

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of public present.

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

Held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006 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 L C Ford  
Cllr Mrs V A Sullivan  
Cllr B H Terry

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Terry Simpson, Town Clerk  
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager

### **F/3971 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Chambers and Cllr N W Light.

### **F/3972 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

### **F/3973 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2006, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

### **F/3974 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS**

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

The Finance Manager explained that the list of payments was larger than usual since it covered a period of two months. The profile budget showed an apparent underspend against budget but this was mainly due to an additional month's rent being received from Med Centres for use of Carvers for the temporary Health Centre. In response to an enquiry from Cllr Mrs Sullivan, the Finance Manager indicated that he would provide members of the Committee with details of the payment shown in the accounts in favour of SITA.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Rippon-Swaine and Chard signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Rippon-Swaine 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 Rippon-Swaine and Chard signed the report.
- 5) That the Finance Manager's report and Summary Budget Reports, including the re-phasing of expenditure to bring forward into 2006/07 the capital expenditure of £9,000 for the Ringwood Junior School pavilion and rugby pitches scheme, be approved.

**F/3975  
GRANT AID**

Members considered applications for grant aid.

It was reported that the King's Church was proposing to acquire a metal storage facility for its equipment to avoid future instances of fire damage.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That £500 be awarded to King's Church towards the cost of replacing their shed, PA and recording equipment and lectern damaged by fire, subject to
  - a) written evidence being provided showing that insurance cover was in place in respect of the new storage building and its contents, and
  - b) written confirmation being provided that any planning or other consents required for the new building had been obtained.
- 2) That £100 be awarded to New Forest Disability Information Service towards the provision of an outreach service in Ringwood.

**F/3976  
RINGWOOD FESTIVAL**

Members considered the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2006 (*Annex 'B'*). The Mayor reported that this had been the most successful Festival ever held in the town and was a testament to everyone involved, and he wished to offer his congratulations to all the volunteers who took part in the event.

Members also considered the Finance Manager's report on the financial position of the Festival (*Annex 'C'*) and were pleased to note that it had been possible to hold such a successful event at a net cost to the Council of less than £2,000, even after payment of two grant donations.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> August be received and approved.
- 2) That the final financial position for the Festival 2006 be approved.
- 3) That a virement of £1,800 from the Festival 2006 budget to the S.137 grants budget be approved.
- 4) That the donations of £1,000 to each of the Youth Cancer Trust and Tenovus be approved under the S.137 grants budget.

**F/3977  
NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

Members considered the District Council's Draft Procurement Strategy (*Annex 'D'*).

**RESOLVED:** That the principles contained within the draft strategy be supported and the District Council be advised that the Town Council hopes that arrangements will be made to allow Town and Parish Councils to benefit from the strategy, perhaps on a call off basis.

**F/3978  
MEMBERS TRAINING**

The Town Clerk reported that Hampshire Association of Town & Parish Councils had launched a new core training course entitled "Core Skills for Councillors", which would include modules on roles and responsibilities, powers and duties, management and meetings and the council and the community. The cost per delegate would be £25.

Members noted that since there would be Town Council elections in May 2007, it would be more appropriate to make adequate provision in the budget to ensure that all members are offered full training opportunities after those elections

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That no members be invited attend the core training course.
- 2) That adequate provision be made in the draft budget for 2007/08 for members training.

**F/3979**

**HAMPSHIRE ASSOCIATION OF PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS (HAPTC) AGM**

Members considered three resolutions to be put to the HAPTC AGM on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006, numbered 2, 3 and 4 on the Association's agenda paper.

2) "That this Assembly joins with Hampshire County Council and other groups to question the authority of SEERA to act for the people of the region. SEERA has no mandate by the people of the region. It is unelected, unaccountable and should be disbanded." Proposed by Binsted PC, Seconded by Four Marks PC.

3) "That this Assembly is concerned that the problems of double taxation remains an unresolved issue in many areas and urges Districts across Hampshire to work with District Associations to achieve resolution." Proposed by Old Basing & Lychpit PC, Seconded by St Mary Bourne PC.

4) "That this Assembly calls upon NALC to seek assurance from Government that despite the encouragement towards online banking, bill paying and service provision, the future viability of rural Post Offices as village hubs will be assured." Proposed by Kingsclere PC, Seconded by Tadley TC.

**RESOLVED:** That proposals numbered 2 and 4 be supported and proposal number 3 be not supported by the Council's delegate.

**F/3980**

**COMMUNITY FIRST, NEW FOREST AGM**

The Town Clerk reported that an invitation had been received from Community First, New Forest for a representative of the Council to attend its AGM on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2006 in Lyndhurst. It was noted that Cllr Clarke would be attending in his capacity as a County Councillor.

**RESOLVED:** That, in view of Cllr Clarke's attendance, it was not necessary for further members to be appointed.

**F/3981**

**URGENT BUSINESS**

Town Centre Strategy Study

Members considered a recommendation from the Planning, Town & Environment Committee, as follows:

- 1) *That the Council supports policies that sustain and enhance the unique nature of the market town that is Ringwood.*
- 2) *That, in delivering these policies, the District Council must work in full and open partnership with the Town Council.*
- 3) *That the documents be brought to the attention of all the Town Plan Focus Groups.*

The Town Clerk reminded members that government advice clearly stated that local planning authorities should take a proactive role to preserve and enhance the vitality of town centres. He suggested that it would be appropriate to amend recommendation 1 to reflect the local planning authority's role, whilst ensuring that the character of the town centre is not adversely affected. Following discussion, the committee

**RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) That the District Council be recommended to make sure that its adopted planning policies for Ringwood town centre reflect the government advice to maintain the vitality of the town, and that it takes a proactive approach to achieve that vitality whilst ensuring that the policies sustain and enhance the unique nature of the market town that is Ringwood.
- 2) That, in delivering these policies, the District Council must work in full and open partnership with the Town Council.
- 3) That the documents be brought to the attention of all the Town Plan Focus Groups.

**F/3982**

**NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS**

The Town Clerk reported that a number of the larger local councils had expressed concern about the ability of the Association to fully represent the views of local councils in the district. This was largely due to the fact that it had insufficient and under funded administrative support. At a meeting of larger local authorities the previous week, it had been suggested that the Association should carry out a fundamental review and report back to constituent authorities on arrangements which would ensure that it is an effective representative body of all local councils in the district. If members supported a review, it would be necessary to arrange for an appropriate item to be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Association.

**RESOLVED:** That the New Forest Association of Local Councils be requested to carry out a fundamental review of its organisation and explain, with examples, to member councils how it is meeting the five primary objectives set out in its new Constitution; and if it is unable to meet its five objectives make proposals on a way forward to provide an effective representative body for all Town and Parish Councils within New Forest District.

**F/3983**

**CCTV**

The Town Clerk advised members that he had noticed an article in the local press which suggested that the District Council was carrying out a fundamental review of CCTV provision. He was concerned that, in view of the Town Council's partnership arrangements with the District Council, no notice of the review had been received.

Cllr Ford explained that she had attended a District Council Crime and Disorder Review Panel the previous evening when the report had been discussed. She had expressed her concerns on behalf of the Town Council and had made particular reference to the need to look at reducing costs by a review of manning levels at quiet times and the number of hours that staff were on duty. Whilst there had been comment about the usefulness of CCTV, she believed it had a much wider role to play in regard to community safety and wellbeing. She was convinced that the public felt safer in areas where CCTV was in operation and quoted examples within Ringwood where CCTV had also been used to bring assistance to people who had fallen over or been taken ill.

It had been noted at the meeting that the heaviest user of the CCTV facility was in fact Hampshire Constabulary who made no financial contribution to the service. The District Council's Review Panel had therefore agreed to seek a contribution from the Police towards revenue costs.

Cllr Ford indicated that she had obtained support from other members of the Review Panel to a proposal that Town Councils who contribute to the CCTV costs should be involved in any review of the service.

Members noted that some two years previously the Town Council had also suggested to the District Council that manning levels and hours of operation of the control centre should be reviewed in order to reduce costs. It was disappointing that this proposal was only now being looked at as a result of an audit report.

**RESOLVED:** That the views expressed by Cllr Ford at the District Council's Review Panel be supported and the District Council be requested to fully involve the Town Council in any discussions about the future of CCTV in the town.

**F/3984**

**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 'E'*).

**F/3985**

**LAND AT LONG LANE**

The Town Clerk advised members of discussions between the District Valuer and the land owners in respect to the purchase of land for development as a sports facility at Long Lane. Negotiations were in the early stages and further reports would be made to members during the process.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be received and approved.

**F/3986**

**RINGWOOD'S FUTURE LEAFLET**

Members received a report from the Project Officer regarding the distribution of the Ringwood's Future leaflet (*Annex 'F'*).

**RESOLVED:** That officers continue to seek compensation from the contractor for non delivery of the Ringwood's Future leaflet.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.21pm.