

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 16th November 2005 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N G R Clarke
Cllr D E Cracknell
Cllr M F J Daly
Cllr N W Light
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan
Cllr B H Terry

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Ros Bowles, Project Officer
Cllr M H Thierry

The Chairman introduced Mrs Ros Bowles, who had taken up the position of Project Officer, and welcomed her to the Council.

F/3843 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Chambers and Cllr L C Ford.

F/3844 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Cracknell and Cllr Clarke declared a prejudicial interest in the grant application from Forest Forge Theatre Company, as they are both members of the Board. They left the room during discussion of this item.

Cllr Terry declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in the item relating to Town Council noticeboards.

F/3845 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 19th October 2005, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/3846 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members considered the Monthly Financial Reports (*Annex 'A'*). It was noted that the reports showed a marked underspend. However, the Town Clerk assured Members that the Council was on target to meet the original revised budget.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be approved.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be approved.
- 3) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 4) That the Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.

**F/3847
GRANT AID**

i) Forest Forge Theatre Company

Forest Forge Theatre Company had applied for a grant to support the running costs of providing a subsidised youth theatre for 100 young people and to contribute to the delivery of professional theatre performances and participatory workshops.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £500 be awarded to Forest Forge Theatre Company.

ii) New Forest Disability Information Service

New Forest Disability Information Service had applied for a grant to support its outreach service in Ringwood and its home visit service. Cllr Mrs Sullivan stated that she often referred Ringwood people to this service and that the outreach service was invaluable.

RESOLVED: That, under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £100 be awarded to New Forest Disability Information Service.

iii) Ringwood Rotary Club

Ringwood Rotary Club had applied for a grant towards its expenses relating to the annual Christmas Eve festivities held in the Market Place.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £150 be awarded to Ringwood Rotary Club.

**F/3848
FARMING AND WILDLIFE ADVISORY GROUP (FWAG)**

Members considered a request for a donation towards the county branch of FWAG, a national farming and conservation based charity. Cllr Light recommended that this request be not supported as the group was a Government quango, which had set up as a charity. In addition, there were five organisations offering a similar service to farmers.

RESOLVED: That no donation be made to Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

**F/3849
MARKET TOWN HEALTHCHECK / TOWN PLAN**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex 'B'*) and noted that, due to the importance of the Town Plan, it was recommended that a dedicated committee be set up to oversee this work. The Town Clerk added that members of this committee would be ambassadors of the town and must be prepared to devote time to the project. The Project Officer explained that there were four main subject areas – economy, environment, community and transport, and said that the Council may also wish to consider adding young people as a fifth subject. It would therefore be useful to have enough members on the committee so that each could lead on a separate area. Councillors Clarke, Terry, Light and Daly expressed an interest in being members of the new committee and it was noted that the Mayor and Deputy Mayor would be ex officio members.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the existing Town Plan Working Party be disbanded.
- 2) That a new Standing Committee entitled the Town Plan Co-ordinating Committee be established.
- 3) That Terms of Reference as outlined at Appendix 1 to Annex 'B' be adopted.

- 4) That the membership of the new Committee be the Mayor and Deputy Mayor plus four or five other Members.
- 5) That the new Committee be authorised to determine the frequency, dates and times of its meetings.
- 6) That the Terms of Reference of Policy and Finance Committee be amended by the deletion of the item relating to the preparation of the Town Plan.
- 7) That a Member of the Town Council be appointed Chairman of the Steering Group established with partner organisations in the town under item 2(a) of the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- 8) That the Town Council provide administrative support for the whole project.
- 9) That Officers be authorised to make application for grants to support the project.

F/3850

PROJECT OFFICER – IT EQUIPMENT

The Town Clerk reported that there was a need to purchase a new laptop and printer for the Project Officer, and there may also be a need for other equipment. It was noted that there were sufficient funds available in the Town Plan budget to cover these purchases.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be authorised to purchase any necessary equipment for the Project Officer.

F/3851

RINGWOOD FESTIVAL 2006

Members considered the Minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 31st October 2005 (*Annex 'C'*). Cllr Cracknell reported that plans were progressing well for the event and that it was hoped the Sealed Knot would be performing in the Market Square and on the Bickerley.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 31st October 2005 be approved.

F/3852

HEALTH & SAFETY

Members considered a draft Health & Safety Policy, circulated with the agenda, which would replace the current outdated document. This had been prepared on the advice of health and safety professionals and took account of all the new legislation that had come into force in recent years. It was noted that this Policy, and the risk assessments that were carried out earlier in the year, would be continuously reviewed to take account of any changes in work practices and new legislation. Following comments received from Cllr Clarke, the Deputy Town Clerk had updated the document to include references to the Council's responsibility to contractors and revise the section on Electricity at Work Regulations. Cllr Light said it was essential that all employees show their acceptance of the new Policy by way of a signature.

RECOMMENDED: That the Health and Safety Policy circulated with the agenda and as amended following discussions between Cllr Clarke and the Deputy Town Clerk, and now attached as Annex 'D', be adopted.

F/3853

TOWN COUNCIL NOTICEBOARDS

The Town Clerk referred to an approach he had received about Member surgeries and suggested that the contact details for Members currently displayed on the Council's official noticeboards should be updated to include times, including surgeries, at which Members

would prefer to be contacted. A copy of the notice currently displayed, with a suggested amendment to incorporate the additional information, was circulated at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the notice showing contact details for Members be amended to incorporate the information outlined by the Town Clerk.

**F/3854
CHRISTMAS CLOSURE**

The Town Clerk reported that the District Council would be closed on Monday 26th, Tuesday 27th and Wednesday 28th December; the Monday and Tuesday being Bank Holidays and Wednesday being a third extra statutory day. He said that Town Council employees had also been given this third statutory day in the past and, as most wished take leave during this week, he proposed that the office should be closed for the week commencing 26th December. However, he would ensure that the answerphone and post would be checked and the dog bins and litter bins in the cemetery would be emptied.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That employees be given Wednesday 28th December as a third statutory day.
- 2) That the office be closed for the week commencing 26th December.

**F/3855
HAMPSHIRE QUALITY PARISH ROADSHOW 2006**

The Town Clerk reported that, although the Council was not eligible to become a Quality Council at present due to the number of co-opted members, it would be financially advantageous to aspire to this in the future. He stated that HAPTC had organised a seminar on 8th February 2006 on this subject and felt that it would be useful for one Member to attend.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Daly be authorised to attend the Hampshire Quality Parish Roadshow on 8th February 2006 and his travel expenses be paid.

**F/3856
URGENT BUSINESS**

i) New Forest National Park

It was noted that a stakeholder meeting had been arranged to discuss emerging priorities for the New Forest National Park and that Cllr Clarke, as the Council's representative on the New Forest Consultative Panel, had received an invitation to this event, to be held on 7th December.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Clarke be authorised to attend the stakeholder meeting.

ii) Avon Valley Stakeholder Locality Meeting for Community Services Strategy

It was noted that the New Forest Primary Care Trust had arranged a meeting for 12.30pm on 15th December 2005, to be held at Fordingbridge Hospital. Cllr Clarke was unavailable on this date and it was hoped that Cllr Ford, as his deputy, would be able to attend.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Ford be authorised to attend the meeting.

iii) December Meeting of the Committee

The Town Clerk said that he would not be available to attend the next meeting of the Committee and proposed that the date be changed to Tuesday 13th December. It was noted that several Members would also have been unable to attend on 14th December.

RESOLVED: That the date of the next Policy & Finance Committee be changed to Tuesday 13th December, beginning at 7pm.

iv) New Forest Consultative Committee

Cllr Clarke informed members that the Chairman of the New Forest Consultative Committee was resigning and said that members had been asked to consider nominees for his replacement.

RESOLVED: That no member of the Town Council be nominated for Chairman of the New Forest Consultative Committee.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 7.43pm.