

MINUTES of the meeting of the **FINANCE COMMITTEE** held on Monday 17th December 2018 in Room 11, Town Hall, Royston, at 7.30pm.

PRESENT: Councillor Davison (in the chair).
Councillors Brown, Harrison, Hughes, F Smith, Squire-Smith, Stanier and Swallow.

In attendance: Town Clerk
Town Councillor Inwood
District Councillors Hill and Hunter
1 member of the public

The Chairman reminded those present that the meeting would be recorded. It was noted that Councillor Brown was also recording the meeting.

277/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Apologies were received from Councillors Bourke-Waite and Leggett.

278/19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DISPENSATIONS:

No declarations were received.

279/19 APPROVAL OF FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES:

It was **RESOLVED** to approve as a correct record, the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on:

- 26th November 2018 (minutes 250/19 to 262/19)

The minutes were signed by the Chairman.

280/19 BANK RECONCILIATION AND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE:

- i) Members received and **APPROVED** the Bank Reconciliation for November 2018.
- ii) Members received and **APPROVED** the November Income and Expenditure report compared against budgets for 2018-2019.

281/19 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT:

Members **APPROVED** the December 2018 accounts for payment and the supplementary accounts for payment for the total £33,616.20 and the transfers between the Town Council accounts.

282/19 ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL CINEMA WORKING PARTY:

Councillor Davison advised that Councillors Hughes and Swallow had agreed to be put forward to serve on the Royston Town Council cinema working party. Councillor Brown offered to be on the working party.

Members **RESOLVED** to appoint Councillors Davison, Hughes and Swallow to the Royston Town Council cinema working party.

A recorded vote was requested. Councillors Davison, Harrison, Hughes, Smith and Swallow voted for the proposal, Councillors Brown and Stanier voted against the proposal and Councillor Squire-Smith abstained.

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the terms of reference for the Royston Town Council Cinema working party with the amendment “and liaise with other interested parties” added to point b (copy attached to minutes).

283/19 GREEN STREET ALLOTMENTS:

Councillor Stanier declared an interest in this item but it was not a disclosable pecuniary interest or an ‘other’ interest under the code of conduct and she took part in the discussion and vote.

a) Members **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the meeting of Royston Town Council and members of the Royston Allotments and Gardens Association (RAGA), held on Friday 23rd November 2018, into the workings of the Council.

b) Members **RESOLVED** to approve and adopt the Allotment Strategy 2018-2023 into the workings of the council.

Members discussed the potential for increasing the amount of allotments that were held by the council. The Chairman confirmed that this was the intention but that suitable land would need to be found to do this.

284/19 ALLOTMENT RENTS:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation from the Budget Working Party to maintain allotment rents, from 1st January 2020, at £11 per pole, £55 per full 5 pole plot for the following 12 months.

285/19 HIRE CHARGES FOR ROOMS AND HALLS:

Members **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation from the Budget Working Party to increase room hire charges from 1st April 2019 by 5%, rounded to the nearest 50p. The Town Clerk confirmed that charges were previously increased in April 2014 and April 2018.

286/19 DRAFT BUDGET 2019-2020:

The Town Clerk updated members on the major changes in the draft budget including:

- £20,000 included for a legacy project to be progressed by the 4 year plan working party
- £5,000 donation to the History Society for a transitional payment due to the change in management of the Cave
- Additional £5,000 for the plantations which need increased maintenance work
- Salaries have been agreed with NALC and the unions and a 2% rise and increments where applicable have been budgeted for
- Insurance quotes are in the process of being gathered but figures in the draft budget are from the current insurance provider to give a guide

The Town Clerk then spoke about the precept and reserves. The precept has not been increased in the last few years and currently equates to £286,327 or £42.53 for a Band D property. General Council reserves currently stand at approximately six months of expenditure and it is recommended by the sector auditors that reserves should be between three and twelve months of annual expenditure. Whilst Town and Parish Councils are not currently subject to Council Tax referendums, this is due to be reviewed and it is possible

that in the future limits could be set for increasing council tax unless a referendum is undertaken and there is local support.

Members commented that compared to other Parish and Town Councils, Royston's Band D charge is very small, with no rise since 2015. For example, Melbourn Parish Council's Band D charge is £125. With the proposed budget, the new precept for 2019/2020 for Royston would be £317,338 or £47.29 for a Band D property, an increase of £4.76 for the year.

Members discussed the need to raise the precept in order to provide the necessary services for Royston. It was suggested that in the future the council should look to commit to making smaller regular incremental increases, and be more specific about where the money will be spent.

Members **RESOLVED** to make a recommendation to Full Council that the draft budget is accepted and a precept demand of £317,338 for 2019/2020 is made.

287/19 COUNCILLORS AS REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS:

There were none.

288/19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC:

It was **RESOLVED** that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, that, in the public interest, the public and press be excluded from the remainder of the meeting under the provision of the Public Bodies (Admission of Meetings) Act 1960.

289/19 ROYSTON CAVE:

Members received an update regarding Royston Cave. Members **RESOLVED** to approve an additional budget of £1,000 for Royston Cave expenditure for 2018/2019. This will be taken from general Council reserves.

The date of the next meeting will be Monday 21st January 2019.

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

Signed: _____
Chairman

Date _____