

OPEN SESSION: There was one member of public present (see attached notes).

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 30th May 2007 at 7.05pm

Apologies

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr D E Cracknell Cllr M F J Daly.

Declarations of Interest

There were none.

PRESENT: Cllr J D Heron (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr B H Terry

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

With the agreement of the Committee, item 4 was taken next for the benefit of the member of public present.

F/4107

RINGWOOD MEETING HOUSE ASSOCIATION

The Town Clerk reported that this Committee had previously agreed to make a one-off contribution of £2,500 to the Meeting House Association towards the restoration of the Meeting House. It was noted that the bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had not been successful, however a further bid would be submitted in early 2008 when all the issues raised by the HLF had been addressed.

Following comments made by the Chairman of the Trustees in the Open Session, Members noted that if the Council's contribution was released, it would be held by the Meeting House Association as restricted funds and would only be used for structural work.

It was noted that New Forest District Council had appointed a Member to serve as a "quasi" trustee of the Association and the same invitation had been extended to the Town Council.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the one-off contribution of £2,500 be released to Ringwood Meeting House Association, to be held in the Association's restricted funds account for structural work to the building.
- 2) That the invitation to appoint a "quasi" trustee to the Ringwood Meeting House Association be considered at the next meeting of the Full Council.

F/4108

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 18th April and 16th May 2007, having been previously circulated, be agreed and signed as a correct record.

F/4109
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 Heron and Chard signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Chard signed the report.
- 3) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 4) That the Inter Account Transfer be authorised. Cllr Heron and Chard signed the report.

F/4110
LLOYDS TSB BANK ACCOUNTS SIGNATORIES

The Finance Manager reported that, following the elections held on 3rd May 2007, it was necessary to make changes to the list of authorised signatories for the Council's bank accounts. The changes would have the effect that all members of the Policy & Finance Committee would be authorised signatories for the Council's bank accounts

RESOLVED:

- 1) That former Councillors N W Light, P Chambers and Mrs V A Sullivan be deleted from the authorised bank signatories list.
- 2) That Councillor J D Heron be added to the list of authorised bank signatories.

F/4111
GRANT AID

Members considered applications for grant aid.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, under Section 145, £75 be awarded to Salterns Playscheme towards the cost of running a summer playscheme for children with special needs.
- 2) That, under Section 145, £200 be awarded to U-Nite Club towards running costs of the Club.
- 3) That, under Section 145, £100 be awarded to New Forest Disability Information Service towards the provision of an outreach service in Ringwood.

F/4112
FINANCIAL REFERENCES FROM COMMITTEES

The Town Clerk reported that Ringwood School had recently installed CCTV cameras and could see evidence of people in the area of the Council's pavilion, but could not clearly identify individuals. As there had recently been several incidents of vandalism to the pavilion, it was recommended that improved lighting would enhance the view and therefore give an element of protection to the Council's property.

Members noted that Ringwood Lawn Tennis Club had folded and that the Town Council had taken back the land. It was noted that, at the point of closure, the Club owed the Council £790 for work carried out in the 2006/07 season plus an estimated £340 for works in 2007/08, although an invoice for this amount had not yet been raised. Members agreed that the Club should be advised of the full amount owed and payment be requested. It was also agreed to request a financial position statement from the Club.

The Town Clerk advised that he had been approached by a professional tennis coach regarding the possibility of taking a franchise for the grass and hard courts. Although the Council currently had an arrangement with Ringwood Recreation Centre to hire out the hard courts, the income from this was particularly low at approximately £400 per annum. Members agreed that it would be a great benefit to the town to bring both the grass and hard courts back into full public use. It was noted that the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee had agreed to seek quotes for the removal of the tennis pavilion. However, it was agreed that, whilst there was a possibility that the courts may be brought back into use, the pavilion should be left in place.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That a supplementary budget of £1,000 be approved for the installation of movement sensitive lighting to protect the Council's pavilion.
- 2) That an invoice be sent to the Ringwood Lawn Tennis Club for the full amount owing for the 2006/07 season and that part of the 2007/08 season up to the closure date of the Club.
- 3) That the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of this Committee and the Chairman of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, be authorised to discuss bringing the tennis courts back into use with interested parties.
- 4) That, following those discussions, the issue be referred back to the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee for further consideration.

F/4113

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex 'B'*), which recommended changes to the Council's Standing Orders as to Meetings to allow members of the public to speak on specific agenda items during Committee meetings.

RECOMMENDED: That the procedure for public participation at meetings, as set out in Appendix 1 to Annex 'B', be adopted by the Council for implementation on and from 2nd July 2007.

F/4114

STUDENT ADVISORS

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex 'C'*), which recommended that young people be invited to attend Committee meetings as specialist advisors, to enable them to become more involved in the decision-making process and allow Members to hear their views.

RECOMMENDED: That Cllr Heron and Cllr Ford be appointed to meet with the Town Clerk and the Headteacher of Ringwood School to discuss the possible appointment of young people advisors to each of the Council's Committees.

F/4115

MEMBERS TRAINING

The Town Clerk reported that Hampshire Association of Parish and Town Councils had arranged several dates for core training for councillors

RESOLVED: That the information be noted and any Members interested contact the Town Clerk.

F/4116**POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH WEST CORNER OF THE FURLONG CAR PARK**

Cllr Heron reported that the District Council had now identified the area of land under consideration and the feasibility and costs involved in delivering each of the four different options. The next stage would be public consultation and, although the format had yet to be determined, this would be led by the District Council with the involvement of the Town Council.

The Town Clerk added that it had previously been agreed to carry out the consultation through the Town Plan. This had now changed but the Town Council would be closely involved in the process. The public would be consulted on all four options and would be given sufficient information to make an informed judgement. Details would be included in the next edition of the Town Council newsletter.

RESOLVED: That the information be noted.

F/4117**SIGNAGE PROJECT GROUP**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the Signage Project Group was currently working on a project to erect five map boards in the Furlong Car Park adjacent to the parking meters, the cost for which could be achieved within the Planning, Town & Environment Committee's budget for signage. It was also hoped that the District Council would contribute to this project. Members viewed the first draft of the map board and noted that several changes had been identified to bring the design more in keeping with the character of the town.

RESOLVED: That the Planning, Town & Environment Committee be authorised to agree the final design of the map board, on recommendation from the Signage Project Group.

F/4118**RINGWOOD FESTIVAL**

Members considered the minutes of Ringwood Festival Steering Committee meetings held on 8th and 14th May 2007 (*Annex 'D'*).

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

F/4119**TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER**

The Town Clerk reported that delivery of the Council newsletter had so far been arranged on an ad hoc basis. However, as the newsletter would now be produced four times a year, he recommended that the Council should now look to enter into a contract for a one or two year period. There were several options for delivery, which included buying space in one of the local newspapers or direct delivery by the Post Office or a specialist delivery company. As all options had pros and cons, it was agreed to invite all types of suppliers to tender for a two year period.

RESOLVED: That local newspapers, the Post Office and specialist delivery companies be invited to tender for distribution of the Council's newsletter four times a year for a two year period.

F/4120
PUBLIC NOTICE BOARDS

The Town Clerk reported that the Council had erected a noticeboard on the corner of Meeting House Lane and Mansfield Road for use by all organisations in the town to publicise their events, and that Ringwood Gardening Club had made a contribution to the cost. However, the Club had now organised a petition to request a new larger and lockable noticeboard, the contents of which could be better controlled.

As there was no budget for new noticeboards in the current financial year, it was agreed that the proposal be considered as part of the 2008/09 budgetary process.

RESOLVED: That the request for a new public noticeboard be considered as part of the 2008/09 budgetary process.

F/4121
DISTRIBUTION OF CORRESPONDENCE BY EMAIL

The Town Clerk reported that, for those members without an email facility, paper copies of all non-urgent correspondence would be sent out in the weekly envelope on a Thursday, but that any urgent correspondence would be sent by first class mail on the same day as the information was sent by email.

RESOLVED: That this information be noted.

F/4122
NALC CONFERENCE

Members noted the agenda for the NALC Conference to be held in Bournemouth from 5th to 7th October 2007, and considered whether to submit any topical motions for debate.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Mayor and Mayoress be appointed to attend the NALC Conference for one day only.
- 2) That no motions be submitted for debate at the Conference.

F/4123
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw. (*Annex 'E'*)

F/4124
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NALC)

Members considered correspondence from the Hampshire Association of Town and Parish Councils (HAPTC) regarding the role of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) in representation of the sector and service provision. It was noted that HAPTC and a growing number of county associations were dissatisfied with the service offered by NALC and were pressing for the Association to better represent the sector.

RESOLVED: That the views of HAPTC be supported.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.35pm.