



Brixham Town Council

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 9th December 2020 at 2.00pm

Present	Cllrs Addison, Haddock, Hoggart, Giles, Massey and Laurie
In attendance	Tracy Hallett, Town Clerk, Linda McGuirk, Deputy Town Clerk and Councillors Leech, Borthwick and Blackmore.
Welcome	Cllr Addison opened the meeting.
Members of the Public	

20053	Apologies for absence through the Clerk None.
20054	Declarations of Interest None.
20055	Minutes The minutes of 24.11.20 were resolved and signed as a correct record subject to a minor amendment to the wording in minute 20051 Cllr Giles reminded members of the need to consider the grants given to organisations where the Council has consistently assisted their viability.
20056	Budget - To discuss and consider the draft 2021/22 Members discussed the budget at length. Cllr Giles stated it was important to get tax base position correct. Cllr Haddock advised he had researched other local Councils to investigate the percentage of staff salaries within similar sized Councils. Cllr Leech said there was a need to look at the Town Clerks salary and supported continuation of the Lengthsmen roles as two full time positions. He reminded members the Lengthsmen position was due be reduced to a part time role at the end of March 2021 and strongly urged members to increase the role to a full time position. Cllr Leech added that he had spent time out on the streets with the Lengthsmen team today and was reminded of how much the community valued their work and respected them. Further adding that he was 100% against any reduction in staff or staff hours, BTC should be investing in and motivating the staff. Cllr Massey disagreed stating BTC staff costs are too high, shouldn't be increasing staff unless perhaps an apprentice scheme is considered which would help the towns dire unemployment situation.

Cllr Addison supported further investigation into an apprentice scheme.

Cllr Hoggart advised there was a COVID related apprentice scheme aimed at 16 to 24 year olds and hoped that this would be looked at.

Cllr Hoggart continued to say there is a balance between the cost of running the council and the cost of services run by the council. It was important to ensure BTC can deliver services to the community. Money must be spent on delivering services to the community and not on running the Council. Need to make decisions based on feedback received from the consultation.

If only way organisations can survive is by receiving revenue grants from BTC there is something seriously wrong with their model. Some organisations will not survive the pandemic.

Cllr Addison reminded members that as an employer there are costs related to pay associated with pensions, minimum wage and living wage which are due to increase in April 2021.

If Torbay Council are receiving more from government for the CTSS why are they reducing the tax base?

Cllr Leech said he believed the Brixham community does value BTC and that residents accept that it takes money to run the council. People want to see things physically happening locally. It was heartening to spend two hours on the street with the Lengthsmen and witness members of the public interacting with the Lengthsmen. BTC Can't afford to stand still we need to keep the momentum going.

Cllr Giles said he doesn't want the community to be penalised during a difficult period and that he also hears positive feedback from residents. Agreeing that people need to physically see the services provided by the Town Council.

Cllr Haddock suggested we must take time to show what each member of staff are doing and delivering and be better at selling ourselves.

Cllr Hoggart reminded members of the need to budget for the cost of actions identified in the COVID Recovery Plan

Cllr Giles advised it was clearly identified at the last Finance & General Purposes meeting to bring money forward from reserves to support the budget and the need to allocate a sum towards the transport issue faced by the town.

Members discussed the Community Projects and Grants schemes at length.

Cllr Massey stated she felt that some organisations run without making an effort themselves and rely on grants from BTC. Brixham Does Care (BDC) are a huge and wealthy organisation who receive the most money, why should they get the money every year. BDC wealthier than BTC. The Town Council must support more smaller charities instead.

	<p>Cllr Blackmore advised the Council needs to communicate a gradual percentage reduction over a period of time. Stressing it is vital the council communicates properly with the community and not just make cuts.</p> <p>The Clerk informed members that organisations were advised last year that revenue funding was not guaranteed.</p> <p>Cllr Leech left the meeting 15:33 due to work commitments.</p> <p>It was resolved to amalgamate the Community Grants and Grants scheme under one heading.</p> <p>It was further resolved to allocate £32,500 into grants with a maximum of £25,000 for larger grants and £7,500 for smaller grants.</p> <p>And that Shoalstone Pool CIC funds remain in the reserves.</p> <p>Grants should meet with the post COVID-19 recovery criteria.</p> <p>The clerk reminded members that they have still not considered income or the COVID-19 recovery actions and that time is getting short.</p> <p>Members discussed the need to budget for a zero income.</p> <p>It was agreed to extend the meeting for a further 15 minutes.</p>
20057	<p>Internal Audit It was resolved to defer the item until the January 2021 meeting.</p>
20058	<p>Accounts for payment It was resolved to approve the expenditure.</p>
20059	<p>Financial Budget Comparison Members noted the Financial Budget Comparison for the period ending 2nd December 2020.</p>
20060	<p>Bank Reconciliations It was resolved appoint Cllr Blackmore to check the bank reconciliations. Cllr Blackmore will liaise with the Clerk.</p>
20061	<p>Direct Debits / Standing Orders Members reviewed and noted the suppliers paid by direct debit / standing order.</p>
20062	<p>Date of Next Meeting It was noted that the next meeting will be held on the 13th January 2021</p>

The meeting closed at 16:05pm

Chairperson Date.....