

WHITEHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 7th September 2017

Present: Councillors B. O’Kane (Chairman); J. Forster; R. Gill;
J. Kane; C. Maudling; G. Roberts;

M. Jewell, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer

V Gorley Trainee Assistant Town Clerk

777/17 Apologies For Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Guest, Councillor Gearing, Councillor Laine; Councillor Lowrey and Councillor Rayson.

778/17 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Roberts declared that he was a member for Cumbria County Council.

779/17 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

780/17 Christmas Lights and Festivities

Following the last Council Meeting on 31 August 2017 (Minute 768/17 refers) The Chairman reported on the prior notice of a resolution to suspend Financial Regulation 11 and the Council considered the risk assessment. The purpose of suspending Financial Regulations was to have the testing, repairing, maintenance and dismantling of the Christmas lights undertaken by Cumbria County Council without seeking tenders/estimates/quotes from other companies. The budget for Christmas was £25,000 and the County Council had submitted a quote of £24,785.50 and had stated that there was likely to be further costs to a maximum of £27,000.

A discussion followed on this and it was agreed that the County Council would provide a value for money service and the Town Council could be confident that the work would be carried out in a safe and efficient manner.

RESOLVED – That Financial Regulation 11 be suspended and that the work to collect, test, erect, repair, maintain and dismantle the Christmas lights be carried out this year by Cumbria County Council in accordance with their quote.

781/17 Christmas Festivities

The Chairman referred to the last Council meeting (Minute 768/17 refers) when it was agreed that the Christmas festivities would be discussed at the Extraordinary Council meeting.

Councillor Maudling said that £6000 to £8000 was required for Christmas festivities for the Christmas switch on to pay for:-

CFM stage	£2,500
Generator	£400-500
Paramedics	£21 per hour or ask St John's Ambulance and make a donation
Security	£17 per hour
Barriers	£400
2 Artistes on the day	£1500 (£750 each)

Following a discussion Councillor Gill proposed that £7,000 be added to the Christmas budget for Christmas festivities increasing the budget for Christmas to a total of £34,000. This was seconded by Councillor Kane

RESOLVED – (i) That £7,000 be agreed for Christmas festivities for the Christmas switch on which would increase the original budget of £25,000 (plus the increase of £2,000 in 780/17 above) to a total of £34,000.

(ii) That an item be put on the first Council meeting in 2018 recommending that for Christmas 2018 the Council only be responsible for the erection, maintenance and dismantling of the Christmas lights and that a committee external to and separate from the Council be set up to raise money to provide Christmas festivities for the town.

782/17

Annual Return

The Chairman asked permission to raise an urgent issue and this was agreed and he asked the Clerk to explain the issue.

The Clerk referred to the earlier Minute 765/17 of the Council Meeting on 30th August 2017 and said that BDO had not sent the form back for amendment but had informed the Council on 4th September 2017 that because of financial irregularities between April 2016 and December 2016 which were identified in the Internal Auditors Report carried out in December 2016 that a Qualified Return would be issued to the Council, meaning that the Council could not apply for Quality Council status in the next 12 months. BDO had said that it was now too late to appeal to get the qualified status lifted which was agreed in Minute 765/17 and that there was no point appealing the irregularities raised in the Internal Auditors report on the basis that everything was in order by March 2017 as these irregularities had happened in 2016/2017. In the circumstances the Chairman had agreed that no appeal should be made either in respect of Minute 765/17 or the latest qualifications raised by BDO on 4th September 2017 and the BDO be informed accordingly.

RESOLVED – That the position be noted and that the action taken by the Chairman not to appeal be approved.

The Meeting closed at 7.00pm



Chairman