

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

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on 15th July 2009 at 7.00pm

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 M J Urwin

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Alyson Greenfield, Finance Officer
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator
Chief Inspector Gary Cooper
Police Sergeant Ricky Gallagher

F/4429 APOLOGIES

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Woodfield and Cllr B Terry.

F/4430 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Ford declared a personal and prejudicial interest in *F/4444 TWINNING MEETING*, as a close colleague and friend of the person in question. Cllr Ford left the room and took no part in the debate or decision made.

F/4431 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th June 2009, subject to the amendment of *Minute Number F/4417* as outlined in *Annex 'A' attached*, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

F/4432 POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER

Members considered renewing the PCSO contract to provide a grant for a further two years from 1st August 2009. A progress report from PS Gallagher regarding the PCSOs in Ringwood had been circulated. PS Gallagher and CI Cooper attended the meeting in order to provide further information and answer Members' questions.

PS Gallagher explained that the use of PCSOs was a new concept for the Police, but that it was proving very successful. Both PCSOs were providing visible presence locally with Sam Knight mainly on patrol on the streets and Tracey Cooper specialising more in the community work, visiting schools and groups.

The Chairman commented that the PCSOs had not been able to help with parking issues at schools, when requested. PS Gallagher said that although they cannot issue parking tickets,

they can monitor the situation, ask people to move on, and call in Police back up if necessary. Any requests to PCSOs should be copied to him and he will ensure appropriate action is taken. Parking chaos at schools is currently a priority, and an initial Police monitoring presence will be instigated especially at the beginning of the autumn term.

CI Cooper commented on the reduction in anti-social behaviour problems at Carvers Recreation Ground, thanks to the PCSOs. There had been a 28% reduction on figures compared to last year.

Members agreed that regular progress reports from the PCSOs would be useful. Around 80% of the PCSOs' time is spent in Ringwood, although they are occasionally sent outside the Town.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the PCSO contract of £6,000 per annum be renewed for two years from 1 August 2009; and
- 2) That brief monthly activity reports be required from the two PCSOs so that they can be circulated to Members via the in-house Bulletin.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4433

MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

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

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.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4434

GRANT AID BUDGET REVIEW

The Finance Officer informed Members that the current expenditure from the Grant Aid budget was already £4,026, leaving only £1,213 unspent until 1 April 2010. Having reviewed the typical grants paid out over a year, she estimated that if all the usual charities and groups were supported there would be a shortfall of £1,602. She advised Members that they could add a supplementary budget to cover these extra applications from reserve funds.

RESOLVED: That the Grant Aid Budget potential shortfall be noted.

ACTION Alyson Greenfield

F/4435

GRANT AID

Members considered an application for Grant Aid from Salterns Playscheme.

RESOLVED: That under Section 145 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £150 be awarded to Salterns Playscheme, to benefit special needs children and provide respite for their carers in Ringwood.

ACTION Alyson Greenfield

F/4436

VIREMENT OF FUNDS FOR WORKS TO PAVILION

Members considered a request from the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee (*Minute OS/5116*) that the sum of £3,000 be vired from reserves to supplement the budget to complete refurbishment works to the Cricket Pavilion at Carvers Recreation Ground. A confidential report with contractors' tenders had been circulated to all members previously. Costs had been negotiated as low as possible, whilst maintaining quality, by the Technical Officer, who had made a full report to the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee.

RESOLVED: That a virement from reserves of £3,000 be approved to supplement the budget to complete refurbishment works to the Cricket Pavilion at Carvers.

ACTION Martin Townsend / Richard Eldred

F/4437

HEALTH & SAFETY

Members received the Deputy Town Clerk's report on Health & Safety (attached as *Annex 'C'*) and considered the recommendations therein.

RECOMMENDED: That, subject to no adverse observations being raised by staff as part of the consultation process on this review, the Health & Safety Policy in *Annex 'C'* be adopted at Council on 29th July 2009.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Clarke be appointed to the role of Health & Safety Champion.

ACTION Jo Stannard / Claire Perrens

F/4438

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WORKING PARTY

Members received and considered notes of the Christmas Lights Working Party meeting held on 6th July 2009 (*Annex 'D' attached*). The Committee was disappointed that it had not been possible to implement improvements to the displays at Friday's Cross. It was hoped that it would be possible to discuss lighting with the traders for future years.

RESOLVED: That the notes of the Christmas Lights Working Party of 6th July 2009 be received and the actions therein approved.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4439

NEW FOREST ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

The Town Clerk reported on continuing concerns about the ability of the New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC) to properly represent the constituent Councils within the New Forest. For at least five years, he believed, the Association had failed to fulfil its role of being a representative conduit for local Councils and, in particular, for feeding information

from and to local Councils through to the District and County Councils. Totton and New Milton Town Councils had already withdrawn from the Association. Hythe and Dibden Parish Council had recently passed a Resolution calling on the Association to carry out a 'root and branch' review of its operating arrangement and had stated that unless this was done, they would also withdraw from membership. A strong local association was essential for the wellbeing of the town and parish Council sector of Local Government within the New Forest and within Hampshire. Although NFALC had received funding from Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC), subject to reviewing and improving its performance, no positive changes had been made.

Members debated at length the various options available. Cllr Rippon-Swaine was concerned that Ringwood Town Council should not take serious action in isolation, without soliciting the support of other councils. Cllr Clarke, having attended the NFALC AGM, had no confidence in the current organisation. The Chairman commented that it appeared NFALC was grossly underfunded, and unable to even run itself effectively.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Council formally request HALC to withhold the transfer of any of the Town Council's subscriptions to NFALC;
- 2) That HALC be requested to instigate a review of the action taken by NFALC since the last Grant was allocated to it to ascertain whether NFALC has made any attempt to meet the objectives of its Constitution;
- 3) That the Town Clerk ascertain whether other local councils shared the concerns about the effectiveness of NFALC; and
- 4) That if no satisfactory result is achieved, this issue be reconsidered by this Committee.

ACTION Terry Simpson

F/4440

JOINT LITTER WORKING GROUP

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Cllr Ford as representative on the Joint Litter Working Group be confirmed.

ACTION Claire Perrens

F/4441

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) PARTNERSHIP

Members noted that the Service Level Agreement and relevant licences had been received and it was anticipated that officers would have access to the ForestMap system by the end of July 2009.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Clerk be authorised to sign the Service Level Agreement and relevant licences for the GIS Partnership ForestMap system, on behalf of the Town Council; and
- 2) That individual Members and officers be required to sign an agreement to accept the terms and conditions of usage prior to being given access to the system.

ACTION Jo Stannard

F/4442

ADVERTISING BLIMP

Members considered a request from Sainsbury's for permission to fly an aerial 'blimp' on Carvers Recreation Ground on the 25th/26th July, 15th /16th & 22nd / 23rd August between the hours of 8am till 6pm. Members noted that Carvers would be in use for cricket and other activities on these dates.

RESOLVED: That permission to fly an aerial blimp on Carvers be refused, as it is not considered a suitable site.

ACTION Christine Smith

F/4443

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 'E' attached*).

F/4444

TWINNING MEETING

Cllr Ford declared a personal and prejudicial interest in F/4444 TWINNING MEETING, as a close colleague and friend of the person in question. Cllr Ford left the room and took no part in the debate or decision made.

Members considered action following incorrect publication of date of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be instructed to take the action now authorised to obtain a full apology, financial restitution and publicise the fact that the Town Council was not responsible for the publication of the incorrect date of the Twinning Meeting in *Fordingbridge & Ringwood News*.

ACTION Terry Simpson

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.45pm.

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

RECEIVED & ADOPTED
29th July 2009

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN