

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

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on Wednesday 19 March 2008 at 7.00pm

Apologies

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

Declarations of Interest

Cllr Ford declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application for a grant by Ringwood and Fordingbridge Talking News, as she is a member of their Executive Committee.

Cllr Heron also declared a personal interest in this item.

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

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk
Rachel Giles, Student Adviser
James Fullick, Student Adviser
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator

F/4233

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2008 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

F/4234

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 Ford signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Heron and Ford 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 Ford signed the report.
- 5) That the Finance Manager's report and Summary Budget Reports be received and noted, (subject to sight of Appendix 2 - to be circulated).

F/4235

GRANT AID

Applications for grant aid were considered from New Forest North Citizens Advice Bureau, Ringwood & Fordingbridge Talking News and Hampshire Constabulary "Walk of Art".

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £750 be made to Forest North Citizens Advice Bureau. The response to CAB should note the Council's concerns regarding their reliance on a limited income stream (ie Council grants) and include a recommendation that they develop other fundraising/revenue streams.
- 2) That, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £150 be made to Ringwood & Fordingbridge Talking News. Cllr Ford left the room whilst this was debated, having declared a personal and prejudicial interest.
- 3) That, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £300 be made for Hampshire Constabulary "Walk of Art". A protective coating could be applied to safeguard the artwork.

F/4236

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Town Clerk reported that the independent remuneration panel had recommended a 4.3% increase which would increase the annual basic allowance from £637 to £666.

RESOLVED: That the annual basic allowance be increased from £637 to £666 with effect from 1 April 2008.

F/4237

CARVERS RECREATION GROUND – DROP IN CENTRE

The Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee made a recommendation that the conditional grant from the New Forest Community Safety Partnership in the sum of £2,500 be not accepted (*Minute OS/4981*).

The Chairman noted that members were pleased to hear from the Town Clerk of recent communication with District Cllr Goff Beck who is looking to correct what he perceives to be an error in the offer and, whilst the Community Safety Partnership wished to encourage the opening of the Drop In on a second evening, it had not been intended to make this a condition of the grant.

RESOLVED: That the grant be accepted if the condition that the Centre open two days per week is deleted.

F/4238

TOWN PLAN

Members considered a recommendation from a Meeting of the Town Plan Co-ordinating Committee held on 17th March. It was noted that there were insufficient funds available in the current year's budget for the printing and launch of the Town Plan, but that an amount was held in Provisions specifically for this purpose.

RESOLVED:

1. That the total funds to be allocated for printing, publication and launch of the Town Plan be set at £7,500 and that the current year's budget be increased by use of funds from the Provisions for this purpose.

F/4239

RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members considered the Minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 10 March 2008. (*Annex 'B'*)

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Festival Steering Committee meeting held on 10 March 2008 be received and the proposals therein be approved.

F/4240

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

It was noted that two members were unable to attend the new proposed Policy & Finance schedule (second Wednesday of each month).

RESOLVED: That the Schedule of Meetings, (*Annex 'C'*), which provides for Policy & Finance Committee Meetings to be held on the third Wednesday of the month, be approved.

**F/4241
ELECTION**

The Town Clerk reported that an election would be held on 8 May to fill the vacancy in Ringwood South Ward.

RESOLVED: That the election date be noted.

**F/4242
WORKING PARTIES**

The need to increase membership of the Fair Trade and Christmas Lights Working Parties was discussed.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Mrs Wiseman be appointed to the Fair Trade Working Party and Cllr Heron to the Christmas Lights Working Party.

**F/4243
PETITION TO 'SAVE PARISH COUNCILS'**

Members considered a request from a Parish Councillor in Cambridgeshire to support a petition for a reduction in bureaucracy and paperwork for small parishes.

RESOLVED: That the request be supported.

**F/4244
DRIVING AND MOBILE PHONES POLICY**

Members considered a draft policy for Driving and Mobile Phones.

RESOLVED: That the policy be adopted subject to deletion of any reference to 'hand held' in reference to 'mobile phone' as it should refer to any mobile phone including 'hands free' and 'head set'.
(*Approved Policy attached as Annex 'D'*)

**F/4245
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 instructed to withdraw. (*Annex 'E'*)

**F/4246
MOUNT PLEASANT LANE**

The Committee received further advice from its legal advisors on arrangements to settle this dispute.

RESOLVED: That this information be noted.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 7.55pm.