

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

I HEREBY GIVE NOTICE THAT a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will be held in the Council Office, St Andrew's Cemetery, Hexham on 11 October 2017 at 6.30pm, when the following items will be discussed:

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence.
2. To receive minutes of the Finance and General Purposes Committee meeting held on 16 August 2017 enclosed.
3. Matters arising, if any.
4. Declarations of interest (see enclosed).
5. To receive bank reconciliation and budget income and expenditure report to 30 September 2017 (attached).
6. To agree exclusion of the public during consideration of agenda items 7 and 8.
7. To consider a staff matter.
8. To consider and agree 2018/19 Grant Aid applications (see enclosed).
9. To consider a new Grant Aid Policy (see enclosed).
10. To consider a donation request from St Mary's Catholic Church.
11. To consider 2018/19 Committee budget and the Council budget process.
12. To consider and agree a Co-option Policy (see enclosed).
13. To agree a date for the next meeting of the Committee.
14. Any urgent matters at the Chairman of the meeting's discretion. (*Matters to be raised under this item should be written out (if possible) and handed to the Chairman of the meeting or the Clerk before the meeting begins.*)

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
5 October 2017

Hexham Town Council
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St Andrew's Cemetery
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H agenda 1017 FandGPCCommittee

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 AUGUST 2017

365.	PRESENT: Councillor J M Graham in the Chair and Councillors T G E Gillanders, Mrs C R Homer, T Pearson and J Ord.
366.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors T Cessford, R Hull and E Green.
367.	MINUTES of the meeting held on 28 June 2017, having been circulated, were AGREED.
368.	MATTERS ARISING: a) PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILETS (Minute 356a and action log refers). Councillor Mrs Homer has raised this issue with Paul Jones, Director of Local Services at Northumberland County Council, and this is being considered. b) WASTE BINS (Minute 356c and action log refers). It was noted that the County Council has advised there are four broken bins in the centre of Hexham. It was AGREED to buy four new bins. c) STREET LIGHTING (minute 363 refers). It was noted a meeting has been held with Gavin Barlow from Northumberland County Council and amended costs have been issued. It was also noted that work will be from the centre of Hexham outwards and some lampposts will be painted rather than replaced.
369.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest.
370.	FINANCIAL REPORT: The bank statement and account reconciliation together with the 2017/18 Budget report to 31 July 2017 were received and accepted. Copies are attached to the minutes.
371.	ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SUPPLIERS: It was NOTED that the end date for the current contracts for both the Cemetery and Abbey Floodlights is 20 November 2017 and that the last termination notice date is 21 September. It was AGREED to research this further.
372.	FUNDING REQUEST: A request for funding relating to a Sport England Project on Mental Health was considered. Councillor Mrs Homer declared an interest because of links with Active Northumberland. It was AGREED to support the project with £500 from the Contingency Fund for the first year, review this for subsequent years, and invite the applicant to make a presentation at a Full Council meeting.
373.	WAR MEMORIAL: It was noted that a grant of £3300.00 has been offered by the War Memorials Trust towards work to the war memorial.

374.	NEXT MEETING: It was AGREED that the next Committee meeting will be held on 11 October 2017 at 6.30pm in the Council Office, St Andrew's Cemetery, Hexham.
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Action Log

To pursue public toilet provision with NCC	Clerk
Further research prices for electricity suppliers	Clerk

Chairman

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council on 3 September 2012 Councillors must declare if they have a disclosable interest in any matters under consideration.

To do so Councillors must use one of the following statements:-

1. "I have a disclosable pecuniary interest
in..... (for example:) Agenda item 3,
Planning application number 13/1234".
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraphs 11&15 apply).

2. "I have a disclosable personal interest
in..... (for example:) Agenda item 4,
Grant aid application by Hexham Youth Initiative
(NOTE: Code of Conduct paragraph 13 applies).

Councillors should familiarise themselves with the Code of Conduct regarding the definitions of (A) pecuniary interest and (B) other personal interest and their obligations when declaring any interest.

To ensure Councillors interests are correctly minuted please use one of the above statements when declaring an interest.

NB. Should a Councillor wish to take part in the consideration and voting on a matter or matters in which he/she has a disclosable interest then they may request a dispensation be granted to enable them to take part in the discussion and voting on it but at least 10 days' notice must be given for any dispensation request.

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
GRANT AID APPLICATIONS 2018/19

The Council adopted the General Power of Competence on 7 August 2017 (minute 6958 refers) which means limitations under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 considered by the Committee in previous years no longer apply. (Unlike expenditure incurred by a Council under Section 137, the General Power of Competence imposes no statutory maximum limit to the level of expenditure which may be incurred by an eligible Council.)

However, the Council has limited funds and Committee members will note the total 2017/18 Grant Aid budget was £71,750.

Application forms, together with any enclosures supplied by applicants, are available for Committee members to view before the Committee meeting by calling at the Council Office Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 4.30pm.

Please note: All grants agreed will be payable after April 2018 and are subject to the total 2018/19 Grant Aid budget that Council will be agreeing in January 2018.

Applications received for 2018/19 Grant Aid are listed below:

Applicant	Reason	Grant requested
Core Music Community Interest Company	Support the continued aim of providing access to music for all the community	£5000
Hexham Community Partnership	Organisation running costs	£55550 (And a 3 year commitment)
Hexham and District Photographic Society	Purchase suitable portable lighting	£500
Hexham Holiday Club	Support core activities	£1000
Hexham in Bloom Volunteers Group	Enter Northumbria in Bloom and enhance Hexham	£2000
Hexham Quaker Meeting	Produce updated advertising and promotional materials and hire appropriate lights for the Voices and Choices exhibition display stands	£500
Hexham Spinal Unit Sports Club	Running costs, volunteers' expenses, updating equipment	£850

Hexham Town Twinning Association	Recreational activities	£750
Hexham & Tynedale Community Trust	Organisation running costs	£2000
Hexham Youth Initiative	Organisation running costs	£25000 per year for two years
Josie's Dragonfly Trust	Organisation running costs	£7000
Northumberland Domestic Abuse Services	Cover the costs of supporting people in the Hexham town area	£7000
Tyneside and Northumberland Mind	Provide "Safe Space", a weekly group that meets in Hexham Community Centre	£9790
TOTAL		£116940.00

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
GRANT AID POLICY

The Council's current Grant Aid policy is:

1. *The closing date for receipt of applications for financial year 2018/2019 is 1 September 2017. **Applications received after this date will not be considered.***
2. *Applications from individuals will not be considered.*
3. *Applications from national charitable organisations will not normally be successful but if considered relevant to Hexham will be considered on individual merit.*
4. *Grants will be paid as soon as practical after 1 April 2018 and possibly in two equal instalments.*
5. *Grants for capital projects will be paid after proof of completion of the project (which must be within the 12 months of financial year 2018/2019).*

The following Grant Aid Policy and Procedure is recommended for adoption, to be used by applicants and the Council when making or considering Grant Aid applications from 2018.

Jane Kevan
Town Clerk
September 2017

GRANT AID POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. BACKGROUND

Hexham Town Council is funded by the residents of Hexham and therefore only has limited funds to assist community organisations located and working in Hexham for the benefit of the community.

Subject to funding being available, Hexham Town Council is committed to providing assistance and support to local community groups which are set up to promote community life for Hexham residents. The Council's financial support is provided by way of grants which are decided against criteria set by, and which may be amended from time to time by, Hexham Town Council.

Hexham Town Council is committed to following best practice in grant giving in order to provide sustainable funding and support to voluntary and community groups, whilst providing value for money for local taxpayers and ensuring that public money is spent in a responsible manner.

So the Council can assess applications rationally and objectively, as many will inevitably be dissimilar in content, it is both necessary and helpful to assess all applications received against a range of criteria. These are designed to be a general indication of need but are not exclusive and can be flexibly applied.

The Town Council's policy on grants is based on the principle of promoting the development of partnerships which encourage and enable local community organisations to deliver local projects to the residents of Hexham. In general, the following principles apply:

- Assistance will be given on the basis of need, merit and contribution to the local community.
- Applicants must clearly show how any assistance given will benefit Hexham residents or the environment of Hexham.
- Any assistance given may be subject to ongoing monitoring and subsequent evaluation of the outcome of the grant.
- Organisations should not make a presumption that funding will continue on a year to year basis.

All successful applicants will be invited to have a table/display stand at the Annual Town Meeting to demonstrate their work/services and the benefit experienced by the grant.

2. THE AIMS OF THE COUNCIL'S GRANT AID POLICY

Hexham Town Council provides grants to support the following aims:

- To enable local people to participate in voluntary groups and activities.
- To help the Town's voluntary groups to improve their effectiveness.

- To ensure the provision of services, needed by the Town's residents, via the voluntary sector.
- To support organisations which meet the needs of people experiencing social and economic difficulties.
- To ensure that there is equality of access and opportunity for all Hexham Town residents to the services it provides and funds.
- To improve or enhance the local environment.
- To achieve value for money.

The Town Council defines a voluntary group as a non-profit making organisation, set up and run by a voluntary, unpaid management committee.

3. THE GRANTS PROCESS

To apply for a Town Council grant you must be a charity, community group or local voluntary organisation with a constitution and dedicated bank account, operating or providing a service to the community in Hexham. All funding requests must use the Council's application form and applicants should provide all information requested. The form can be downloaded from the Council's website or are available from the office.

Applications (in triplicate please) should be posted or hand-delivered to the Town Council office at the address on the application form.

If necessary a completed application may be emailed to meet the closing date but this should be followed by hard copies together with supporting documents.

Applications must be received by 1 September for the next financial year so that provision can be made in the following year's budget.

All valid grant applications will be assessed by the Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) Committee in September/October of each year, and be ratified at the January Full Council meeting when the budget is agreed. All applicants will usually be notified of the Council's decision in January.

The F&GP Committee will award a grant at a figure it deems suitable, taking into account this policy, and not necessarily the figure that has been applied for.

Grants will be paid as soon as is practical after 1st April (larger grants may be paid in two equal instalments, the second after 1st October).

There were 13 applications received in 2017 and a Grant Aid budget of £xxx, subject to the overall Council budget, was proposed for 2018/2019.

Hexham Town Council supports a wide variety of grants which have been used to fund both revenue and capital projects, core costs and specific project work. The Council particularly welcomes applications from small or newly formed groups and those that have not applied before.

4. THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA IS USED FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS:

- Whether the group/project has followed the grants process and meets the Council's requirements and grant giving policy.
- Level of benefit to Hexham and the impact the grant will make.
- Evidence of a well-managed group, including previous experience and track record.
- Financial sustainability and viability of the group and/or project.
- Evidence of partnership working.
- Evidence that funding has been sought from other sources and the level of match funding available.
- Evidence of compliance with previous grant award conditions (if applicable).

5. HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL WILL NOT FUND THE FOLLOWING:

- Organisations that do not provide a service to the community in Hexham.
- Individuals or appeals supporting an individual.
- General appeals.
- Statutory organisations or the direct replacement of statutory funding.
- Political groups or activities promoting political beliefs.
- Religious groups where funding is to be used to promote religious beliefs.
- Arts and sports projects with no community or charitable element.
- Medical research, equipment or treatment.
- Animal welfare.
- Projects that may take place before an application can be decided.
- Organisations that have a closed or restricted membership.
- Equipment or other costs that have already been purchased or incurred prior to the application being considered.

6. CONDITIONS OF FUNDING

Grants will be made subject to the following conditions:

- They can only be used for the purpose of the application.
- If the Town Council's grant is part of the overall cost, no monies will be paid until there is evidence that the entire objective is funded.
- No monies should be spent in advance of the application. Evidence of expenditure may be requested.
- Grants will be paid by cheque or bank transfer to an organisation or group.
- The recipient must agree to participate in suitable publicity to note the Town Council's contribution.
- Applicants must submit a copy of the organisation's constitution, latest bank statement and a copy of last year's accounts with their application.
- Organisations are expected to provide the Town Council with written evidence of what the grant has been spent on and the benefit it has brought to Hexham. Such evidence should include copies of invoices and receipts and, where applicable, photos, attendance numbers, press clippings, etc. This information should be submitted within one month of the event/project end or by the end of February each year (whichever is sooner), so that it can be reported at the Annual Town Meeting.

Grants for capital projects will be paid after proof of the project being completed has been received (which must be within the financial year that the grant has been applied for).

Application forms and any information submitted to support an application will be held on file as follows before being destroyed:

Successful applicants: for two years following the year in which the grant was awarded.

Unsuccessful applicants: until the approval of the minutes of the meeting which declined the application.

It is anticipated that some organisations may ask for a guarantee of funding for a number of years. Whilst this is legally possible, it is recommended that no such binding commitments are given. This is because there is the potential for significant changes in the legislative obligations placed on local Councils. It would be possible to give an indicative, but non-legally binding, assurance that a continuation of a grant is likely to be a priority when budgets are set each year.

Amendments to this Policy and Procedure can be made at any time.

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE BUDGET FOR 2018/19

The Committee has to consider and agree a Committee budget for the next financial year, 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2019. This budget will be amalgamated with other Committee budgets so that this Committee can ultimately consider a draft Council budget to present a recommended budget to the Council. The Council will agree the 2018/19 budget and its required precept on 8 January 2018.

Income has been shown to remind the Committee of the Council's income sources (miscellaneous income includes VAT refunds, the Cemetery double tax charge refund and Christmas Market fees).

The figures in the "2018/19 Draft Budget" column below, where given, are initial suggestions for the Committee to consider.

HTC Budget 2018/19	2017/18 Agreed Budget	2017/18 Income at 30/9/2017	2017/18 Estimated at 31/3/18	2018/19 Draft Budget	Ref.
INCOME					
Allotments	5520	840	5520	5520	4000
Cemetery	65000	59930	105000	100000	4010
Donations/Grants/loans	0	0	0	0	4015
N/Plan Grant	0	0	0	0	4105
Miscellaneous	0	24764	0	0	4020
TOTAL CREDITS	70520	85534	110520	105520	

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE	2017/18 Agreed Budget	2017/18 Spent at 30/9/2017	2017/18 Estimated at 31/3/18	2018/19 Draft Budget	Ref.
Internal audit/bookkeeping	2800	2035	2755	3000	6000
Staff welfare	450	255	430	450	6010
Staff salaries	126534	68520	138500	143000	6020
Staff pension contributions	24000	12214	25374	26265	6030
Travelling expenses	300	0	0	300	6035
Grant Aid	6750	6750	6750		6050
Grant Aid under S137	65000	33500	65000		6060
HCP longterm S137 grant	0	0	0		6062
HYP longterm S137 grant	0	0	0		6064
Donations (one time only)	1500	800	1500	2000	6066
Risk management/H&S	500	0	0	500	6070
Training	500	361	751	1000	6080
Local Council Award Scheme	500	0	50	200	6090
Professional fees	1000	100	100	1000	6095
Tourism support fund	10000	0	0	10000	6096
Market Trading	0	0	0		TBA
TOTALS	239834	124535	241210		

HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL
FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE
CO-OPTION POLICY

The Committee is requested to consider and recommend the following Co-option Policy to Full Council.

Policy regarding the Co-option of a Town Councillor

1. When a vacancy on Hexham Town Council occurs, for whatever reason, the Electoral Officer of Northumberland County Council must be so advised by the Clerk of Hexham Town Council.
2. Once the date for nominations to the Town Council has passed the Electoral Officer, if no formal election is to take place, will advise the Clerk of the Council that the co-option process may start. Co-option is the process by which the Town Council selects a new Councillor and it is done as an agenda item within a monthly Town Council meeting.
3. The Town Council manages the process of co-option by itself and will demonstrate transparency and openness by ensuring that a fair and equitable procedure is followed. This procedure is set out below:
 - The Clerk of Hexham Town Council invites interested candidates to write to the Clerk by a specified date.
 - This date will be no longer than two weeks after the Electoral Officer has notified that no election will take place.
 - This invitation will be made by:
 - a) An advertisement in the press and
 - b) A notice placed on the Town Council noticeboard.
 - c) Other methods of invitation may also be considered, but in each case a closing date for receipt of applications will be specified.
4. Qualifications. A person will only be considered as a Councillor if he/she is a Commonwealth citizen or Euronational, is over 21, and an elector in the parish of Hexham.

Disqualifications. There are several ways in which a person may be disqualified:

- a) If a person holds a paid office or other place of profit in the gift or disposal of the council or any committee or subcommittee thereof of a company controlled by the council.
- b) Bankruptcy and execution of compositions or arrangements with creditors. This ends 5 years after discharge.
- c) Conviction in the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands or the Isle of Man within 5 years before the election and has been sentenced to not less than three months imprisonment (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine. If a free pardon has been given the disqualification ceases.
- d) Corrupt or illegal practices.

5. If there is more than one candidate, the letters received are circulated to Councillors ahead of the meeting at which a Town Councillor is to be co-opted. At the Council meeting only Councillors who are present at the meeting where co-option is to take place will be eligible to vote.
6. At the Town Council meeting candidates are invited to say something about themselves and Councillors have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates. Each candidate will be allocated a maximum of three minutes.
7. In a closed session of the Town Council, without the public present, members will consider the candidates and, following the discussion, the public are invited back into the meeting before the voting takes place.
8. The Chairman will request the Councillors present to nominate any of the candidates. Candidates will require a proposer and seconder to progress to the voting stage. If there is only one vacancy, a Councillor may only nominate or second one candidate. One candidate needs to receive an absolute majority of votes.
9. The Chairman will then place the names of those nominated into alphabetical order and proceed to vote. Councillors will have one vote per vacancy to be filled.
10. Voting will be in accordance with Standing Orders by a show of hands and will continue until one candidate has received an absolute majority of those Councillors present. At this stage, the successful candidate will be declared co-opted.
11. Should no single candidate receive a majority on the first vote, the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated. Voting will then take place for the remaining candidates until one person receives an absolute majority.
12. The successful candidate is then declared co-opted to the Parish Council and will be asked to join the meeting.
13. The successful candidate is a Councillor in their own right and is no different to any other member as co-option is a legitimate form of election as part of the election process. The co-opted Councillor is then invited to sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and will agree to be bound by the Code of Local Government Conduct.
14. Should there be no applicant for the vacancy by the date of the Council meeting then Council will decide at the meeting whether or not a vacancy will be agreed or if the Town Clerk will be asked to advertise the vacancy again.

Adopted by Hexham Town Council on XXX

ENDS