

**Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee**  
**held in the Council Chamber, Cowbridge Town Hall,**  
**on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 7.00pm.**

**Present:** Chairman – Councillor J R Harris  
Vice Chairman – Councillor T L Williams MBE  
Mayor – Mrs S Vaughan  
Councillors: Mrs N C Thomas, Mrs S M Cox, G A Cox and R S Downe.

**In Attendance:** Town Clerk – Mr David B Morris

**1: Apologies for Absence.**  
Councillor J M Andrew

**2: Declarations of Interest.**  
None

**3: To confirm the Minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017.**

**Proposed** by Councillor J R Harris, seconded by Councillor T L Williams that the minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and duly signed.

**Resolved** as proposed.

**4: Matters arising from the Committee Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 2017, which are not already on the agenda.**  
None

**5: Matters arising from the Town Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2017, which are not already on the agenda.**  
None

**6: Receipts & Payments of Account/Accounts.**

**6.1 Receipts & Payments Account/Accounts to be paid for Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017.**

Receipts and Payments Accounts for period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 and the statements of bank balances as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017 were circulated to Members and read.

**Recommended** that these accounts be approved.

A list of accounts to be settled from 20<sup>th</sup> December 2017 to 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018 was circulated to Members and read.

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**6: Receipts & Payments of Account/Accounts (Continued):**

**6.2 Budget & Precept 2018/19.**

Councillor J R Harris referred to the proposed income and expenditure figures for the financial year 2018/19 that had been circulated. Members considered the figures and raised matters concerning previous financial decisions by the Town Council and the demands now being placed on the Council with future requirements in relation to meeting legal obligations, maintenance of town assets and civic events.

It was recognised that over the past ten years the Town Council precept had averaged a 2.1% increase per annum which was below the precept set by the Vale of Glamorgan Council and other Town and Community Councils. Unfortunately as a result of keeping the precept low the Town Council finances had been reduced to an unsatisfactory level. There was now a need to take strong and practical steps to enable the Town Council to meet future expenditure demands, especially in relation to matters that could not have been previously planned for and if not addressed will only increase in pressure as time goes on.

These demands being the upkeep of the Town Hall building, the continued maintenance of Twt Park and Llanblethian Playing Fields as the play equipment reaches the end of its 'life expectancy', allowance and expense payments to Councillors and Staff, increasing salaries, and other legal requirements and civic participation costs, which are expected by the people of Cowbridge and Llanblethian as well as the general standard of the community.

Members agreed that the Town Council finances needed to be on a 'sounder footing' and the solution was discussed in detail. It was recognised that there were only three sources of income for the Council – hiring out the Town Hall facilities, Cemetery Fees and the Precept. The first two sources of income are variable and no major increase to fees/costs could be instigated in these areas. Consequently the only area available to consider increasing to meet the forthcoming financial demands would be the Precept and this should be considered in financial terms rather than in percentages.

To commence redressing the low finances of the Council, Members considered increasing the Band D rate to £71.78. This would mean an increase of £11.96 per annum on the current Band D rate, equating to an increase of only £1.00 per month. This would appear to be a fair rate to maintain the viability of the Town Council to meet its forthcoming financial demands.

If such an increase was approved then a maintenance only budget should be adopted for at least the first six months which could be reviewed later in the year but no major expenditure to be undertaken without reference to the full Council.

This should give an end of 2018/19 financial year figure slightly in excess of £100,000, which is arguably the desired level for retaining an 'unmarked' reserve and ear marking funds for future capital project expenditure such as replacing the play equipment and resurfacing the play areas in Twt Park and Llanblethian Playing Fields as well as possibly installing a disability lift in the Town Hall.

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**6: Receipts & Payments of Account/Accounts (Continued):**

**6.2 Budget & Precept 2018/19.**

Two propositions were considered for recommendation to the full Town Council –

- (i) **Proposed** by Councillor R S Downe, seconded by Councillor T L Williams that a precept increase of 10% should be recommended to the Council to take into account the projected financial demands for the forthcoming financial year 2018/19 but to reduce the ear-marked and unmarked reserves anticipated to be carried forward into the financial year 2019/20.
- (ii) **Proposed** by Councillor J R Harris, seconded by Councillor Mrs S Cox that a precept increase of 20% should be recommended to the Council to take into account the projected financial demands for the forthcoming financial year 2018/19 but to increase the ear-marked and unmarked reserves anticipated to be carried forward into the financial year 2019/20.

**Resolved** to recommend an increase in the precept of 20%.

Councillor Mrs N C Thomas abstained from the vote.

**6.3 Vale of Glamorgan Council – Town/Community Council Tax Precepts 2018/2019.**

Notification from Vale of Glamorgan Council of the Levy for 2018/19.

The levy of £1.00 per household in Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council area would produce £2,562.00 for 2018/19.

**Noted.**

**7: Grant Aid.**

**7.1 Application for Donation to the Urdd National Eisteddfod 2018.**

Request from Urdd National Eisteddfod 2018 for support with the costs of staging the event.

**Proposed** by Councillor J R Harris, seconded by Councillor T L Williams to provide a grant of £100.00 to support the staging of the Urdd National Eisteddfod 2018 on the grounds that this is a youth festival with local school participation.

**Resolved** that in pursuance of the power conferred by section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and being of the opinion that the expenditure satisfies the requirements of that section to support the staging of the Urdd National Eisteddfod 2018 for youth participation and thereby encourage local young persons to attend and take part especially local schools, the Committee approves the payment of £100.00 to the Urdd National Eisteddfod 2018.

**7.2 Application for Donation to the Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod 2018.**

Request for financial support from Llangollen International Musical Eisteddfod 2018 towards the costs of staging the Eisteddfod.

**Noted.**

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### **7: Grant Aid (Continued):**

#### **7.3 Application for Donation in support of Ambulance Service Charity.**

Request from the Ambulance Services Union to financially support ambulance staff that work in the communities of Wales.

**Noted.**

#### **7.4 Application for Donation in support of Action on Hearing Loss Cymru.**

Request from Action on Hearing Loss Cymru to financially support their work to improve the lives of deaf and hard of hearing people in Wales.

**Noted.**

### **8: Appeal Rateable Value Town Hall – Notice of Hearing by the Valuation Tribunal.**

Notice of Hearing by the Valuation Tribunal in relation to the appeal by the Town Council to the Business Rateable Value of the Town Hall. The Hearing date has been set for the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2018. The surveyor from Get Your Rates Right will be attending the Tribunal on behalf of the Town Council.

**Noted**

### **9: Cowbridge History Society - Production of a ‘Blue Plaque’ Self Guide Leaflet.**

A meeting had taken place between representatives from the Cowbridge History Society and Councillors J M Andrew and A T Trousdell to discuss the production of a ‘Blue Plaque Trail’ Guide for Cowbridge. The History Society had agreed to write the content of the Guide but felt the Town Council should be responsible for its production and publication. It was agreed to re-meet and invite a representative from the Vale of Glamorgan Destination Management Tourism Team to attend, to establish if they would take responsibility for producing and publishing the Guide. It was also agreed that any such Guide should also include Llanblethian and Aberthin.

**Noted.**

### **10: Employment of Temporary Staff through Recruitment Agency – Payment Schedule.**

Jennifer Griffiths Recruitment Agency had identified an individual who was willing to undertake duties as a temporary Parks and Open Spaces Maintenance person for the Town Council. They would be contracted to work 16 hours a week in the first instance and be paid a casual users mileage rate when using their vehicle for work purposes. Payment would be through the Recruitment Agency once a fortnight. The temporary maintenance worker would complete a time sheet which would be authorised by the Town Clerk and submitted to the Recruitment Agency who would then invoice the Town Council for payment. The individual would commence working on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

**Noted.**

### **11: Correspondence.**

#### **11.1 SLCC Latest News – Council Employees Offered ‘Overdue’ Pay Rise.**

Notification from the SLCC that the National Employers who negotiate pay on behalf of the UK Councils had offered Council employees a two year pay increase of 2% in April 2018 and a further 2% in 2019. Awaiting agreement from the employee Unions.

**Noted**

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**11: Correspondence (Continued):**

**11.2 European Walled Town Membership Renewal.**

A membership renewal notice had been received from the European Walled Towns. The Town Clerk advised that he had responded asking for more details in regard to the benefits of membership. The Town Council had last renewed its membership in March 2015. Councillor J R Harris advised that the Town Council had not renewed its membership since that date because of the costs of attending meetings especially in Europe and that there had been no identifiable benefits to Cowbridge other than being members.

**Resolved** not to renew Membership since of no value to the Town Council and the community of Cowbridge with Llanblethian.

**12: Matters to be discussed at the discretion of the Chairman.**

Councillor J R Harris advised that with the resignation of Councillor D W Morris there was a need to appoint at least another Councillor signatory preferably two. Councillor Mrs S Vaughan and Councillor T L Williams agreed to become Town Council signatories.

**Resolved.**

**13: Date and Time of next meeting.**

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018 at 7.00pm.

Councillor J R Harris  
**Chairman.**