

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 19th July 2006 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr P Chambers (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N G R Clarke
Cllr D E Cracknell
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

F/3959 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr M F J Daly and Cllr L C Ford.

F/3960 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

F/3961 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 24th May and 21st June 2006, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/3962 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

The Finance Manager reported that expenditure to date was close to the profile budget. He explained that the Provisions would need to be reviewed later in the year to establish whether there was still a need to retain all of these or whether some funds could be brought back into the general reserve. It was noted that the Council would soon receive £5500 less fees for the sale of the fishing rights, and it was suggested that this income should be set aside as a Provision for recreation facilities.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Chard signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Chambers and Chard 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 Chard signed the report.
- 5) That the Finance Manager's report and Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.

- 6) That a new Provision for recreation facilities be created and the income from the sale of the fishing rights be allocated to this fund.

F/3963

RISK ASSESSMENT 2005/06

The Finance Manager presented the Risk Assessments of Financial Systems' Controls in 2005/06 (*Annex 'B'*). Cllr Mrs Sullivan felt that there should be some reference to the fact that payments are made by cheque. The Finance Manager agreed to include a section on cheque payments in future risk assessments.

RESOLVED: That all actions taken by the Town Clerk and Finance Manager in the preparation of the Risk Assessments of Finance Systems' Controls in 2005/06, as shown at Annex 'B', be approved.

F/3964

FAIR TRADE

The Town Clerk reported that Alice Blincoe, a student from Ringwood School who had recently spent two weeks with the Council on work experience, had prepared the Council's submission for the town to receive accreditation as a Fair Trade town.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That, in recognition of the need to support disadvantaged farmers and workers in developing countries, the Council now formally signifies its support for Fairtrade and agrees to serve Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar at its offices and meetings.
- 2) That the Working Party comprising councillors, students of Ringwood School and other interested organisations and persons established to steer this project be retained to ensure the continued commitment to Fairtrade.
- 3) That the directory of organisations supplying Fairtrade products to be prepared by Ringwood School be also included on the Town Council website.
- 4) That, once accreditation is received, additional publicity including further Fairtrade display literature be prepared and distributed.

F/3965

WALL BETWEEN CEMETERY AND RINGWOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL

Members considered a recommendation from the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee that that a supplementary budget of £2,100 be approved for essential repairs to the wall between the Cemetery and Ringwood Junior School.

RESOLVED: That a supplementary budget of £2,100 be approved for repairs to the wall between the Cemetery and Ringwood Junior School.

F/3966

CLLR TERRY SCRIVEN

The Town Clerk reported that Colonel Terry Scriven had been elected to the Town Council unopposed. He had now signed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office and it was noted that he wished to serve on the Planning, Town & Environment Committee.

RECOMMENDED: That Cllr Scriven be appointed to the Planning, Town & Environment Committee.

F/3967

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Members considered the notes of the Christmas Lights Working Party held on 18th July 2006 (*Annex 'C'*). Cllr Chard reported that the Chamber could now only guarantee a contribution of £500 towards this year's Christmas lights instead of the £2500 when the partnership arrangements were introduced. This meant that virtually the whole burden of providing Christmas lights would fall on the Town Council. Cllr Cracknell felt that this was very disappointing, particularly as one of the aims of the Christmas lights was to bring more people into the town to the benefit of the traders. This year, the Council hoped to improve the lights in the Market Place and introduce some colour into the illuminations. However, the Town Council has significantly increased its expenditure from only £1100 to over £10,000 per annum over the past two years. This had been agreed on the basis of the partnership with the Chamber. It provided for the Town Council to install and fund all of the new infrastructures of electricity supplies, cabling, festoons and cross street displays together with the annual erection, dismantling and storage of the lights. Members indicated that it would not be appropriate for the Town Council to provide additional funding for further displays or the provision of trees and lights for individual shop premises, as the budget was largely committed to infrastructure and the erection and dismantling of lights. It was noted that the projected spend for 2006/07 would be approximately £11,000 and that ongoing annual maintenance costs could be in the order of £6,000.

It was noted that at the Working Party the Chamber had enquired whether a final decision on its contribution could be made later in the year. The Town Council advised that in view of timescales it was necessary for orders to be placed for work as quickly as possible and at the time of placing orders suppliers needed to be assured that funds were in place to meet costs. He advised therefore that the Council should only commit expenditure for which there were funds currently available.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine felt that the Market would benefit from the installation of Christmas Lights in the area and asked if the Market operator could be approached for a contribution. It was suggested that the Chamber of Trade & Commerce should be asked to make an approach.

It was noted that the Working Party had suggested that the lights would be switched on on 1st December 2006 on the same night as the reindeer parade but without any formal ceremony. However, Members felt that there should be an official switching on ceremony.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the notes of the Christmas Lights Working Party meeting held on 18th July, attached as *Annex 'C'*, including recommendations at 5 (a) to (p), but with the exception of item 6, on which a decision would be made at the Committee's meeting in September be approved.
- 2) That the Council's expenditure in 2006 on Christmas lights be limited to those items of the Working Party's recommendations referred to at 1) above which can be met within the approved budget; and
- 3) That bearing in mind the partnership arrangement entered into between the Town Council and the Chamber of Trade & Commerce for the benefit of the town the Council expresses its disappointment at the modest contribution that the Chamber now proposes to make for Christmas lights in 2006.

F/3968

SOCIETY OF LOCAL COUNCIL CLERKS – NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The Town Clerk reported that the SLCC's National Conference would be held between 20th and 22nd October 2006 in Plymouth and would focus on 'Facing the Future'.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's attendance at the SLCC National Conference be approved.

F/3969
FESTIVAL 2006

Members considered the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 19th June and 4th July 2006 (Annex 'D').

Cllr Cracknell reported that the Festival had been hugely successful, the Sealed Knot had been brilliant, the Band of the Brigade of Gurkhas concert had been a sell-out and the Pedal Car Grand Prix was the best ever. It was noted that the event would not have happened without the work done by Mrs Wickens, who had been brilliant.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meetings held on 19th June and 4th July be received and noted.

F/3970
URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.12pm.