

BENTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Precept Meeting held on Monday 18 January 2016, at 7.00 pm in the Town Hall

Present Cllrs Adams, Bridgeman, Cowling, Faichney, Marshall, Stannard (Chairman), Taylor, Townson & Vendy
Also, the Clerk Mrs Burton and 1 parishioner

185. To Receive Apologies from members unable to attend
Cllrs Pritchard & Swales

186. Declarations of Interest

187. To Receive Comment & Concerns - none

188. To consider the Projected Assessment for 2016/17, based on accounts for 2015/16 to end of December, and make any necessary changes

The clerk circulated copies of the projected assessment for the year 2016/17 which had already been discussed by the Finance Committee at its meeting the previous week. She explained that the predictions for the current year were based on actual income / expenditure to the end of December 2015, i.e. 3/4 year adjusted to the full year either by the addition of known costs or by converting from 3/4 to 4/4. The predicted overspend / under spend for the current year was then calculated as the difference between budgeted and actual expenditure plus or minus any differences from budgeted income.

The Council as a whole was under budget this year to date, mainly due to rate relief being confirmed part way through the year and spending on grass cutting / parish caretaker being lower due to problems with the contractor. The clerk confirmed that Craven were again passing on the Council Tax grant but that it would be reduced from £4420 to £1507 in the coming year, however any change in the precept would forfeit that grant. She also pointed out that the last payment for the Town Hall refurbishment would be made in August, leaving a potential extra £17500 in the budget for the coming year, and the Community Youth Building final payment would be made in February 2017 – giving £47855 savings in 2017/18.

The proposed draft budget, which was based closely on spending over the last two years, was accepted with a few amendments.

An increase was made to the budget for the website to allow for extra work to refresh its look in the coming year. The replacement of the Council's street lamps with LED heads was discussed and it was agreed to get prices etc for the coming year rather than include these in the 2016/17 budget. The Buildings Committee had highlighted a damp problem in the Wenningdale Annex which needs to be thoroughly investigated, a further £3000 was added to the Town Hall maintenance budget giving £7000 to cover this added requirement alongside decorating etc and general maintenance. A method of disabled access for the Wenningdale Room to make the room more useful should be considered for the 2017/18 budget.

RESOLVED That the initial proposed budget with the listed changes be accepted for the main areas of Council expenditure, subject to discussion of grants and special projects

189. To consider any Special Projects

189.1. Town Hall Windows

Following the successful replacement of the first floor landing and front kitchen windows this autumn prices had been procured to replace the other 'white' windows i.e. the side kitchen windows, the TIP and the lift plant room. The total cost of these would be some £3600. It was agreed that this should be included in the Special Projects for the coming year.

RESOLVED That the cost of £3600 to replace the remaining 'white' windows be included in the Special Projects budget

189.2. Updating Office Equipment

The Finance Committee had agreed the replacement of the Clerks PC out of the current budget. The old PC will be used to run the TIP Rolling Display as a stand alone machine. However there will be other pieces of equipment required, e.g. wifi repeaters, CCTV system, so the £500 budgeted figure should stand, with extra money being left in the Special Projects budget to cover any extra spending.

RESOLVED That the Office Equipment budget be left at £500

RESOLVED That the Special Projects Budget be set at £6000

190. To consider and decide upon Grant Applications

There had been 18 applications for Precept Grants. Each application was discussed according to its merits, income / expenditure versus reserves, fund raising efforts and the benefit to Bentham residents.

The initial proposals were summarised after all applications had been considered and then over £750 of adjustments made as there was still flexibility within the budget. Considerable discussion was held about some applications from Limited companies and organisations outside Bentham and their ability to raise funds, reserves and benefits to Bentham residents, with only Settle Swimming Pool being awarded a grant from these organisations. There were also discussions regarding the fund raising, or apparent lack of it, by certain organisations, although the majority agreed that Bentham would be a poorer place without these facilities and funding was agreed. It was agreed that

organisations receiving grants could ask the Council to buy and donate goods if preferred as the Council can reclaim VAT on donations to other organisations

RESOLVED: that a grant of £300 be awarded to Age Concern

It was agreed that it was a significant achievement for the Bonfire Committee to have a reasonable balance in the bank as shown in the accounts

RESOLVED: that a grant of £250 be awarded to the Community Bonfire

A grant of £400 was proposed for the Christmas Lights and an amendment raising it to £1000 was made. The amendment was passed by a vote of 5:4

RESOLVED: that a grant of £1000 be awarded to Bentham Christmas Lights

RESOLVED: that a grant of £100 be awarded to Little Stars nursery group

A grant of £3500 was proposed for the Youth Cafe who have lost a significant part of their funding to help cover their £8000 annual running costs, and an amendment raising it to £5000 was made. The original proposal was passed by a vote of 5:3

RESOLVED: that a grant of £3500 be awarded to Bentham Youth Café

RESOLVED: that a grant of £1700 be awarded to Bentham Playing Fields Association

RESOLVED: that a grant of £250 be awarded to Bentham CARNIVAL

RESOLVED: that a grant of £80 be made to the Community Link Café

RESOLVED: that a grant of £1250 be awarded to the Goodenber Play Area.

RESOLVED: that a grant of £200 be awarded to LASRUG.

RESOLVED: that no grant be awarded to Pioneer Projects (Celebratory Arts) Ltd.

RESOLVED: that a grant of £200 be awarded to Sunbeams

A grant of £600 was proposed for the Town Team art works and an amendment lowering it to £300 was made. The amendment was passed by a vote of 7:2

RESOLVED: that a grant of £300 be awarded to the Town Team

RESOLVED: that a grant of £1200 be awarded to the Victoria Institute

RESOLVED: that a grant of £200 be awarded to Settle Swimming Pool

RESOLVED: that no grant be awarded to Home Start Craven

RESOLVED: that no grant be awarded to Settle Stories

RESOLVED: that no grant be awarded to Revitalise

Eighteen applications were received for 2016/17, and the following grants were approved:

Bentham Youth Cafe	3500
Playing Fields Association	1700
Goodenber Road Play Area	1250
Victoria Institute	1200
Christmas Lights	1000
Age Concern	300
Town Team	300
Community Bonfire	250
CARNIVAL	250
LASRUG	200
Settle Swimming Pool	200
Sunbeams	200
Little Stars	100
Community Link Cafe	80
Pioneer Projects Ltd	0
Craven Home Start	0
Settle Stories	0
Revitalise	0

10530

The total value of grants awarded for 2016/17 is some £5445 higher than the previous year taking account the increase in funds available without need to alter the precept. As before, grants of £500 or more will be paid in 2 instalments. It was agreed that organisations receiving precept grants should be present at the Annual Parish

Meeting to give a report, and that failure to attend may affect the way that the Council considers further applications

RESOLVED: that grants of £10530 be awarded to local groups and associations

191. To agree the Precept for 2016/17

The inclusion of the proposed spending for special projects and the grant awards led to a budgeted expenditure of £120369 (approx £400 lower than the previous year), with a budgeted income of £120175 if the precept was kept the same and the reduced Council Tax Support Grant of approx £1507 received. The Council agreed that it should apply for the grant.

RESOLVED: that the Band D precept cost of £85.58 be maintained for another year, raising a precept of £104643

RESOLVED: that the Council apply for the Council Tax Support Grant of approximately £1507 (to be confirmed by Craven District Council)

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 9.15pm