

20th December 2013

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a MEETING of WESTBURY TOWN COUNCIL to be held at THE LAVERTON, BRATTON ROAD, WESTBURY on MONDAY, 6th JANUARY 2014 at 7.00 pm.

Yours faithfully

Town Clerk

Public Forum

Register between 6.50 pm – 7.00 pm
Maximum input per person – Strictly 5 minutes
Forum not to exceed 30 minutes

**Petitions/Depositions to be lodged with the Town Clerk
at least five working days prior to the Meeting.**

A G E N D A

- 1. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES (if any) AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE.**
- 2. DISPENSATIONS (if any).**
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (if any) AND REASONS. (Members must be diligent regarding their interests.)**
- 4. MINUTES.** To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Town Council Meetings held on the 4th November 2013 and 12th November 2013; copies of these Minutes have been circulated to each Member and in accordance with Standing Order No. 13(a) may be taken as read.
- 5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES (if any). Note: no new decisions can be taken.**
Members' matters arising from these previous Minutes.
- 6. POLICE REPORT.**
- 7. WILTSHIRE COUNCILLORS' REPORTS.** Members wishing to ask questions of Wiltshire Councillors are requested to give prior notice to Wiltshire Cllrs R Hawker, D Jenkins and G King, or to the Clerk for onward transmission.

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8. **MINUTES of COMMITTEES.** To receive and consider Minutes and recommendations of the following Committees:-

Finance Committee	-	9 th December 2013
General Purposes Committee	-	2 nd December 2013
Highways, Planning & Development Committee	-	18 th November 2013
Highways, Planning & Development Committee	-	16 th December 2013

9. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THESE MINUTES** (if any). **Note: no new decisions can be taken.**

10. **NOTICE of MOTION received from the Finance Committee dated 9th December 2013.**

Draft Budget 2014/15

To adopt the Draft Budget 2014/15 as recommended, excluding any council tax support grant from Wiltshire Council and as amended to reflect the increase in Grant from £2,000 to £4,000 for Crosspoint, and confirm the Precept as £343,697.00, representing a 11.92% increase, which equates to a Band "D" equivalent of £78.60. (See attached.)

To instruct the Clerk and the Chair of the Finance Committee to produce an appropriate press release to explain the background and reasons for this year's precept increase.

11. **NOTICE of MOTION received from the Finance Committee dated 9th December 2013.**

Small Grants 2013/14.

- a. To approve the small grant applications for 2013/14 amounting to £11,570. (See attached).
- b. To consider an additional grant application for £350 received from the Cygnets Pre-School to purchase replacement ICT toys/equipment to meet their recent OFSTED inspection recommendation.

12. **NOTICE of MOTION received from the Finance Committee dated 9th December 2013.**

Internal Audit Report 2013/14 (First Interim).

- a. To accept the report (previously circulated with the Finance Agenda 09.12.2013) together with the response to the Auditor's recommendations (see attached).
- b. Debit Card Authority – Westbury Town Council Business Account. (Action Plan R5). That the current daily transaction limit on the two Lloyds debit cards held by the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk be reduced from £700

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to £500, and that a debit card be approved for Mr D Lawrence, Laverton Hall Development & Marketing Officer, with a daily transaction limit of £250 to enable the efficient running of the Laverton Bar.

13. NOTICE of MOTION received from Cllr Mrs S Ezra dated 12th December 2013.

Bus Shelter at the White Horse Health Centre. Numerous complaints have been received regarding this bus shelter. It is an open cantilever type, which affords bus passengers attending the Surgery no protection from wind, rain or cold. It is proposed to replace this bus shelter with a more substantial enclosed shelter, and for the current cantilever shelter to be removed to Westbury Leigh to replace the old dilapidated bus shelter, erected originally by a private company to sell advertising space. The Community Area Transport Group has agreed to fund £3,500 for this project in anticipation of match funding from Westbury Town Council.

To approve match funding of £3,500 to remove the current bus shelter at White Horse Health Centre to Westbury Leigh and replace with a more substantial, enclosed bus shelter. Funding of £2,500 to be taken from the bus shelter provision ear marked reserve and £1,000 from the rolling capital programme.

14. NOTICE of MOTION received from Cllr I Cunningham dated 17th December 2013.

Background:

Many councillors are very busy and fail to get motions onto the agenda in time; often the arrival of an agenda reminds a councillor that they have failed to put forward an agenda item. The council removed the “items for next meeting” last agenda on all meetings some time ago; whilst this item made for longer meetings and possibly hurried/ill-conceived motions the reminder aspect was, in retrospect useful.

Motion:

That this council notifies councillors of upcoming council and committee meetings by a “call for agenda items” 7 days before the closing of the agenda where possible or immediately if there are not 7 days available.

This should be done by e-mail whenever possible to save money and using a contact group to save staff time unless any councillor specifically requests a paper based notification; the process can exclude councillors who don’t feel this would be useful to them by informing the clerk; they could easily be left out of the e-mail group.

Financial Implications:

Minimal – unless some councillors insist on postal/paper reminders ; if postal reminders are a significant request then this policy could be reviewed. Staff time should be negligible if they set up a reminder and use an e-mail group to send a standardised e-mail.

Benefits:

Councillors would bring forth motions and possibly better motions (more time to think). The agenda item reminder being (mostly) in electronic form would also serve as a better reminder for the upcoming meeting itself for those councillors who use e-mail and electronic calendars on their computer, tablet or phone as they would be

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using the device when the agenda call came in; councillors who use paper only diaries would not be disadvantaged by the reminder.

Disadvantages:

Might make for longer meetings – but we shouldn't use this as a reason not to have motions.

15. NOTICE of MOTION received from Cllr I Cunningham dated 17th December 2013.

Background:

Members of the public who speak in the forum are often disappointed to find that the council appears to “ignore” their comments by simply moving on to its agenda. It is also frustrating for councillors who would like to discuss the topics raised. Clearly it is not possible (or legal) to discuss significant items that were not on the agenda; as for example, councillors and members of the public may have made a decision not attend based on the agenda and councillors would not have had time to consider the item etc. so we can't change this directly. However, by explaining the situation more clearly and perhaps offering a route for the public to promote a topic directly, we could improve the perception. I am not trying to undermine the role of councillors in representing their constituents but rather make us more approachable.

Note: this motion in no way affects the right of a member of the public to turn up, sign in and speak as they always have done.

Motion

That this council should make efforts to seem more responsive to communications from the public via e-mail, letter or in person by adopting the following:

- a. The chair to make a statement at each meeting *before* any public forum explaining, that according to our standing orders (and the law), councillors will be unable to debate an item introduced during the forum unless the item is also already on the agenda.
- b. Subject to our rules of debate (as set out in our standing orders), topics proposed by a member of the public at least 7 days *before* any meeting can be considered by the Clerk as possible agenda topics for full council or an appropriate committee; the Clerk should give a decision to the member of the public (with any explanation deemed appropriate by the Clerk) but it should be made clear that the member of the public can still speak on (a legal) item at the public forum whether or not the topic was adopted for the agenda.
- c. The Clerk be asked to draw up a short article for public consumption to explain the situation with regard to the public forum, communications to the council & council meetings (including items 1 and 2 if adopted), which will be:
 - i. Published on the website (possibly under Clerk's blog).
 - ii. Placed on our main noticeboards.

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- iii. Sent, where appropriate, in responses to e-mails or letters from the public.
- d. Public forum items or communications presented to the council (that were received after the agenda deadline) can be added to the next appropriate council agenda immediately (at the current meeting) by a request from any councillor (with a voting motion if necessary); but with no debate of the item itself at the current meeting.

Financial Implications:

There would be some staff time involved. But unless there is a substantial uptake in public participation it won't be much; it is hoped that this change might increase public participation.

Benefits:

The council would be seen as more responsive. Members of the public would at least understand our apparent "indifference" to their comments. The council might review more items which are of importance to the town.

Disadvantages:

Vexatious persons might use this option to cause "difficulties", but we do not say that their items *will* be added to agenda; as long as we let them know why the item will not be added that should be fine.

Items which break our 6 month rule; are not relevant to the operations of the council; are illegal; don't show respect etc. could all just be turned down on a procedural basis - or even length of agenda. The Clerk is our responsible officer and should be trusted to make sensible judgements on our part.

The member of the public can be reminded:

- a. The clerk and chair are not *required* to add any item to the agenda.
- b. The member of the public can still speak at the forum on the matter (subject to normal legal restrictions).
- c. The member of the public may still approach any other councillor to bring forward the topic at a meeting or to complain that their suggested item was "wrongly" turned down.

16. NOTICE of MOTION received from Cllr I Cunningham, Chair of the Website Working Group, dated 17th December 2013.

Background:

Often during debate one of the following occurs:
it becomes clear that more information is needed which cannot be obtained immediately – the Clerk (or sometimes a member) undertakes to find out more the council instructs the Clerk to write a letter. In such circumstances, items have a habit of "getting lost"; everyone is busy, requests are often not replied to, letters not acknowledged but unless a councillor thinks to ask, the status often remains unresolved.

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Motion:

Under circumstances where a motion is deferred/halted in order to allow more information to be obtained or that the Clerk is asked to write on behalf of the council: the agenda item is deemed “incomplete” and is *automatically* added to the next agenda as a “Follow up” item (or summary reminder/thereof as written by the Clerk) for the next meeting of the council or relevant committee. Further, if the matter is not resolved at the next meeting, the item is added to the next agenda etc. until such time as the matter is resolved or the council votes to not to continue this. Note: it would therefore be possible for the council to choose *not* to add an item for follow-up on the 1st instance by voting not to continue the item - but this would have to be a deliberate.

Financial:

There would be some staff time involved. Agendas might use more paper.

Benefits:

Items would not get “lost”. The council would be more focussed. Councillors would not feel that items had been lost – when they may be on-going. The council might accept less “foot dragging” by other bodies with which we interact. We will “keep an eye” on things that take more than one sessions to complete.

Disadvantages:

Items may remain “stuck” on agendas through no fault of the council or its staff.

- 1) It is simple to move “next item” at any meeting
- 2) The council can vote *not* to continue the item

Background:

There are a number of issues that face the council that are not well understood by the public. A recent example that we have discussed is the precept and our support grant. Whilst councillors can (and should) explain these things to the electorate, people are suspicious that we might have a political point to make. On several occasions recently we have identified communication with the town as being the most important point i.e.. if only people understood what was going on then... Misinformation is rife - for example many in the town think that town councillors have just had “another” increase in their allowances. A non-political, “helpful” blog which discusses the issues and presents facts might prove both interesting and useful

17. NOTICE of MOTION received from Cllr I Cunningham, Chair of the Website Working Group, dated 17th December 2013.

That the town council’s website should be altered to include a “Clerk’s Blog”. This should be used to provide explanations of issues facing the council, decisions made etc. It should be updated on a regular basis – at least as often as we hold full council meetings. The topics would normally be chosen by the Clerk – although full council can suggest items for inclusion (e.g. an item discussed at council). The blog will not be a forum; members of the public can communicate about blog items in the normal

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way and if the Clerk feels that a point or answer to question is generally useful this can be included in the blog at the Clerk's discretion.

The effectiveness of the blog should be reviewed every six months by the website working group. [Councillors, if the blog concept is approved might like to consider how this should be done – web site group is just a suggestion].

The content of the blog could also be highlighted to local newspapers – they might choose to carry it.

Financial Implications:

There would be some staff time involved but this should only be of a few hours every couple of months. The items for the blog might be generally useful information for the council in any case. It would seem sensible in many cases for the same information to be distributed to councillors before it is blogged; if an explanation is useful for the town it would probably be useful for councillors and help their deliberations so some of the time spent on the blog article might already be spent on proving background information to councillors for meetings.

Benefits:

Better understanding of the workings of the council for the public and perhaps also councillors. An opportunity to pre-empt "issues" by release of factual information into the public domain. It might make our website more interesting.

Disadvantages:

Some people might be concerned about the possibility that some items might be too political – but the Clerk is our responsible officer and we should trust his discretion; further councillors would still have the power of oversight by appropriate motions at full council.

18. NOTICE of MOTION received from Cllr D Jenkins dated 19th December 2013.

Commemoration of the Great War 2014

To approve funding of up to £3,000 from the Rolling Capital Programme to commemorate this historic event.

19. PROPOSED SOLAR FARM ADJACENT TO THE SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS, SLAG LANE, WESTBURY (Planning Application W/12/02081/FUL British Solar Renewables Ltd).

Developers incentives concerning Renewable Energy & Projects to Local Communities. Cllr D Jenkins to report.

20. TELEPHONE AND INTERNET SERVICES

Recommendation to combine all telephone and internet services under one provider: South West Communications Group Ltd. (See attached report.)

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21. **COMMITTEE CRITERIA TASK & FINISH GROUP.** To appoint Cllr I Taylor to this group.

22. **CLERK'S CORRESPONDENCE/MATTERS:**

Royal British Legion Westbury Branch. Letter of thanks. (See attached.)

23. **THE LAVERTON INSTITUTE TRUST MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP.** Report by Cllr D Bradshaw.

24. **CCTV WORKING GROUP.** Report by Cllr Mrs S Ezra.

25. **EMERGENCY PLANNING WORKING GROUP.** Report by Cllr I Cunningham.

26. **COMMUNICATIONS BY THE TOWN MAYOR.** To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may wish to lay before the Council.

27. **ACCOUNTS:**

Payment of Accounts. To approve the list of payments made since the last Meeting or to be made and to confirm the action of the Chairman and one other Member in signing the necessary orders for payment, Business Pass Cash/Visa Cards (if any) transactions, and staff remunerations:-

2 nd December 2013	-	£51,360.22
6 th January 2014	-	As submitted

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