

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 29 August 2018 at 10:00am In the Council Chamber of Beccles Town Hall**

**PRESENT:** R Stubbings (Chair and Deputy Mayor)  
N Brooks  
J D Harris  
R Kathurla

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs C Boyne, Town Clerk

**MEMBERS OF PUBLIC:** 0

**1. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were apologies for absence from Councillors Birrell and Walmsley.

**2. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR ANY REQUESTS FOR THE GRANTING OF DISPENSATIONS IN RELATION TO ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

**3. TO ACCEPT FOR ACCURACY AND ADOPTION THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 JULY 2018**

**RESOLVED** To accept for accuracy and adoption the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 11 July 2018

**4. TO REVIEW THE CURRENT S106 AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY SCHEDULES**

The chair confirmed that all of the S106 funds had been allocated and that there was a balance of £3,796 on the Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

**5. TO RECEIVE THE ADVICE FROM THE VAT SPECIALIST**

It was noted that the council could only reclaim £7500 VAT on exempt business activities. If the council went over this threshold it would not be able to claim any VAT on these activities, although a one off breach may not prohibit the council from claiming provided it was not a consistent year on year breach. In summary the VAT Specialist was advising that the council did not need to register for VAT at this time, but that it should regularly monitor its VAT exempt business activities to ensure that it was not getting close to the threshold in one particular financial year.

It was noted that the council currently reclaimed the VAT on behalf of the Beccles Fenland Charity Trust for its non-business activities but that it would not be able to do this if the trust made a payment to the council ie made an administration recharge for officer time spent on Fenland Trust work. The VAT specialist advised that, wherever possible, expenditure relating to the charity, including the payment of charity staff, should be met from the trust's



account, not the council's, and so the trust should investigate this further.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

That the council does not register for VAT or opt to tax on any of its assets at this time

**6. TO REVIEW THE NUMBER OF TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD PER MONTH**

It was generally agreed that it was not good practice to regularly cancel meetings, as the second meeting of the month rarely went ahead. If there was a need for a second meeting, then this could be arranged as an emergency meeting.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

To hold one town council meeting per month on the first Tuesday of the month, and to arrange emergency meetings as and when required

**7. TO CONSIDER THE DRAFT PRIVACY POLICY FOR ADOPTION BY COUNCIL**

The clerk explained that this policy would be displayed on the council's website.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

To adopt the draft Privacy Policy

**8. TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ASSETS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

(I) **TO ACCEPT THE QUOTATION FROM WAVENEY FENCING IN RESPECT OF THE FENCING OFF OF THE BLYBURGATE HALL COTTAGE GARDEN, SUBJECT TO RECEIVING CONFIRMATION THAT POSTS WITH A 25 YEAR GUARANTEE WOULD BE USED**

(II) **TO ACCEPT THE QUOTATION FROM JEM ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS LTD FOR THE REPLACEMENT OF LIGHTING AT BLYBURGATE HALL**

The clerk explained that there was a £10,000 budget for expenditure on Blyburgate Hall and Cottage and that it was likely that this would be exceeded this year given the works to the Cottage alone.

It was considered important that the fencing work should be carried out before new tenants move into the cottage, and so this was more of a priority than the lighting. It was therefore agreed that the fencing should be financed from reserves in this financial year and that the replacement of the lights should be included in the Hall budget for 2019/20.

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**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

To accept the quotation from Waveney Fencing in respect of the fencing off of the Blyburgate Hall Cottage Garden, subject to receiving confirmation that posts with a 25 year guarantee would be used, and that this work would be funded from reserves

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

To accept the quotation from JEM Electrical Contractors Ltd for the replacement of lighting at Blyburgate Hall, but for this work to be delayed until 2019/20 when the cost can be incorporated into the budget

**9. TO RECEIVE THE DRAFT PRESS AND MEDIA POLICY FOR ADOPTION BY COUNCIL**

It was noted that the clerk would be responsible for issuing press releases and that the policy gave clear guidelines to councillors regarding contact with the press.

**RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

To adopt the draft Press and Media Policy

**10. TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON COUNCIL LEASES**

The update was received.

**11. TO CONFIRM THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING AS WEDNESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 10:30AM****12. ADMISSION TO MEETINGS - PURSUANT TO SECTION 1(2) OF THE PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960 IT IS PROPOSED THAT, BECAUSE OF THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED, THE PUBLIC AND PRESS LEAVE THE MEETING DURING CONSIDERATION OF THE REMAINING MATTERS**

**RESOLVED** Pursuant to section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 it is agreed that, because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public and press leave the meeting during consideration of the remaining matters

*h* 10/10/18