Members consider what to include for next year.

It is usually the case that the RFO presents Members with a series of drafts, so that they can be satisfied that the Budget is developing in the way they want. Each Committee will have the chance to scrutinise its own draft Budget and the Finance & Management Committee will scrutinise the final or near-final version, before the definitive version has to be approved and the precept set, which must take place at the full Council meeting on 4 February 2019. Although the Precept is in law a balancing figure, the RFO must be able to advise Members (at the February meeting) on both the absolute amount of the Precept that the draft Budget will require and the Band D equivalent.

The Council's Precept demand must then be submitted to Kirklees Council in early February (normally much earlier than the statutory deadline of approval of the Budget/Precept by 28 February). There is no provision in statute for the Precept to be increased once it has been notified.

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RESOLVED: (a) That the Clerk be authorised to prepare a draft budget for 2019-20, with options for a precept freeze and a £5 increase per household (Band D property) for consideration at the next Finance & Management Committee meeting.
(b) That it be noted that the Business Rates exemption on public toilets does not come into force until the financial year 2020-21.

1819 76 To receive Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported on Council business and civic events undertaken since the last full Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

1819 77 Freedom of Information Act 2000 – to agree what information will be made available to the public

RESOLVED: That, under the Council's Publication Scheme, supporting papers for any item within the public session of the meeting be made available, if requested, after confirmation of the minutes.

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Chairman