

## **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 April 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 14 February 2017 enclosed.
3. Matters arising, if any.
4. Declarations of interest (see memorandum enclosed).
5. To receive bank reconciliation and budget income and expenditure report to 31 March 2017 (attached).
6. To consider an options report on the provision of public toilets (see enclosed).
7. To consider an Action Plan for 2017/2018 (see enclosed).
8. To agree paying off the loan for the tractor (see enclosed).
9. To agree a date for the next meeting of the Committee.
10. 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 April 2017

Hexham Town Council  
Council Office  
St Andrew's Cemetery  
West Road  
Hexham  
NE46 3RR  
01434 609575  
[clerk@hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@hexhamtowncouncil.gov.uk)  
H agenda 0417 FandGPCCommittee

## HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2017

321.	PRESENT: Councillor J M Graham in the Chair and Councillors T G E Gillanders and Mrs C R Homer.
322.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors P E Oliver, T Cessford, J V R Hare and D Clegg.
323.	MINUTES of the meeting held on 29 November 2016, having been circulated, were AGREED.
324.	MATTERS ARISING: There were no matters arising.
325.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were no declarations of interest.
326.	FINANCIAL REPORT: The bank statement and account reconciliation together with the 2016/17 Budget report to 31 January 2017 were received and accepted. Copies are attached hereto.
327.	BUS SERVICE 74: Making a financial subsidy in conjunction with Ponteland Town Council and adjoining Councils towards this bus service was considered. It was AGREED to pay a subsidy of £150.00 from the 2016/17 donations (one time only) budget as a gesture of goodwill as this had not been budgeted for.
328.	IT EQUIPMENT: It was noted that the equipment used by the Clerk at home will not be required by the Council after his retirement. Valuations of this equipment were also noted and it was AGREED that the Clerk may purchase these items at a total cost of £67.50 for his own use.
329.	EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC: It was resolved and AGREED in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 that as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted at Agenda item 9, namely consideration of a proposal relating to a 2017/18 grant, it is advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded from the meeting and they were instructed to withdraw.
330.	2017/18 GRANT PROPOSAL: The proposal was considered and AGREED as attached confidential minute 330.
331.	The meeting was reopened to the public.
332.	DONATION REQUESTS: It was AGREED to make a donation of

	£100.00 from the 2016/17 budget to Northumberland Community Voluntary Action and to advise the Hexham Abbey Festival trustees to make a written application to the new Council in late May/early June 2017 for a donation from the 2017/18 budget.
333.	ASSET LIST: The updated list of the Town Council's assets was NOTED.
334.	NEXT MEETING: It was AGREED that the next Committee meeting will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 11 April 2017 in the Council Office, St Andrew's Cemetery, Hexham.

**Action Log**

Advise and send cheque to Ponteland Town Council (done 6.3.17)	Clerk Designate
Purchase home IT equipment (done 14.2.17)	Clerk
Write regarding the agreed grant proposal (done 28.2.17)	Clerk Designate
Advise Northumberland CVA and Hexham Abbey Festival trustees regarding donations (done 17.2.17)	Clerk Designate
Arrange count of public seats in Hexham to complete the asset list update	Clerk Designate

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 & General Purposes Committee 11 April 2017**

**OPTIONS REPORT ON THE PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILETS**

The following report was considered by the Planning & Infrastructure Committee on 10 March 2017. The Committee agreed to:

- Refer this to the next meeting of the Hexham BID for its response
- Refer this to the Finance & General Purposes Committee
- Consult Prudhoe Town Council on how public toilets in Prudhoe are funded.

**Background**

All public toilets in Hexham are currently owned and operated by Northumberland County Council and provision is as follows:

**St Mary's Wynd**

Closed

**The Sele**

Open all year (subsidised by Hexham Town Council at a cost of £2,000 to remain open in winter)

**Tyne Green Country Park**

Open all year

**Wentworth Car Park**

Open all year

Of the above, the public toilets at St Mary's Wynd are most central for people shopping in Hexham or attending events in the town centre such as Armed Forces Day celebrations, Spook Night, Taste Tynedale, the Christmas Market and the Christmas Lights Switch-On. The Town Council and Hexham Community Partnership receive regular complaints about St Mary's Wynd toilets being closed and this report provides information on options to address provision of public toilets in the centre of Hexham.

**Options**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Asset Transfer of St Mary's Wynd toilets from NCC to HTC	Running costs of £12,000-£14,000 per year (see NCC report)	NCC indicates it is unlikely to object to an asset transfer of these toilets.  The toilets may need repairs/ refurbishment work before being fit for use.  Additional HTC staff may be required and/or contracts needed for daily opening and cleaning.

Install a fully self-cleaning automatic toilet	£58,000 per unit, £18,500 installation	Can be installed as a new build or in an existing structure.  Effective against antisocial behavior and can be open 24/7.  Fully self-cleaning so staff visits would only be needed to check for graffiti and replace soap, etc.
Install a semi-automatic toilet	£27,000 (existing building) or £46,000 (standalone unit), £18,500 installation	Can be installed as a new build or in an existing structure.  Has to be cleaned manually but has an “easy clean interior”.  The doors can be automatically opened and shut via timer switches.
Community Toilet Scheme (this is when a Council pays businesses to open their private toilets for public use so the public can use a shop/café/restaurant toilet without having to buy anything)	Councils typically pay a grant of £500-£600 to any business that opens its toilets to public use.	If some businesses join this scheme, there would be more public toilet provision in Hexham. There would also be no staffing implications and this would be the most cost-effective option.  Signage/promotion of the scheme would be required.  Public toilets may not be available for late afternoon or evening events in the town, unless there is late night shopping or licensed premises’ toilets are available (or portaloos hired).

### **Budget**

There is no specific 2017/18 budget for toilet provision (other than the £2,000 for the Sele toilets) but there is £38,000 in the contingency fund.

### **Financial Regulations – Authority to Spend**

The Council’s Financial Regulations (4.6 refers) state:

*No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.*

Financial Regulation 4.7 states:

*All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council’s standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.*

## **Financial Regulations – Contracts**

Financial Regulation 10.3 states:

*All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11(1).*

Financial Regulation 11.1h states:

*When it is to enter into a contract of less than £60,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5000 and above £500 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.*

## **Confidentiality**

The Local Government Act 1972 (s100) states a meeting shall be open to the public except when confidential information would be disclosed or if the Council resolves to exclude the public because of the nature of the proceedings. Accordingly, this report may be considered in open session.

## **Recommendation**

The Committee is recommended to consider the options and consider undertaking consultation with the business community to assess the interest in participating in a Community Toilet Scheme.

## **Updates since the Planning & Infrastructure Committee meeting:**

- Hexham BID has agreed to promote the use of toilet opening by businesses. The BID will circulate the members and ask how many would be interested in opening to the public in exchange for a small payment.
- Prudhoe Town Council had advised that in Prudhoe one set of toilets is permanently closed and the other set remain open and are accepted by both the Town Council and County Council as requiring significant refurbishment. The County Council has agreed to contribute towards investment in the toilets. The County Council has been asked, if an asset transfer was agreed for the toilets at St Mary's Wynd, if it would offer equivalent funding for their refurbishment as offered to Prudhoe Town Council for the toilets there.

It has also been noted that there is public access to the toilets at Wentworth Leisure Centre and the new bus station.

Jane Kevan  
Town Clerk  
4 April 2017



**Hexham Town Council**  
**Finance & General Purposes Committee 11 April 2017**

**HEXHAM TOWN COUNCIL ACTION PLAN 2017/18**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Complete the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan	The draft plan will be considered at the public forum in May 2017, prior to assessment, consultation and the final referendum. Once adopted, the Hexham Neighbourhood Plan will contain planning policies and site allocations which will be used by County Council planning officers when making decisions on planning applications in Hexham.	2017/2018 £2000 (reference 5600)	Modification prior to the final referendum (date not yet known).
Arrange training for new Councillors	There will be a new Council following the May 2017 election. All new Councillors will require training, including a brief on existing Committees and what they do.	2017/2018 £500 (reference 6080)	The Town Clerk will do an introductory brief and issue documents including "The Good Councillor's Guide" and a copy of the standing orders to all new Councillors in May. Additional local training availability to be monitored.
Refurbish Sele Play Area	The aim is to enhance the safety of this play area as some patches of wear in the wetpour surface were identified in the summer 2016 RoSPA report. Some items of play equipment also need minor work or to be updated.	2017/2018 £1000 (reference 7190), plus s106 funding	To complete by 31st October.
Arrange Remembranceti de events in support of the RBL commemoration events	These are annual events.	2017/2018 £7500 (reference 7800)	Start planning in July.

Arrange Christmas Lights Switch-On event	This is an annual event to promote community engagement.	2017/2018 £1200 (reference 7065)	Start planning in August/September.
Enhance and improve Christmas lighting		2017/2018 £10000 (reference 7050)	
Start to arrange Armed Forces Day 2018 event	It was agreed in 2016 (Community Engagement committee minute 174) to hold this every two years so the next event will be in June 2018. Maintain links with 3RHA.	No budget in 2017/2018 but to plan into 2018/2019 budget	To book local armed forces by June and contact Abbey and traders in October.
Maintain Council links with Hexham in Bloom by having a Council representative on the committee	Support where possible.	2017/2018 £2300 (reference 7850)	
Apply under Council Award Scheme	The Council aims to be awarded the Foundation Award this year and then work towards the Quality Award.	2017/2018 £500 (reference 6090)	On-going
Clean and repair the War Memorial	Started/being processed.	Up to 75% costs funded under the War Memorials Trust Grants Scheme	Completion by end of October.
Monitor and lobby Northumberland County Council regarding car parking facilities in Hexham	Present/expected loss of 500 long-term parking spaces in Hexham. Northumberland County Council need to provide 500 spaces asap. HTC actively engaged.		On-going
Apply for St Andrew's Cemetery to be given a Green Flag award	To write a management plan, including seasonal photos.		Application to be submitted in January.

Consider extension of current burial arrangements			
Support Hexham BID			
Support tourism	A new budget dedicated to tourism has been agreed.	2017/2018 £10000 (reference tba)	
Promote the Council's Grant Aid scheme		2017/2018 £6750 (reference 6050) £65000 (s137) (reference 6060)	
Address public toilet provision in Hexham			
Look after planters in the town centre	Maintained by HTC staff.		

The Committee is requested to consider this Action Plan and recommend it to the new Council.

Jane Kevan  
Town Clerk  
4 April 2017

**Hexham Town Council**  
**Finance & General Purposes Committee 11 April 2017**

**Kubota STW40C Tractor**

In August 2015 the Council took delivery of a new Kubota machine. The total cost was £25620.00 and a deposit of £4270.00 was paid, leaving a balance of £21350.00 owed.

A hire purchase agreement was made with CNH Capital to pay 36 monthly instalments of £644.00 (£23184.00) plus an administration fee of £50.00.

The first payment was made in August 2015 so 20 of the 36 payments have been made to date.

CNH Capital has provided a settlement quote of £9719.00 to pay off the remaining loan, as long as this payment has cleared by 23 April 2017 (the date the next payment is due).

The 2017/18 budget is £20000.00 and I recommend the Council settles this loan.

Jane Kevan  
Town Clerk  
5 April 2017