

MELTHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF PROPERTIES, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE HELD ON MONDAY 07 OCTOBER 2019

Present: Councillor Bampton (Chair), Councillor Buchanan, Councillor Haigh, Councillor Keighley, Councillor Millward and Councillor White.

PUBLIC SESSION: There were no members of the public present.

19/26 NOTICE OF MEETING

Public Notice of the meeting was taken as read.

19/27 ADMISSION TO THE PUBLIC

As printed agenda.

19/28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence as all Councillors were present.

19/29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

19/30 BUDGET MONITORING AND INTERNAL CONTROLS

Councillors considered the budget monitoring report for the second quarter of the financial year. The Clerk pointed out that the commentary provided explained in detail the position at quarter 2. The Clerk reported that a couple of budget heads were overspent for example due to an increase in the minimum wage but 'devolved services' has a significant underspend and across the board the Council were on track at the quarter 2 point.

Councillors considered the Schedule of Payments for July, August and September 2019 circulated with the agenda and

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Payments for July 2019 in the sum of £10750.66 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Payments for August 2019 in the sum of £6690.21 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Payments for September 2019 in the sum of £14,881.04 be approved.

In accordance with the internal control checks agreed by Council the Committee checked that the petty cash balanced with the petty cash book and that the monthly bank reconciliations matched the relevant current account bank statements and found everything to be in order.

19/31 BUDGET PLANNING / PRECEPT 2020/21

The Clerk had circulated a report setting out the projected year end position for this financial year. Councillors thought that the description 'administration' as a budget head was misleading as this budget actually dealt with statutory compliance, communications, insurance and operation of the Council offices. The Clerk was asked to consider renaming this budget head to better reflect what the budget is spent on. The Clerk reported a projected underspend in administration, a small overspend at the park and an underspend in services. The Chair

queried the projected figure for sundry income and the Clerk agreed to circulated clarification on how the figure had been reached.

The Clerk explained she had produced an initial draft budget for 2020/21 based on the projected year end position from this year and any known differences in spend for 20/21 e.g. as a result of changes to the way accounts are produced, increases to waste collection costs and increases in salaries as a result of minimum wage increases nationally. The Clerk clarified that at present the draft budget did not include any provision for projects the Council might want to explore as a result of the Ask Meltham exercise and currently did not make any provision for inflation. The Clerk explained that until the Council were clearer on what projects they might wish to look at in the next financial year it was not possible to start looking at the possible precept for 20/21. The Clerk also said that she believed a further meeting of the Committee would be needed to develop this work further in order that when the Committee meets on the 9 December 2019 it would be in a position to make recommendations to the full Council meeting in January 2020 as to the budget for 20/21 and the precept.

19/32 ROBERT ASHTON MEMORIAL PARK

- a. Councillors considered the play inspection report circulated with the agenda, carried out by Wicksteed earlier in the year and noted the remedial actions taken.
- b. Councillors considered a maintenance plan circulated with the agenda (prepared by the Councils contractor at the Clerks request) to aid future planning of works and budget planning. The Clerk suggested that the routine maintenance of the park generally amounted to painting, staining, putting chippings down and strimming, with repairs and renewal as required. The Clerk reported that the contractor had estimated the costs and frequency of different tasks from experience and checking when maintenance was last done from records and this could be refined moving forward. The Clerk said it would hopefully allow the Council to see in advance of the next financial year what maintenance would be due.
- c. Councillors considered a report prepared by the Councils ground maintenance contractor circulated with the agenda regarding a number of matters raised following the last site inspection including proposals for paving / seating near the tennis area, recommendations on siting a basketball hoop, proposals for creating an accessible path from the car park to the bandstand, and proposals for a future mowing regime / wildflowers. Councillors discussed the importance of having a joined-up approach to works in the park so that it was not necessary to duplicate any works. One of the Councillors suggested for example that the entrance to the car park would ideally be placed further down the access road to avoid pedestrians and cars being in the same vicinity but that this might then affect any proposed path from the car park. It was also suggested that it would be preferable to have a multi-use games area which could be used for other sports apart from just tennis. It was suggested that it would be worth bringing in some professional consultancy expertise in consultation with residents and park users to draw up a master plan for the park redevelopment. Councillors asked the Clerk to make enquiries of Kirklees Council regarding professional support in this area, and if this was not possible to obtain some quotes for professional consultancy services. Councillors agreed with the contractor's proposals for future mowing / wildflower areas and the Clerk suggested it would be important to put up some signage clarifying that these areas had been left to grow long for wildlife rather than due to neglect. It was decided that the paving by the tennis courts and the path from the car park bandstand be put on hold for time being.
- d. Councillors considered the issues regarding the pond raised by the Councils contractor, a note of which had been circulated with the agenda and decided to recirculate the survey that had been done previously and put it on the next agenda for further consideration.

- e. Councillors noted that the Clerk had made enquiries of two firms providing smart water security solutions with regard to protecting the remaining stone in the park, but no response had been received as yet.
- f. Councillors considered a suggestion following the Wicksteed inspection to cover the toddlers play surface with play grade bark chippings and to provide some equipment in place of the racing track shape currently in the wet pour surface which would be obscured. The Clerk said she had discussed the options, and this provided the quickest method to improve the surface. The Clerk reported that she had asked the Council contractor for some indicative costs and these were reported to the Committee. Councillors instructed the Clerk to make some enquiries about whether the bulk purchase of loose play grade chippings could reduce the costs. It was further decided that the decision to cover the surface with bark chippings should be communicated to park users in advance of the works. The Clerk to bring back some suggestions for play equipment to replace the racing track to the next meeting.
- g. Councillors noted that enquiries were still being made into the costs and practicalities of providing toilet paper.