

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of the public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 21st July 2004 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr N J Chard (Chairman)
Cllr P Chambers
Cllr N G R Clarke
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr N W Light
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan
Cllr B H Terry

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Officer

Members welcomed Martin Townsend who would be covering for Mrs Greenfield whilst she was on maternity leave.

F/3647 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr M H Thierry.

F/3648 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Light declared an interest in an item of Urgent Business relating to a grant application to NFDC from Bisterne Village Hall.

F/3649 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 16th June 2004, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/3650 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS (*Annex 'A'*)

a) Schedule of Monthly Payments – June 2004

i) No. 1 Account
RESOLVED: That the Schedule be AGREED.

ii) Imprest Account
RESOLVED: That the Schedule be AGREED.

b) Cheques for signature

There were no cheques to sign.

c) Petty Cash Statement

RESOLVED: That the Petty Cash Statement be AGREED.

d) Inter-Account Transfers

Members received a Statement of Inter-Account Transfers for July 2004.

RESOLVED: That the transfers be AGREED. Cllrs Chambers and Light duly signed the report.

e) Statement of Town Council Balances

RESOLVED: That the Statement be RECEIVED and NOTED.

Mr Townsend updated members on progress of the introduction of the new Sage software. All transactions for Period 1 had now been entered into the system and it was hoped that from August all data would be input direct. Mr Townsend hoped that he would be able to produce reports from Sage for the next Policy & Finance Committee in September. These reports would show actual spend to date compared to both the approved and profiled budgets. In addition, a report would be issued with future agendas showing actual spend up to each month end, together with a supporting statement explaining any variances.

It was noted that Mr Townsend would be making suggestions for improvements to some of the Council's financial procedures and would also be looking at updating the financial regulations.

F/3651

GROUND MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT

Members considered a recommendation from the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee (i) that the Town Council purchase a second-hand tractor suitable for use with gang mowers and, if possible, a highway verge Kubota, at a cost not to exceed £4,000 and (ii) that the Town Council dispose of its Kubota B2400 Mini Tractor.

The Town Clerk had been advised that the Kubota Mini Tractor, together with the unused G1900 Kubota ride-on mower, could be worth approximately £5,000. He had also received a quotation of £6,500 for a second-hand tractor and estimated that the highway verge Kubota could be obtained for approximately £500. It was therefore unlikely that the full £4,00 would be needed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Council purchase a second-hand tractor suitable for use with gang mowers and, if possible, a highway verge Kubota, at a cost not to exceed £4,000.
- 2) That the Town Council dispose of its Kubota B2400 Mini Tractor and G1900 Kubota ride-on mower.

F/3652

TOWN COUNCIL ACCOUNTS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 1ST APRIL 2003 TO 31ST MARCH 2004

Members received a copy of the unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2004. It was noted that there had been an underspend. However, the Town Clerk reported that this was due to the receipt of developers contributions for on-site maintenance at the former Nags Head site and the fact that it had not been possible to undertake some planned worked. All variances would be explained in a report to District Audit with the Council's Annual Return.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2004 be approved.

- 2) That the Statement of Accounts (as part of the Annual Return) be approved.
- 3) That the Statement of Assurance (as part of the Annual Return) be approved.

F/3653

NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK

The Town Clerk reported that he had a copy of the Inspector's Report and a boundary map available in the office for all members to view.

Cllr Mrs Sullivan said that she had been approached by several members of the public asking where they could see a clear map of the boundary. She felt that the Town Council should ensure that the map was widely available.

Cllr Ford had attended a briefing for District Councillors where it had been made clear that towns excluded from the boundary should expedite Town Plans as a matter of urgency. The Town Clerk reported that he would be recommending bringing in an experienced person to carry out this work, using money from Reserves. A report would be presented to members in September or October. In the meantime, he asked for members' approval to informally approach someone he had in mind for the job.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Secretary of State's decision on the boundaries of the National Park be noted.
- 2) That the Town Clerk ask New Forest District Council to circulate the boundary map to other relevant organisations in the Town.
- 3) That the Town Clerk be given authority to informally approach his contact to discuss the job of producing a Town Plan.

F/3654

CCTV

The Town Clerk asked members to consider whether an additional CCTV camera should be provided at Carvers Recreation Ground. The capital cost for this would be £25,000 with a further £1,000 revenue cost. However, he said there might be a possibility of obtaining a grant towards these costs.

Cllr Clarke said that the Council should be cautious about extending the scheme for one small area at such a large premium. He said that there would also be future costs for maintenance/replacement.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That an additional CCTV camera for Carvers Recreation Ground be added to the 'wish list' to be considered for the 2005/06 budget.
- 2) That the Town Clerk investigate whether the Council would be able to obtain a grant towards the cost of an additional camera.

F/3655

LIAISON MEETINGS WITH NFDC

The Chairman asked for nominations for a representative and a reserve to attend future meetings of the Liaison Meetings between the District Council and Town and Parish Councils. It was noted that the purpose of the meetings was to improve communication and disseminate information between NFDC and Town and Parish Councils.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Mrs Sullivan be appointed as the Town Council's representative to attend the Liaison Meetings between NFDC and Town and Parish Councils, and that Cllr Terry be the reserve.

F/3656

URGENT BUSINESS (1)

i) Disability Discrimination Act 1995

It was noted that the full extent of this Act would be in force by October 2004, and that the Town Council was required to carry out an audit of all its buildings to ensure compliance with the Act. To ensure a consistent approach across the New Forest, the Town Clerk had asked the District Council whether it would be able to carry out audits for Town and Parish Councils.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's actions to organise an audit of Council buildings be approved.

ii) Training in Chairmanship Skills

It was noted that HAPTC would be holding 2 half-day events on Training in Chairmanship Skills for Parish and Town Council Chairmen. Cllrs Clarke and Light had previously attended this event and recommended it.

RESOLVED: That authorisation be given to any member wishing to attend the Training in Chairmanship Skills event.

iii) 7th Health for all in the New Forest Conference

It was noted that this Conference would be held on 20th October 2004 in Calmore, with the theme for the day being "Moving Forward Together".

RESOLVED: That authorisation be given to any member wishing to attend the 7th Health for all in the New Forest Conference.

iv) NFDC Grant Aid Applications

The Assistant Director of Leisure Services had asked for the Town Council's views on 2 grant aid applications as follows:

Ringwood Disabled Sports Association – to support the continuation of the club.

Bisterne Village Hall – for refurbishing and re-roofing the lavatories, new disabled lavatory and access, new kitchen and hot water system.

Cllr Light declared an interest as the Chairman of Bisterne Village Hall Committee. He left the room whilst this application was discussed.

RESOLVED: That the Town Council fully supports applications for grant aid to NFDC from Ringwood Disabled Sports Association and Bisterne Village Hall.

There were 3 items of Urgent Business, which were discussed after the exclusion of Public and Press.

F/3657

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That under section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

F/3658

URGENT BUSINESS (2)

v) Strip of land adjacent to 61 North Poulner Road

It was noted that the Lease for this strip of land had still not been signed.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be authorised to take appropriate action to get the Lease signed, otherwise the land would revert to the Town Council.

vi) Staff Matters

The Town Clerk reported that one member of groundstaff had resigned and that action was being taken to replace them.

RESOLVED: That action being taken to replace a member of groundstaff be approved.

vii) Land of Scout Hut, Strides Lane

It was noted that the Scout Hut in Strides Lane was now vacant.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk investigate the future use of the land in Strides Lane where the Scout Hut is located.

F/3659

RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members received details of an insurance claim for stolen money.

RESOLVED: That the action taken with regard to the insurance claim be approved.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.05 pm.