

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

## **MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2005 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr N J Chard (Chairman)  
Cllr P Chambers  
Cllr N G R Clarke  
Cllr N W Light  
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan

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

### **F/3755 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr L C Ford, Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine, Cllr B H Terry and Cllr M H Thierry.

### **F/3756 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **F/3757 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

*With the agreement of the Committee, item 5 on the agenda was discussed next.*

### **F/3758 GRANT AID**

#### **i) Victim Support – New Forest & Romsey**

With the permission of the Chairman, Jo Black from the New Forest & Romsey branch of Victim Support gave members a presentation on the work of the organisation, which was all about local volunteers helping local people who had been victims of crime such as criminal damage, ABH and fraud and deception. The New Forest & Romsey branch had helped 150 families in Ringwood during the past year, all of whom had been referred by the Police. She explained that the branch was applying for grant aid from the Town Council as they needed to recruit a second volunteer to cover the Ringwood area to replace someone who had recently left. It was noted that the cost of basic training alone was £500.

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £300 be awarded to Vicitim Support – New Forest & Romsey towards the cost of recruiting a new volunteer for Ringwood.

## **ii) DORCAS New Forest**

DORCAS New Forest had applied for a grant of £250 towards the provision of work and training placements to enable them to increase the number of voluntary positions. It was noted that in excess of over 250 people in Ringwood had benefited from the service in the past year.

**RESOLVED:** That a grant of £200 be awarded to DORCAS New Forest towards the provision of work and training placements.

## **iii) Consideration of Applications for Grant Aid**

**RESOLVED:** That applications for grant aid be considered on a bi-monthly basis for the remainder of the financial year, i.e. June, September and November 2005 and January and March 2006.

## **F/3759**

### **MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The Finance Officer presented the Monthly Financial Reports (*Annex 'A'*). He circulated an additional request for inter-account transfers and explained that a 6-month Treasury deposit of £180,000 had recently matured and he had therefore invested £260,000 in another 6-month deposit account with an interest rate of 4.46%. It was noted that this would earn the Council an additional £3,500 in interest during this financial year.

The Finance Officer explained that the Summary Budget Report was the probable actual for year-end, subject to any minor year-end adjustments. It was noted that the underspend against the original budget was £66,400 and that this balance would be transferred to the general reserve and brought forward to 2005/06. The Town Clerk informed members that the main reason for this underspend was due to unexpected income received during the year, such as that from MedCentres for the lease of Carvers and the fact that the budget was being managed in a more efficient way than ever before. The Finance Officer said that the introduction of capital accounting this year would make the cost of service provision more clear as project work would be separately accounted for.

Members gave Mr Townsend a vote of thanks for all the work he had put in to improving the Council's finances.

### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the No. 1 account be approved.
- 2) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be approved.
- 3) That the list of Petty Cash payments be approved.
- 4) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 5) That the Inter Account Transfers be authorised. The reports were signed by Cllrs Chard and Light.
- 6) That the Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.

## **F/3760**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS**

It was noted that the Standards Board for England was reviewing the Code of Conduct and that all authorities and Councillors had been invited to contribute to the review.

Members considered the questions included in the consultation paper and agreed the responses proposed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Council should respond to the consultation on the review of the Code of Conduct and that a copy of the response be circulated to all members for information.

**F/3761**

**RINGWOOD ROTARY CLUB PICNIC AREA**

The Town Clerk reported that the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee had recommended that three new picnic benches be purchased and maintained by the Town Council for the Rotary Club Picnic Area. He reported that they could cost up to £450 each. In addition, the Town Council was now on a waiting list with Waitrose which occasionally donated benches made from recycled plastic bags. Cllr Chard had been informed that Ringwood Rotary would be repairing one bench and replacing another. It may therefore only be necessary for the Council to purchase one.

Cllr Light suggested that, if the Council was maintaining the picnic benches, it should be acknowledged on any signage in the area to make the public aware of its contribution.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That £750 be allocated to purchase picnic benches for the Rotary Picnic Area, in association with Ringwood Rotary.
- 2) That the Town Council should be acknowledged on any signage in the area.

**F/3762**

**RINGWOOD CEMETERY – WATER SUPPLY**

Members considered a recommendation from the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee to obtain an enhanced water supply at the Cemetery in order to reduce the time taken to fill the water bowsers during the summer.

**RESOLVED:** That an enhanced water supply be obtained for Ringwood Cemetery at a cost of £737 plus VAT.

**F/3763**

**ATTENDANCE AT SEMINARS/EVENTS**

**i) Hampshire Water Champions Information Day – 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2005**

The Town Clerk reported that an invitation had been received from Hampshire County Council for any members interested in local water issues to attend this Information Day.

**RESOLVED:** That members were welcome to attend this event, but that it would not be an approved duty and travel expenses would not be paid.

**ii) How a Parish Plan Influences – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2005**

The Town Clerk reported that this event was being run by HAPTC and could be of interest to the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the Town Clerk plus two members be authorised to attend this event and that their reasonable travel expenses be paid.

**F/3764****RETIREMENT OF THE DIRECTOR OF HAPTC**

It was noted that Mrs Suzanne Hudson was due to retire on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005 after 17 years as Director of HAPTC. A letter had been received seeking contributions towards a presentation and inviting members to attend a reception to be held on 10<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm in Winchester.

The Town Clerk reported that Council funds could not be used to contribute to a retirement gift, however he suggested that the incoming Mayor could make a small contribution from the Mayor's Annual Allowance.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Town Clerk and up to two members be authorised to attend the reception for the Director of HAPTC on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2005.
- 2) That it be recommended to the incoming Mayor that a small contribution be made towards a retirement gift from the Mayor's Annual Allowance.

**F/3765****CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

The Town Clerk reported that he had now spoken to four companies about the provision of Christmas lights and asked for a Working Party to be established to consider the proposals put forward.

**RESOLVED:** That a Christmas Lights Working Party be established, comprising the Town Clerk, three members of the Council and up to three representatives from the Chamber of Trade.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the three Town Council members be Cllr Chard, Cllr Cracknell and one other to be selected at Full Council.

**F/3766****TOWN PLAN**

The Town Clerk reported that he had spoken to a Professor in the Sociology and Social Policy Research department at Southampton University who had two students who may be interested in working on a Town Plan for Ringwood. He suggested that a Working Party be established to interview potential candidates.

In light of the work that would be required, Cllr Chard proposed that the budget allocation for work on the Town Plan be increased from £10,000 to £20,000.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That a Working Party, comprising the Town Clerk and the three Committee Chairmen, be established to interview potential candidates to work on the Town Plan.
- 2) That the Town Plan budget be increased to £20,000.

**F/3767**  
**URGENT BUSINESS**

**i) Dr Little Gardens**

It was noted that the Committee had previously agreed the price for the purchase of part of Dr Little Gardens from the Highways Agency, subject to clawback provisions. The Town Clerk reported that he had now been informed that the Agency would require 50% of any increased value as a result of development of the land within 20 years of the date of sale.

**RESOLVED:** That the clawback amount of 50% be approved.

**F/3768**  
**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. (*Annex 'B'*).

**F/3769**  
**LAND AT LONG LANE**

The Town Clerk reported that, in order to establish a level playing area for football and rugby on part of the 10-acre field at Long Lane, the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee had accepted a quotation for work to be commenced immediately. The cost would be met from reserves, pending receipt of Developer's Contributions.

**RESOLVED:** That the action taken by the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee be approved.

**F/3770**  
**RINGWOOD FESTIVAL**

The Town Clerk reported that the Committee had previously agreed to spend £200 to obtain the copyright for the British Pedal Car Grand Prix. He had now looked into this further and had found out that the legal costs associated with this could be an additional £800, if not more. This information had been passed to the Festival Committee, which was in the process of considering whether or not to proceed.

**RESOLVED:** That this information be noted.

**F/3771**  
**OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

The Town Clerk reported that he had now obtained further information on the value and associated running costs of the Public Offices. Based on this information, it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) That the Council not proceed with the purchase of the Public Offices.
- 2) That the Council reserve judgement on discussion about future office facilities until work on the Town Plan has begun and public opinion about the future direction of the town is known.

**F/3772**  
**GROUNDSTAFF**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report on job descriptions and grading of groundstaff (Annex 'C'). The Town Clerk reported that the Groundsmen's job descriptions had been updated to more accurately reflect the roles undertaken, and these had been approved by the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee. The job descriptions had now been re-assessed and the proposed pay scales were discussed.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That no change be made in the salary scale of the Grounds Foreman.
- 2) That Groundstaff be paid on a scale incorporating spinal column points 12 to 17.
- 3) That the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to grant an additional increment where a member of the Groundstaff team has a specific responsibility over and above those carried out by other staff.

**F/3773**  
**TOWN CLERK AND DEPUTY TOWN CLERK**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report regarding a new national agreement on terms and conditions of employment and salaries for Clerks and others (*Annex 'D'*). It was noted that the agreement would give rise to an increase in salary for the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk and suggested that this should be phased in.

Cllr Chard suggested that Mr Townsend's salary should also be reviewed as the work he was doing was over and above that contained in the job description for the Finance Officer.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee meet with the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk and Mr Townsend to look at the report in detail and make recommendations to the next meeting of the Committee in May.
- 2) That Mr Townsend's job description and salary be reviewed to more accurately reflect his role within the Council.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.40pm.