

KENDAL TOWN COUNCIL

Audit, Grants and Charities Committee

**Monday 25th January 2016 at 6.30 pm
in The Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Kendal**

PRESENT Councillors Matt Severn (Chair), Rachael Hogg (Vice Chair), Andy Blackman and David Evans

APOLOGIES Councillors Paul Bramham and Keith Hurst-Jones

OFFICERS Jack Jones (Town Treasurer) and Nicky King (Council Secretary)

The Chair opened the meeting with a minute's silence in memory of Councillor John McCreesh who passed away suddenly on Saturday 16th January.

805/15/16 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None.

806/15/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R Hogg declared an other registrable interest in items relating to the Rinteln Association.

807/15/16 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2015

The Chairman presented the minutes of the meeting held on 26th October 2015, which had been approved by full Council on 23rd November 2015.

RESOLVED That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 26th October 2015 be accepted as a correct record.

808/15/16 MATTERS ARISING (Not on Agenda)

None.

809/15/16 BUDGETARY CONTROL STATEMENT – NINE MONTHS ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2015

The Treasurer presented a report on the Council's financial position as at 31st December 2015, providing figures showing actual income and expenditure against the expected portion of the budget for the period, together with a commentary on variances. The overall position was favourable, with an overall underspending of approximately £29,000. The Treasurer highlighted the following points from the report:

Miscellaneous Budget

There had been an overspend of approximately £1,500 due to known costs in response to December's flooding, which had been approved at Council.

Allotments

General expenses were significantly lower than budgeted. This was mainly due to much lower than expected maintenance expenditure and water charges.

Kendal in Bloom

The Treasurer reported significant underspendings on installation, maintenance, competitions and community planting. There had also been more income received from sponsors than expected.

Christmas Lights & Festivals

The Festival Grants budget showed an underspending of £4,400. There were also significant underspendings in the Christmas Lights budget, however the final costs for installation and dismantling of the lights was awaited and would reduce this sum in the final quarter of the year.

Highways & Infrastructure

Approximately £7,000 underspent.

The Treasurer referred to the Balance Sheet which shows a snapshot of the Council's financial position as at 31st December 2015. He explained that there is currently approximately £22,000 VAT reclaimable from HM Customs & Excise.

In conclusion the Treasurer reiterated that the budgetary control statement indicated a substantial net underspending of approximately £29,000. The Chair suggested that the Committee consider further the issue of underspending at a future meeting. He would also draw attention to this matter at the Council meeting in March.

RECOMMENDATION That the Budgetary Control Statement for the nine months ending 31st December 2015 be received and forwarded to Council for approval.

RESOLVED That the Committee consider further the issue of underspending at a future meeting. The Chair to draw attention to this matter at the Council meeting in March.

810/15/16 REVIEW OF RISK ASSESSMENTS

The Treasurer presented a review of the Council's risk assessments for consideration by the Committee. Each assessment had been checked for relevance and minor changes made where necessary. Operational COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) assessments had also been reviewed and new guidance agreed with the Town Handyperson. Risk assessments relating to outside work, the garage and workshop and equipment used had also been thoroughly reviewed with the Town Handyperson. Where redundant equipment and materials had been referred to, these had been disposed of and the risk assessments updated accordingly. The Treasurer advised that where outstanding actions had been identified, these would be progressed promptly.

With regard to COSHH, the Treasurer informed Members that he had discussed this matter with the Town Handyperson. His advice was to avoid using/buying such materials where possible. Where this could not be avoided, materials must be kept in original containers and the advice on containers re storage/use adhered to. It was proposed to prepare a library of Fact Sheets to keep within the garage.

It was proposed by Councillor Evans that recommendation be made to Council to approve the review of risk assessments. This was seconded by Councillor Hogg and carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION That the Review of Risk Assessments be approved by Council.

811/15/16 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair suggested that the order of business of the agenda be amended to bring forward item 8 (Insurance Services Tender) and this was agreed.

812/15/16 INSURANCE SERVICES TENDER

The Treasurer presented a report on the insurance services tender. He explained that the Council's current contract with Zurich would terminate on 31st March 2016. Tenders had been invited from 5 organisations for a comprehensive insurance and claims service to be let on a three year contract, with an option to renew for a further two years on the same basis.

An addendum report comparing the tender returns had been prepared, to be considered in Part II of the agenda.

813/15/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Councillor Severn and seconded by Councillor Evans to move to Part II, this was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED That the press and public be excluded for the following items of business.

Part II

In accordance with Section 100(B)(2) of the Local Government Act 1972, the following reports were excluded from inspection by members of the public as they contain exempt information as described in Schedule 12A of the Act, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, as follows:-

- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) [Paragraph 3]

814/15/16 INSURANCE SERVICES TENDER ANALYSIS [Paragraph 3]

The Treasurer presented an addendum report comparing the tender

returns for insurance services and requested Members consider its contents. The most favourable tender had been returned from the Council's current insurance providers, Zurich Insurance plc, for a three year agreement with an option to extend for a further two years on the same basis. The tender met all of the Council's specified requirements and the premium was significantly lower than expected.

Councillor Blackman proposed that recommendation be made to Council that it accepts the tender from Zurich Insurance plc for the Council's insurance requirements for a three year period beginning on 1 April 2016, with an option to extend for a further two years on the same basis. This was seconded by Councillor R Hogg and carried unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION That Council accepts the tender from Zurich Insurance plc for the Council's insurance requirements for a three year period beginning on 1 April 2016, with an option to extend for a further two years on the same basis.

815/15/16 READMISSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED That the press and public be re-admitted for the remainder of the meeting (none were present).

GENERAL GRANT APPLICATIONS

816/15/16 2016/17 Applications:

The Treasurer informed Members that there had been a request by telephone that morning from the Kendal Oral History Group who were seeking funds to assist with a project which would audibly record people's experiences of the flooding in December 2015. A sum of £800 was requested for the purchase of two audio transcribers. As any assistance would be met from the Flood Recovery rather than the Grants budget, it was agreed that the Treasurer would raise this matter at the full Council meeting in February. In the meantime he would request a formal application from Kendal Oral History Group.

RESOLVED That the Treasurer raise the matter of the request for funding from Kendal Oral History Group at the full Council meeting in February and in the meantime request a formal application be submitted.

The Treasurer then presented a report of five general grant applications received for assistance in 2016/17. The report contained the full applications together with the relevant financial information provided by each organisation. Members considered each application in detail and discussed its merits before recommending a grant for 2016/17, which would be subject to the availability of budgeted funds.

817/15/16 1127 (Kendal) Air Cadet Squadron

Members considered a request for funding of £1,626 for the

purchase of ceremonial and display equipment used to improve the quality of presentation that the Air Cadets were known for.

RECOMMENDED That a grant for the full amount requested of £1,626 be awarded.

818/15/16 Kendal Community Theatre

Members considered an application for funding of £10,000 for 'Kendal Yarns', a festival of short new plays to be performed in the Yards of Kendal.

The Treasurer reminded Members that they had previously referred this application to the Christmas Lights & Festivals Committee as the proposed production appeared to represent a festival. After considering the application, the Chair of the Christmas Lights & Festivals Committee requested via Council that the Audit, Grants & Charities Committee reconsidered the request.

Members noted that the applicant had secured funding of £26,000 from the Arts Council.

RECOMMENDED That, in view of the demands on the Council's grants budget, a grant of £1,500 be awarded.

819/15/16 Dance Ability

Members considered a request for funding of £100 to purchase t-shirts. Dance Ability is a dance group for adults with learning difficulties. It was noted that payment was to be made to an individual's bank account and as such the Treasurer would request receipts.

RECOMMENDED That a grant of £100 be awarded.

RESOLVED That the Treasurer request receipts for the purchase of the t-shirts.

820/15/16 Kendal Rugby Club

Members considered a request for funding of £4,900 to enable the Club to provide opportunity for lead coaches to complete coaching qualifications.

RECOMMENDED That, in view of the demands on the Council's grants budget, a grant of £1,000 be awarded.

821/15/16 Kendal Millennium Playing Fields

Members considered a request for funding of £1,000 for maintenance, grass cutting, repairs to the pavilion etc. Members noted that the playing fields had been badly affected by the recent flooding.

RECOMMENDED That a grant of £1,000 be awarded.

822/15/16**Kendal Rinteln Association**

Members considered an application for funding for £500 to be used for grants for young people of Kendal to visit Rinteln and hospitality for groups visiting Kendal from Rinteln.

The Chair requested that it be stated that the grant awarded was to be used specifically for the young people of Kendal to visit Rinteln.

RECOMMENDED

That a grant of £500 be awarded, specifically for the young people of Kendal to visit Rinteln.

It was noted that approval of these grants would leave £1,769 unallocated in the 2016/17 Budget.

823/15/16**General Grants Criteria**

The Treasurer referred to a report he had circulated prior to the meeting regarding the general grants criteria. The criteria were last reviewed in August 2015, however it had come to the Treasurer's attention that several areas could be clarified and/or improved and he wished to gauge the Committee's opinion on these.

Members discussed the points highlighted in the report and agreed that it would be worth giving further consideration to these.

One issue raised related to reference in the criteria to a 'first progress report' being required from an organisation receiving a grant. The Treasurer confirmed that there is no explicit request made for any form of reporting back to the Council after the grant aided project/activity had been completed. Members agreed that this should be implemented for any grant of £2,000 or more.

A further issue raised was that all annual grants are paid in July, yet the Council receives its main source of income (its precept) in two instalments, in April and September. The Treasurer commented that it would assist cash flow if grants were also paid in two instalments, in May and October (at least the larger amounts). After a general discussion Members decided that this may create additional administration and the payment of grants should continue to be made in July.

It was agreed that the Treasurer should present a report to the Committee meeting in April on possible amendments to the general grants criteria.

RESOLVED

That the Treasurer should present a report to the Committee meeting in April on possible amendments to the general grants criteria.

824/15/16**ITEMS FOR THE NEWSLETTER**

Members agreed that the Treasurer write an article for inclusion in the next available edition of the newsletter summarising how much had been spent on grants and giving information on local groups

that had benefited.

RESOLVED

That the Treasurer write an article for inclusion in the next available edition of the newsletter summarising how much had been spent on grants and giving information on local groups that had benefited.

825/15/16

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

826/15/16

DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 25TH APRIL 2016

The meeting closed at 7.45pm.

Summary of Information, Resolutions and Recommendations to Council

Min	Subject	Information/Resolution/Recommendation to Council	
809	Budgetary Control Statement	REC	That the Budgetary Control Statement for the nine months ending 31 st December 2015 be received and forwarded to Council for approval.
		RES	That the Committee consider further the issue of underspending at a future meeting. The Chair to draw attention to this matter at the Council meeting in March.
810	Review of Risk Assessments	REC	That the Review of Risk Assessments be approved by Council.
814	Insurance Services Tender Analysis	REC	That Council accepts the tender from Zurich Insurance plc for the Council's insurance requirements for a three year period beginning on 1 April 2016, with an option to extend for a further two years on the same basis.
816	General Grant Applications	RES	That the Treasurer raise the matter of the request for funding from Kendal Oral History Group at the full Council meeting in February and in the meantime request a formal application be submitted.
817	1127 (Kendal) Air Cadet Squadron	REC	That a grant for the full amount requested of £1,626 be awarded.
818	Kendal Community Theatre	REC	That, in view of the demands on the Council's grants budget, a grant of £1,500 be awarded.
819	Dance Ability	REC	That a grant of £100 be awarded.
820	Kendal Rugby Club	REC	That, in view of the demands on the Council's grants budget, a grant of £1,000 be awarded.
821	Kendal Millennium Playing Fields	REC	That a grant of £1,000 be awarded.
822	Kendal Rinteln Association	REC	That a grant of £500 be awarded, specifically for the young people of Kendal to visit Rinteln.
823	General Grants Criteria	RES	That the Treasurer should present a report to the Committee meeting in April on possible amendments to the general grants criteria.

824	Items for the Newsletter	RES	That the Treasurer write an article for inclusion in the next available edition of the newsletter summarising how much had been spent on grants and giving information on local groups that had benefited.
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