

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of the public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 16 July 2008 at 7.00pm

Apologies

There were no apologies for absence.

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Woodfield declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Ice Rink on the Bickerley see *F4302 below*.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Claire Perrons, Meetings Administrator
Cllr A Wiseman

F/4294

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 June 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

F/4295

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members considered the Monthly Financial Reports and a Report regarding authorisation of bank signatories and business credit card attached to these minutes as *Annex 'A'*. The Town Clerk provided details of two 'test' items of expenditure, which had been chosen at random by the Chairman.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 3) That the Statement of Town Council Balances be received and noted.
- 4) That the Inter Account Transfer be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Rippon-Swaine signed the report.
- 5) That the Finance Manager's report and Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.
- 6) That Cllr Woodfield and Cllr Urwin be added to the list of authorised bank signatories to replace Councillors M Daly and D Cracknell.
- 7) That the Town Clerk be authorised to obtain and operate a business credit card, with a limit of £1,000.

F/4296

RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members considered the minutes of a meeting of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee (*Annex 'B'*).

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 30 June and the proposals therein be approved.

**F/4297
GRANT AID**

Applications for grant aid were considered from Cruse Bereavement Care (South Hampshire Branch) and Greyfriars - Ringwood & District Community Association (Ebenezer Hall Appeal 2008). After discussion, it was concluded that the Cruse application had not demonstrated enough local benefit to residents of Ringwood for members to judge that a grant would be appropriate. However, the Greyfriars Ebenezer Hall Appeal was felt to offer benefits to a substantial sector of the Ringwood community directly.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That no grant be approved for Cruse Bereavement Care (South Hampshire Branch); and
- 2) That, under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £5,000 be made, in two instalments, to Greyfriars Ebenezer Hall Appeal 2008; £2,000 to be paid this year and £3,000 to be paid in 2009/2010 financial year, with at least part of that grant being funded from the grant budget.

**F/4298
NEW FOREST ACCESS WORKSHOP**

Members considered an invitation to a New Forest Access Forum workshop which 'aims to seek creative and local solutions to improvement of access to the countryside in the New Forest', to be held on 17 September 2008, 10am-3.15pm, at Brockenhurst Village Hall.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Ford be authorised to attend the New Forest Access Forum workshop on 17 September 2008 and her reasonable travel expenses be reimbursed.

**F/4299
COMMUNITY PLANS AND HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Members considered a report from the Town Clerk regarding an invitation to take part in a pilot study during the autumn to facilitate County involvement in local community planning (*attached as Annex 'C'*). Members noted that the process recommended by the District and County Councils for preparing Community Plans undermined the democratic mandate and gave unelected quangos power to define the future of areas. These bodies had no democratic authority and it was this structure that caused the problems which the Community Planning Officer was seeking to overcome. Rather than establish further meetings to deal with the problem, the District Council should reconsider the structures it proposed for preparing Town and Village Plans so as to provide maintenance of a democratic mandate that ensures that the views of all sections of the community are sought and taken into account. This would meet the overriding objective set out in the Government guidelines for preparation of the Plans.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Clerk's Report on Community Planning be supported; and
- 2) That the Town Clerk respond directly to the Chief Executive of New Forest District Council to the effect that whilst the Town Council is prepared to take part in a pilot study, it has serious reservations about the existing advice on the process recommended for developing a Town or Parish Plan and recommends that the District Council should reconsider its advice with a view to adopting new guidelines that enhances the democratic mandate in this process.

**F/4300
TOWN PLAN DISTRIBUTION**

Members considered whether to authorise distribution of free copies of the Town Plan (price: £10 each).

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be authorised to distribute free copies of the Town Plan to persons considered to be assisting implementation of the Plan.

**F/4301
FOLLY FARM**

On 2 July 2008 a number of members and staff had made a site visit to Folly Farm and received professional advice that improvements could be made to the site and public access encouraged. Members considered the recommendation of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee (OS/5011), following the site visit, that funding be made available for a full assessment of land at Folly Farm to be carried out in order to determine how the woodland could be managed in the future, prior to the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee giving further consideration to the future of the site.

Members raised concerns about the viability of the site as a recreational facility as it is outside the Town's area, and the ongoing costs with regard to health and safety, public liability insurance and tree maintenance. The general consensus was that it was not justified to expend additional funds on a further professional assessment and that it would be preferable to sell the site.

RECOMMENDED: That the recommendation of Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee (OS/5011) be referred to Full Council for decision on 30 July 2008.

**F/4302
ICE RINK ON BICKERLEY**

Cllr Woodfield declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the Ice Rink, due to her connection with the organizers.

Cllr Woodfield made a statement explaining the various options for the Ice Rink. Costings for either a 'real' ice or plastic ice rink were not yet available, but the hire company Marshall's considered that Ringwood was too small to justify a real ice rink (unlikely to make a profit). However, plastic ice rinks, although cheaper, were not as popular and likely to suffer from competition from real ice rinks at Bournemouth, Southampton and Winchester.

Cllr Woodfield left the room whilst members discussed this item.

Members were very supportive of the concept, but felt that the Ice Rink would be a high risk venture for the organizers. There was concern about the impact on the grounds of Bickerley Common and on local residents if the Ice Rink was there for six weeks.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That consent be given for either a plastic or real ice rink, and, *as minute F/4284 of 18 June meeting*, 'subject to the provision of the relevant entertainment licence, adequate provision to safeguard against noise nuisance from generators and adequate public liability insurance being obtained';
- 2) That permission be given for a maximum of three weeks;
- 3) That a charge, subject to sight of costings and expected profits, be made for use of Bickerley Common;
- 4) That the users undertake to fund the costs of any remedial works required to the grounds once the project had finished.

Cllr Woodfield rejoined the meeting.

**F/4303
AWARDS FOR COUNCILLORS AND CLERKS**

An oral report was received from the Town Clerk on New Forest Association of Local Councils' proposals for the New Forest District Council to provide awards for outstanding achievement.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's report be noted.

F/4304

THE JUBILEE LAMP, MARKET PLACE

Members reviewed existing plans to repaint and repair the Lamp (agreed budget provision £750) and considered instead seeking Heritage Lottery funding for a full renovation including restoring the original Victorian drinking fountain at the base, to modern standards. There was general support for the idea of seeking to restore the Jubilee Lamp. Cllr Clarke voiced concerns about the pitfalls of attempting to provide fountain water in terms of health and safety and ongoing maintenance costs. Whilst accepting that comment, members believed that a full refurbishment scheme should be investigated, noting that modern health constraints may restrict the extent of the works that can be carried out.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That investigations be undertaken into a possible full restoration scheme for the Jubilee Lamp;
- 2) That a further report be brought to committee as the investigations proceed; and
- 3) That the work proposed for the current year be deferred pending these new investigations.

F/4305

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 'D' attached*).

F/4306

MEMBER OF STAFF SALARY REVIEW

Members considered the Town Clerk's report on the review of a staff member's salary.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation in the report be approved.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.07pm.