

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 19th April 2006 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr P Chambers (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr D E Cracknell
Cllr M F J Daly
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr N W Light
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan
Cllr B H Terry

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager
Cllr M H Thierry

F/3909 APOLOGIES

Apoloiges for absence were received from Cllr N G R Clarke.

F/3910 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

F/3911 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th March 2006, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/3912 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members considered the Monthly Financial Reports attached to these minutes as Annex 'A'.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 3) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 4) That the Inter Account Transfers be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 5) That the Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.
- 6) That the transfers to Provisions be agreed.

**F/3914
GRANT AID**

1) Friday Night Drop-In (Belindas)

Members agreed that this was a very useful facility and was well organised. It was noted that young people at Ringwood School had said they would prefer a drop-in facility than a youth club.

2) WRVS

It was noted that this application was from a national organisation and that there were other local organisations in the town offering a similar service.

3) Ringwood & Burley Band

Cllr Cracknell reported that he had attended the Band's AGM recently and said that they did a wonderful job and involved young people. He had been surprised by the high cost of instruments.

RESOLVED

- 1) That, under s137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £300 be awarded to the Friday Night Drop-In (Belindas) towards running costs and to purchase equipment.
- 2) That no grant be awarded to WRVS as it is the Council's policy to support local organisations.
- 3) That a grant of £300 be awarded to Ringwood & Burley Band to support the youth section of the band.

**F/3915
DELEGATIONS**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (Annex 'B'), which recommended improved operational arrangements in respect of delegations. This would enable actions to be delegated to individual members of staff and the Deputy Town Clerk to act on delegations to the Town Clerk in the event of his/her absence.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, where any power or function is delegated to any member of staff other than the Town Clerk, then that function may be exercised by either the Town Clerk or the Deputy Town Clerk.
- 2) That the Deputy Town Clerk be authorised to act on delegations to the Town Clerk, in the event of his/her absence.

**F/3916
TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE**

Members considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report (Annex 'C'). The Deputy Town Clerk informed members that, despite continued assurances from the District Council that they would work with the Town Council to develop its website, no progress had been made. She therefore recommended moving the Town Council's website away from the District Council template and creating a more dynamic and interactive site to better suit the Council's requirements and to improve communication with the public.

It was noted that the Deputy Town Clerk was speaking to the District Council about transferring the ringwood.gov.uk domain name into the Town Council's ownership to allow its continued use.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That TLC Online be appointed to build and update a new website for the Town Council.
- 2) That the Deputy Town Clerk, in consultation with the Website Working Party, be authorised to liaise with TLC Online to ensure that the Town Council's requirements are met.

F/3917

INDEMNITY FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Members considered the Town Clerks' report (Annex 'D'), which recommended the adoption of a policy of indemnity for Members and Officers.

Cllr Mrs Sullivan was concerned that, if the members and officer named in paragraph 1.5.c were involved in a particular case, they would need to be replaced. The Town Clerk assured members that, if this did occur, it would be standard practice for the Deputy Town Clerk to replace the Town Clerk and for this Committee to appoint alternative members.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Council adopt the Member/Officer Indemnity Policy attached to the report as Appendix A.
- 2) That the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, be delegated power to grant indemnities within the terms of the approved policy.

F/3918

STANDING ORDERS

The Town Clerk reported that he had been approached by several members with the suggestion that the Council's Standing Orders be amended to specify that members should sit at the table to take part in meetings. However, he did not believe that there was a need to amend the Standing Orders as they already allowed for the Chairman not to hear members if he or she believed that they were conducting themselves in a manner that would bring the Council into contempt or ridicule (SO 31).

RESOLVED: That there be no change to the Council's Standing Orders.

F/3919

POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS

Members considered a briefing sheet from the Hampshire Constabulary Western Operational Command Unit (Annex 'E'), which sought partnership funding for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) but gave no guarantee that the Council would get a number of PCSOs proportionate to the amount of funding put in. The Town Clerk said that the Police Authority would be given a government grant towards the policing of the town and questioned whether the Town Council should be contributing. It was also noted that the PCSOs would not be in post until 2008.

Members discussed the level of vandalism in the town and it was noted that a record was being kept of staff time and materials purchased in association with vandalism so that members would be aware how much it was costing the Council.

RESOLVED: That no provision be made for the funding of Police Community Support Officers at this time.

**F/3920
FESTIVAL 2006**

Members considered the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meetings held on 13th March and 10th April 2006 (Annex 'F'). It was noted that additional costs of approximately £1,000 would be incurred for road closures and St Johns Ambulance. It was further noted that the Peal of Bells planned for 8th July had been postponed until Trafalgar Day on 21st October.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meetings held on 13th March and 10th April 2006 be received and noted.

**F/3921
ADVERTISING BANNERS ON ROTARY PICNIC AREA FENCE**

The Town Clerk reported that new government legislation, the Clean Neighbourhood Act, gave the District Council the power to remove fly posting. This could lead to the Town Council allowing banners to stay up on the Rotary Picnic Area fence but the District Council coming along and removing them. He therefore recommended that the Town Council withdraw from controlling the display of banners on the Rotary Picnic Area fence, so that the District Council could carry out its statutory duty.

RESOLVED: That the Council withdraw from its agreement with the District Council to control the display of banners on the Rotary Picnic Area fence.

**F/3922
NEW FOREST FILM LOCATIONS**

The Town Clerk reported that the Council had been offered the opportunity to promote sites in the town to filmmakers, photographers and event organisers on a new website www.filmhampshire.org.uk at a cost of £80 per location. Members felt that there were no sites in the town that would stand out amongst many similar locations. However, Cllr Chambers suggested that the Tourism Group of the Chamber of Trade might be interested in pursuing this.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That no sites in the Town be put forward for inclusion on the Film Hampshire website.
- 2) That the information be passed to the Tourism Group of the Chamber of Trade for consideration.

**F/3923
URGENT BUSINESS**

i) Planning Application for Rear of Greenways

The Town Clerk reported that the District Council's Conservation Officer had recommended that the Council's outline application for a bungalow at the rear of Greenways be withdrawn and that a detailed application be submitted. It was noted that, although this permission had been renewed several times, the District Council's policy had now changed and outline applications in a Conservation Area were no longer considered acceptable. As the Council did not intend to build in the foreseeable future, the Town Clerk had spoken to the Head of Development Control who had agreed to review the case.

RESOLVED: That this information be noted.

ii) Town Centres Strategy Study

The Town Clerk reported that the District Council's consultants would be presenting their findings at a meeting at 5.30pm on 8th May at Appletree Court. It was noted that the Town Clerk, together with the Chairmen of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee and Town Plan Coordinating Committee would be attending, but that there were 3 additional spaces available.

RESOLVED: That any member wishing to attend the presentation on 8th May inform the Town Clerk.

F/3924

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 'G').

F/3925

COMMUNITY AWARDS 2006

Members considered nominations received for the 2006 Community Awards.

RESOLVED: Recipients of the awards were agreed.

F/3926

FINANCE MANAGER

Members discussed making permanent the Finance Manager's contract.

RESOLVED: That the Finance Manager's contract be made permanent for 14 hours a week with immediate effect.

F/3927

MOUNT PLEASANT LANE

It was noted that correspondence had been received from Mr Len Doyle of 9 Mount Pleasant Lane regarding the Council's claim to right of access over the Lane.

RESOLVED: That this matter be deferred to Full Council, pending advice from the Council's solicitors.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25pm.