

OPEN SESSION: There was one member of the public present.

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on 16th December 2009 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr J D Heron (Chairman)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr B H Terry
Cllr B Woodifield

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator

F/4503 APOLOGIES

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Urwin, Cllr Rippon-Swaine and Simon Hookins, Student Advisor.

F/4504 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Town Mayor, Cllr Ford, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in F/4518 - Twinning, as a close colleague and friend of the person in question. Cllr Ford made a statement and left the Meeting at 8.50pm, taking no part in the debate or decision made.

Cllr Clarke declared a personal interest in F/4518 - Twinning as he is Chairman of the Ringwood Twinning Association.

F/4505 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2009, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

F/4506 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members considered the Monthly Financial Reports attached to these minutes as *Annex 'A'*. It was confirmed that full details of all invoices were available for Members' inspection.

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. Cllrs Heron and Chard signed the report.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4507
COMMITTEE BUDGET 2010/11

Members considered proposals for inclusion in the Committee's budget for 2010/11 (*Annex 'B' attached*).

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the revised priority proposals for Policy & Finance Committee be approved; and
- 2) That the revised base budget for Policy & Finance Committee be approved for consideration as part of the Council's overall budget.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4508
DRAFT COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2010/11

Members considered the Council's draft budget and precept proposals for 2010/11 (*Annex 'C' attached*). After further discussion, Members agreed that it was necessary to cut costs further, in order to limit increases in Council Tax. There was some debate about whether the grant for Police Community Support Officers in Ringwood should be continued. The Town Clerk informed Members that to date only one of the promised monthly reports had been received. It was therefore difficult to judge benefits of the scheme. As the Committee was divided the Chairman proposed that this should be referred to the full Council.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the revised new bid priority proposals numbers 1-6 for Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, be approved, but that 7) The Bickerley Bollards and 8) Cemetery noticeboard be deferred to a future year (*Annex 'C' Appendix B*);
- 2) That the revised base budget for Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee be approved for consideration as part of the Council's overall budget (*Annex 'C'*);
- 3) That the revised base budget for Planning, Town & Environment Committee be approved for consideration as part of the Council's overall budget (*Annex 'C'*);
- 4) That the revised new bid priority proposals numbers 1-2 for this Committee, as resolved in minute F/4507, be approved, but that number 3) Support for twinning be reduced from £500 to £300, that number 4) Grants payable be reduced from £3,000 to £1,000 and that number 5) notice board be deferred to a future year (*Annex 'C' Appendix B*);
- 5) That the base budget for Christmas Lights be reduced by £3,000 to £5,000 and for the newsletter be reduced by £1,000 to zero;
- 6) That prior to approval of the Committee's base budget, Council give specific consideration to the £7,000 currently in the Council's overall budget for grant aiding Hampshire Constabulary for the provision of Police Community Support Officers;
- 7) That the revised base budget for this Committee be approved for consideration as part of the Council's overall budget (*Annex 'C'*);
- 8) That, subject to any amendments made at their Meeting, the Council's net budget of £400,760 for 2010/11 be approved (*Annex 'C'*); and
- 9) That, subject to the outcome of discussions on the net budget the precept of £400,760 for 2010/11 be approved.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4509
RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee attached as *Annex 'D'*.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 7th December 2009, and the proposals therein, be approved.

ACTION Sue Godwin

F/4510
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCEDURE

Members considered the Procedure for Public Participation at Meetings - Standing Order 62. The document had been revised in order to make it clearer but not substantially altered.

RECOMMENDED: That the updated Procedure for Public Participation at Meetings referred to at Standing Order 62 be approved subject to the inclusion of the following: *At the discretion of the Chairman, and following consultation with the Town Clerk, the 10 minutes allowed for public participation may be extended (Annex 'E' paragraph 3.7)*

ACTION Claire Perrens

F/4511
ALLOTMENTS – PEST CONTROL

Following reports of an increase in vermin at the Long Lane Allotments, Members of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee had made a recommendation to this Committee (*please see OS/5155 02.12.09*) that, subject to further investigation into costs, immediate action be taken to appoint pest control contractors for the Long Lane Allotment.

The Town Clerk reported that a meeting had taken place on site with the New Forest District Council Pest Control Officer, and an estimate of costs for pest control was being obtained. Although there had been a general increase in rats due to the cold weather, there were a number of factors exacerbating the situation at Long Lane. Some allotment holders had been using carpet to cover compost heaps and restrict weeds on the ground; farmyard manure had been left in heaps; these practices created warm spaces encouraging rat habitation. The Town Clerk had written to all allotment holders to the effect that until tenants took action themselves to make the site less attractive to vermin, any action taken by the Council would not solve the problems.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That once comparative quotations had been obtained, immediate action be taken to appoint pest control contractors at Long Lane Allotments; and
- 2) That, under the review of fees and charges for 2010/11 at its next Meeting, the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee be requested to consider increasing allotment rent to help defray pest control costs.

ACTION Terry Simpson / Claire Perrens
--

F/4512
WORKING PARTY – EQUALITY

Members considered an invitation from Ringwood Junior School for a Member to be appointed to join a working party to create a Single Equality Scheme for the School. It was noted that the first meeting proposed was Friday 15th January 2010 at 9 am.

RESOLVED: That further information regarding frequency and times of meetings be obtained

RECOMMENDED: That a Councillor be appointed to join Ringwood Junior School Equality Working Party at the Council Meeting on 6th January 2010.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4513

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM / CLERKS' LIAISON MEETING

The Town Clerk asked Members for items for the Agenda for the next meeting of the New Forest District Council (NFDC) Executive Management Team/Town & Parish Council Clerks meeting to be held on 13th January 2010.

RESOLVED: That the following items be put forward for the Agenda for the NFDC EMT/Clerk's Liaison Meeting on 13th January: 1) Joint working with the New Forest National Park Authority with a view to increasing opening times for the Visitor Information Centre, as Ringwood is a gateway town to the New Forest 2) Problems with access to recycling bins at Ringwood Recreation Centre car park

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4514

YOUTH COORDINATION

The Chairman reported on a meeting of various organisations in Ringwood involved in delivery of services for young people. There had been a very good level of attendance and the meeting had provided an important opportunity to identify the various groups. There had been enthusiasm for continued co-ordination and the Town Clerk had agreed to collate information including contact details for the different groups and dates of meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Chairman's report on youth coordination be noted.

ACTION Cllr Heron / Terry Simpson

F/4515

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (NFALC)

Cllr Clarke reported that NFALC at present was ineffective and would be financially obsolete by March 2010, unless major change took place. Cllr Clarke had drafted an amended constitution, business plan and three year budget for NFALC. This would be discussed at a meeting to be held on 17th December 2009. A questionnaire had been sent to all 37 town and parish councils in the New Forest. The Town Clerk stressed that it was important to take time to find what representation these councils required. The Chairman questioned whether it was necessary to have an association at this level, as there were already associations at county and national level representing local councils. It was agreed that improved communication through electronic mail and websites could lead to valuable expertise and information exchange; this could be utilised by NFALC.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Clarke's report on NFALC be noted.

ACTION Cllr Clarke, Terry Simpson

**F/4516
EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC & 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 'F' attached*).

ACTION Claire Perrens

**F/4517
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

The Town Clerk reported on the Christmas Lights installation.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk, in liaison with the Chairman of the Christmas Lights Working Party, and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee, be authorised to review the current contract for installation of Christmas Lights

ACTION Terry Simpson / Cllr Chard / Cllr Heron / Cllr Rippon-Swaine
--

**F/4518
TWINNING**

The Town Mayor, Cllr Ford, declared a personal and prejudicial interest in F/4518 - Twinning, as a close colleague and friend of the person in question. Cllr Ford made a statement and left the meeting at 8.50pm, taking no part in the debate or decision made.

Cllr Clarke declared a personal interest in F/4518 - Twinning as he is Chairman of the Ringwood Twinning Association.

The Town Clerk reported on progress with action relating to Town Twinning meeting advertisements.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Clerk's report be noted; and
- 2) That the Town Clerk be instructed to proceed in the manner now agreed.

ACTION Terry Simpson

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

Note: The text in the Action Boxes above does not form part of these minutes.

RECEIVED & ADOPTED
6th January 2010

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN