



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR
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Minutes of the **Policy and Resources Committee** meeting held on **Monday, 12th December 2016**, in the **Jubilee Room, Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham**, commencing at **7.30pm**.

Present: Cllr Mrs S Hunt (Chairman)
Cllr Ms A Baker (Vice Chairman)
Cllr A Frith, Cllr M Gould,
Cllr P Harris, Cllr D Milsted,
Cllr R Monksummers, Cllr Mrs V Potheary,
Cllr Mrs B Ridout, Cllr Mrs D Toye,
and Cllr B Von Clemens.

Also present: Cllr Mrs A Beckley, Cllr R Evill,
Cllr Miss E Jones, Cllr S Joyce,
Cllr Miss N Purkis and Cllr D Walsh.

Apologies: None.

In attendance: Mrs S Dobie, Town Clerk
and Mrs C Ratcliffe, Office Manager/Deputy Clerk.

Members of the Public and Press: There were three members of the public present.
There were no members of the press.

Note: The Policy and Resources Committee act as Full Council on matters pertaining to the precept document for FY 2017/18 and, therefore, all members are eligible to vote with regards to agenda item no. 6.

Cllr Mrs Hunt welcome members of the public to the meeting, including a Year 10 student from Gillingham School on a work observation day.

Cllr Milsted commented that he felt strange discussing a precept that we would not be paying as he will have moved away from the area by April 2017.

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday, 12th December 2016 (continued):

182. To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday, 21st November 2016.

Cllr Milsted proposed that **“the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on Monday, 21st November 2016, should be approved as a correct record of that meeting”**. Cllr Harris seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

183. Questions. There were no questions.

184. Declarations of Interest - Members are required to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011, Section 27 regarding disclosable pecuniary interests.

Cllr Von Clemens, Cllr Mrs Ridout and Cllr Walsh disclosed pecuniary interests regarding agenda item 6 – as trustees of Gillingham Youth Foundation (GYF). The application by GYF for a grant was deferred from the previous Policy and Resources Committee meeting pending further information. The information requested was tabled at the meeting.

185. Finance:

a) To approve cheques for payment for December 2016.

Cllr Monksummers proposed that **“the cheques for payment for the month of December 2016 to the gross value of £ 16,893.29 should be approved for payment”**. Cllr Harris seconded and the vote by the Policy and Resources Committee members was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

186. To consider, agree and approve ‘in principle’ the Precept for the Financial Year 2017-2018.

The Town Clerk had circulated the draft precept document FY 2017/18 and explanatory notes prior to the meeting and reminded all those present that they were now eligible to vote.

North Dorset District Council has not yet provided the figures for the number of Band D equivalents. This information will be available in due course. Therefore, the precept has been based on last year's set at – 4065.60. All the items on the ‘wish lists’ presented by councillors were considered by all the committees and adopted at the various Full Council meetings and have been included within the draft Precept. At the time of writing there is a **15.96%** increase, which is an additional **£2.13** per month on a band D equivalent.

Monies held in the National Savings and Investment Account and the General Reserve – 2016-17

There is currently £145,858.69 earmarked within the National Savings Investment Account - £34,140.95 of this will be drawn down at the end of this financial year, as it has already been allocated towards Hardings Park. The remaining £111,717.74 is earmarked for estate management; £20K will be transferred into the General Reserve to cover the additional work carried out within estate management by contractors and the Town Council horticultural staff during this financial year and the cost of up-dating the management plans, IT equipment and additional programs and large machinery. The £15K received from a developer will be transferred into the NS&I account. This will leave a balance of £106,717.74 as a contingency budget for future estate management work not included in the FY2017-18, if required.

Monies held in the General Reserve have been drawn down during the Financial Year 2016-17 but some of this expenditure will not be completed within this financial year, and will be held in the General Reserve during the F.Y 2017-18 and will not form part of the 2017-18 Precept.

For information, listed below are some of the larger balances held at 30th November 2016 for major projects, within the General Reserve, some of which will be spent by the end of this financial year:

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday, 12th December 2016 (continued):

186. To consider, agree and approve ‘in principle’ the Precept for FY 2017/18 (continued):

Tree Surgery	2,908.40
Grants – Gill. Neighbourhood Group	1,918.06
Heritage Enhancement	4,426.66
Harding’s Lane Sport Pitches (s106)	22,547.97
Hardings Park Project	20,675.18
CCTV –Add. Camera/Inspections	11,452.66
Works Depot	20,000.00
Marlott Road Play Area Up-grade	10,000.00
Heritage Grant Bid Writer Costs	1,000.00
Chapel Roof Repairs	<u>5,000.00</u>
	£99,928.93

INCOME

1.0 Estimated Income

Budget No: 1.11 – New management plans are being drawn up and the cost of this work will be covered by the GTC ground staff team and contractors and has been included within the 2017-18 precept. Also included is a £10,000 contingency in case of major storm damage that may occur in the winter months, which can cause flooding or damaged trees. The income has been reduced by £10,000.

Included within Income

Budget No: 1.10 – Parish Contributions – The Stours Parish Council contribute to the Public Conveniences in the High Street totalling £853.00. This has been reduced by half, totalling £426.00 due to the poor state of the toilets and the closure of two of the facilities.

Budget No: 1.12 - Sundry Income includes revenue from hiring rooms at the Town Hall and 1 Chantry Fields, burial income, bank interest and sundry income. With the cost of the refurbishment of the Civic Hall, circa £9K, it would now be beneficial to advertise this room for Civil Ceremonies and Civic events only.

Burial income remains steady at approx. £6,000 per annum. Sundry Income is approximately £500 and the monies received from the Town Meadow Group are paid into this budget as a contra payment. Bank Interest from both accounts is approximately £1,500 and lettings £2,000. Envisaged total income will be in the region of £10,000.

Budget No: 1.14 - Allotments – There are two allotment gardens and the income is envisaged at £900.

Budget No 1.19 – Civil Marriages – The lettings fee for Civil Ceremonies has been increased from £100 to £200. Eight weddings have been held in the Civic Hall since April 2016. Hopefully, now the room has been refurbished, this figure will increase. Estimated income on present figures, ten, totalling £2,000.

Total estimated income for 2017-2018: £39,999.87

The Town Clerk informed the meeting that the current SLA with NDDC for street cleaning ends on 31st March 2017. NDDC has confirmed that they will extend the SLA for another three years from 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2020 and the statutory annual payment of £9,000 will continue.

Cllr Milsted proposed that “**the Income Offset of the draft precept FY 2017/18 document totalling £39,999.87 should be approved and adopted**”. Cllr Von Clemens seconded and the vote was unanimous.
RESOLVED.

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday, 12th December 2016 (continued):

186. To consider, agree and approve ‘in principle’ the Precept for FY 2017/18 (continued):

EXPENDITURE

2.00 Expenditure Grants and associated organisations

The annual grant awards to local organisations as received and agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee at their meeting held on the 21st November 2016 and adopted at the Full Council meeting held on 28th November 2016. All accounts and applications forms have been received and verified. It also includes £10,000 to RiversMeet (if the works depot project commences), £10,000 to CAB and £5,000 to the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

A request for more information deferred from the Policy and Resources meeting held on the 21st November 2016 for a grant towards the Gillingham Youth Foundation still needs to be addressed, but has been included in the expenditure for grants at this time.

Total estimated grant expenditure for 2017-2018: £50,550.00

The Town Clerk asked if there were any questions regarding the grant expenditure.

Cllr Monksummers and Cllr Mrs Potheary asked about the appointment of the Town Crier. The Town Clerk replied that the Town Crier was taken ill shortly after he was appointed earlier in the year and confirmed in November that he would like to step down. The £1,500 allocated towards a new uniform and expenses has not been spent in this financial year and will remain in the General Reserve if members wish to appoint a Town Crier in the future.

The Town Clerk commented that in order to finalise the figures for Expenditure members needed to agree whether or not the Gillingham Youth Foundation (GYF) should receive a grant. Cllr Harris wished to debate the matter and, therefore, Cllr Von Clemens, Cllr Mrs Ridout and Cllr Walsh as trustees of GYF were asked to leave the room.

Cllr Harris thanked the Town Clerk for circulating the GYF accounts and commented that having looked at the accounts it appears that their expenses are below income. The building will be maintained by DCC until March 2017. Why do they need such a large donation at this stage as it appears to be working well?

The Town Clerk replied that the grant application is for October 2017. GYF finances may have changed by then if the expected lettings do not materialise. Members can still decide in October whether or not to pay the grant.

Cllr Milsted understood the point that Cllr Harris was making. The expected lettings figure is optimistic. Payment will not be paid until October 2017 and £2,000 is not a large grant request given the uncertainties in the future. It would not be unreasonable for the Town Council to budget for this grant should it be needed in October. This time next year they will have a better idea of their finances.

Cllr Ms Baker and Cllr Mrs Hunt concurred with Cllr Milsted.

Cllr Mrs Baker proposed that **“the grant application for Gillingham Youth Foundation should be approved and included within the precept for FY 2017/18”**. Cllr Milsted seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

Cllrs Mrs Ridout, Von Clemens and Walsh returned to the meeting.

Cllr Milsted proposed that **“the Running Costs of the draft precept FY 2016/17 document totalling £50,550 should be approved and adopted”**. Cllr Harris seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday, 12th December 2016 (continued):

186. To consider, agree and approve ‘in principle’ the Precept for FY 2017/18 (continued):

3.01- 3.29 - Running Costs

The running costs have been established from the total spent within the first six months of this financial year and compared with the final expenditure from the FY 2015-16. Most are within or under budget with the exception of the Insurance – **Budget 3.11**, has been increased by £1,000 as additional premiums have occurred this financial year as a result of the refurbishment of Hardings Park and the purchase of new machinery.

Running costs have increased by £5,240 due to the additional horticultural work that the grounds staff have taken on in respect of estate management work.

Total estimated running costs expenditure for 2017-2018: £102,280.00

The Town Clerk explained that she was still waiting for an exact figure from DCC regarding the leased IT and telephone equipment at the Town Hall. The figure used is a ‘ball-park’ figure only.

Cllr Mrs Beckley asked why there was an increase in health and safety equipment. The Town Clerk replied that from April there would be an extra employee who would require protective personal equipment (PPE), plus other costs in connection with all the public open spaces.

The Town Clerk informed members that she thought it prudent to allow for extra fuel costs following Brexit.

Cllr Von Clemens proposed that “**the Running Costs of the draft precept document FY 2017/18 document totalling £102,280 should be approved and adopted**”. Cllr Gould seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

4.00- 4.12 - Wages and Salaries

The Staff and Salaries Committee has set the budget for 2017-18 to include one additional full time member of the horticultural team. The 1% pay award during this financial year has also been included. Two of the internal staff will have their hours increased and all staff will be employed on a 37hr week contract from the 1st April 2017. This has resulted from increased work with regard to land management and devolved services.

It has been confirmed by the administrators of the Superannuation Scheme that a short fall still remains and actuary payments will be applied in the next financial year. It has not been possible to ascertain the amount that will be required. The last actuary payment totalled £17,000 and it was agreed that payment could be made over a three year period. This ended this financial year. An actuary payment of £5,000, if required, has been included in the F.Y 2017-18 expenditure.

To offset the increase of the Staff and Salaries budget, monies have been transferred from budget 7.01 - Dorset Countryside - £28,535.40 and budget 2.21 – CREW of £7,000. This will leave a total increase of £30,000.

Total estimated Wages and Salaries expenditure for 2017-2018: £409,308.00

Cllr Mrs Potthecary asked whether there was any provision for a Community Resource Worker (CRW). The Town Clerk replied that Town Council staff will undertake the community resource work. The Staff and Salaries Committee had previously agreed that the £7,000 allowed for a CRW and the £28,535.40 allowed for the Dorset Countryside contract should be used to off-set the costs of recruiting an additional grounds man and to make two members of the office staff up to full time.

Cllr Mrs Potthecary remarked that there was logic in spreading the workload and proceeded to ask if there were any plans to include provision for a CRW in the draft precept. The Town Clerk replied that there were no plans to allow for a CRW in the precept.

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday, 12th December 2016 (continued):

186. To consider, agree and approve ‘in principle’ the Precept for FY 2017/18 (continued):

Cllr Frith proposed that “**the Wages and Salaries Expenditure of the draft precept 2017/18 document totalling £409,308 should be approved and adopted**”. Cllr Monksummers seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

3.29-3.50 Utilities and Contracts Costs

Utilities and Contracts costs have all been based on the half yearly financial figures for 2016/17 and adjusted accordingly.

Total estimated Utilities and Contracts costs for 2017-2018: £54,880.00

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council’s properties had not been re-valued by the Valuation Office since 2010. The new values show a similar amount for the Town Hall and public conveniences. The value of the Community Office has decreased by £600 but the Works Depot has increased by £4,250 and the Cemetery has increased by £2,200. All Clerks are fighting the valuation of cemeteries and remained hopeful that the figures would be reassessed and reduced. It is envisaged that a concessionary rate will be given regarding the public conveniences, as per this financial year.

Cllr Milsted commented that cemeteries had been given increased values in the past and the valuations were revised and reduced. It would be beneficial for the Town Council to issue a press release about these new valuations, which are beyond the control of the Town Council.

The Town Clerk replied that for the purposes of setting the precept the figures demanded by the Valuation Office have been used albeit they may be reduced later on.

Cllr Monksummers proposed that “**the Utilities and Contracts expenditure of the draft precept 2016/17 document totally £54,880 should be approved and adopted**”. Cllr Mrs Ridout seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

5.00- 5.15 - Unsolicited Costs

The Unsolicited Costs have been established from the total spent within the first six months of this financial year and compared with the final expenditure from the financial year 2015-16 and adjusted accordingly.

There have been two additional budgets allocated to the Unsolicited Costs that may be carried out in the FY 2017-18, as follows:

Budget 5.14 - £1,545 has been allocated towards the cost of the provision of the Registration Service to be kept at the Town Hall, if DCC resolve this is how this service is provided in 2017.

Budget 5.15 - £3,000 towards Service Devolution Revenue. It has been established that Town and Parish councils do not have the power to carry out highway maintenance work such as cleaning gullies. Possibly, the only way forward is to enter into a Service Level Agreement with Dorset County Council and pay them to do this and any other devolution work.

Total estimated Unsolicited Costs for 2017-2018: £17,296.00

Cllr Milsted commented that DCC had not exercised due diligence before asking Town and Parish Councils to finance non-essential highway maintenance works.

Cllr Harris asked how DCC can devolve services to Town and Parish Council when highway assets remain their responsibility. This proposal should be challenged and a decision deferred until next year at the very least when there is sufficient time to raise funds. What happens if the Town Council chooses to do nothing?

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday, 12th December 2016 (continued):

186. To consider, agree and approve ‘in principle’ the Precept for FY 2017/18 (continued):

The Town Clerk responded that DCC Highways will only commit to reactive works rather than proactive works.

Cllr Von Clemens commented the devolution of non-essential highway maintenance was ‘as clear as fog’ but nevertheless, the Town Council has to allow for any changes.

Cllr Milsted commented that regular maintenance work will still be carried out on the main gritting routes, it is the non-gritting routes that will not be done even if there are surface water flooding issues. If the Town Council does not set aside the money then nothing will be done at all.

Cllr Frith proposed that **“the budget figure of £3,000 for ‘Services Devolution Revenue’ is approved and included within the draft precept 2017/18 document”**. Cllr Milsted seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

Cllr Mrs Baker proposed that **“the Unsolicited Costs of the draft precept 2017/18 document totalling £16,700 should be agreed and adopted”**. Cllr Mrs Ridout seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

6.01- 6.20 - Major Projects

Budget No: 6.02 - Town Hall Refurbishment Project. A further £12,000 has been allocated within this budget for the provision of new flooring in the Civic Hall and provision of new hearing loop systems for the Civic Hall and the Jubilee Room. It was hoped to carry out the installation of the hearing loop systems within this financial year; however, the allocated monies for the Town Hall refurbishment was spent on the replacement of an IT projector and screen and the decorating of the Civic Hall.

Budget No. 6.03 – Additional Burial Land - £10,000 added as agreed by council in June 2016.

Budget Nos. 6.04 - 6.13 – Agreed by the General Purposes Committee and Full Council in October 2016.

Budget No. 6.08 – An amount of £25,000 to refurbish the High Street public conveniences has been included should the current interested parties fail to obtain their grant.

Total estimated Major Projects expenditure for 2017-2018: £131,100. 00

Cllr Milsted commented that the Windrose Rural Media Trust has submitted an initial ‘Permission to Apply’ document to the Arts Council for the refurbishment of the public toilets in the High Street to be used as an office and media store. If permission is granted, Gillingham Town Council will need to write to the Arts Council to confirm that the toilet building will be leased on a 20 year lease for a peppercorn rent.

The Town Clerk explained further that if the Windrose is unsuccessful with its grant application the toilets will still need to be refurbished and possibly still leased to the Windrose Trust. Budget no. 6.08 allows for this scenario.

Cllr Monksummers proposed that **“the Major Projects of the draft precept 2017/18 document totalling £131,100 should be agreed and adopted”**. Cllr Joyce seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

7.00 - Contract Costs

Budget No: 7.01- GTC Management Plans – It has not been possible to establish the full costs of the first year of a five year management plan for all the open spaces, amenity land and play areas. Assistance from outside agencies to help write the plans will be required and included within this budget along with additional work required by contractors to help with tree surgery, hedge-laying and attenuation ponds. A figure of £15,000 has been included for this first year.

Total estimated Contract Costs expenditure for 2017-2018: £16,700.00

Policy and Resources Committee Meeting – Monday, 12th December 2016 (continued):

186. To consider, agree and approve ‘in principle’ the Precept for FY 2017/18 (continued):

Monies held in the National Savings and Interest Account and the General Reserve do not form part of the precept and have been included for information only. The residue of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan Group (GNPG) grant is held in this account and includes £490 received from the distribution company after they failed to deliver the consultation leaflets as requested last summer.

Total Annual Expenditure for the F.Y. 2017-18: £782,114

Precept Amount

Total Estimated Income	£39,999.87
Total estimated expenditure for 2017- 2018	£782,114.00
Less total estimated income	<u>£39,999.87</u>
	£742,114.13
Plus Contingency	<u>£10,000. 00</u>
Precept Amount for 2017-2018	<u>£752,114.13</u>

*Band D equivalent – 4065.60

Resulting in an increase of 15.96%

Cost per month to a Band D = £15.42 – an increase of £2.13

*The Band D equivalent has been set as last year – awaiting confirmation from the District Council

Cllr Milsted informed members that the overall increase in Band D equivalents in North Dorset was only 220 and, therefore, Gillingham is unlikely to see a significant increase.

Cllr Milsted proposed that **“the draft precept document totalling £752,114.13 should be approved and adopted ‘in principle’ prior to receiving the relevant information for North Dorset District Council”**. Cllr Von Clemens seconded and the vote was unanimous. **RESOLVED.**

Cllr Milsted commented that the town’s precept would provide decent services for its residents.

Cllr Monksummers remarked that overall the increase would only represent an extra 50p per household per week and is extremely good value for money.

187. Matters Pertinent.

- a) Cllr Monksummers asked if anybody knew about the traffic monitoring that was going on in the town. Cllr Mrs Ridout commented that it was nothing to do with DCC Highways. An independent survey had been commissioned.

Note: Since the meeting it has been discovered that the traffic survey was commissioned by the consortium for the new Southern Extension to update information already held regarding current traffic flow and waiting times at principle junctions in the town.

- b) Cllr Mrs Hunt informed members that the finger post in Milton-on-Stour had finally been refurbished and put back thanks to the efforts of the Village Committee.

Closure: The meeting closed at 8.15pm.