

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

## **MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at 7.00pm

**PRESENT:** Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine, Chairman  
Cllr N J Chard  
Cllr N R G Clarke  
Cllr L C Ford, Town Mayor  
Cllr B H Terry, Deputy Town Mayor  
Cllr B Woodifield

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Terry Simpson, Town Clerk  
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk  
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager (left at 8.00pm after F/4415)  
James Fullick, Student Advisor  
Cllr G J O'Reilly  
Cllr Mrs A C Wiseman  
Mr John Mascall (for F/4417 only)  
Mr Chris Elliott (for F/4417 only)

### **F/4406 APOLOGIES**

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Heron and Cllr Urwin.

### **F/4407 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*F/4428 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS* - Cllr Woodifield declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Christmas Lights as she is a member of the Chamber of Trade.

*F/4426 MAYOR'S CADET* - Cllr Ford declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in this item as she is the Town Mayor.

### **F/4408 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **F/4409 MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Members considered the Monthly Financial Reports attached to these minutes as *Annex 'A'*. It was noted that the latest invoice from Southern Electric for Carvers and the Cemetery was higher than anticipated as invoices for the previous few years had been based on estimated usage only. In future, regular meter readings would be taken to avoid a repeat occurrence.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the list of cheque payments on the Imprest account be authorised. Cllrs Rippon-Swaine and Chard signed the report.
- 2) That the list of Petty Cash payments be authorised. Cllrs Rippon-Swaine 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 Rippon-Swaine and Chard signed the report.

<b>ACTION</b> Martin Townsend
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#### **F/4410**

#### **REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL**

Members considered the Finance Manager's report attached as *Annex 'B'*. It was noted that the internal audit service had been very thorough and professional and there were no issues of concern.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That arrangements be made for the next review to be carried out before the June 2010 meeting of this Committee.

<b>ACTION</b> Martin Townsend
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#### **F/4411**

#### **INTERNAL AUDIT 2008/09**

Members received the Draft Internal Audit Report produced by New Forest District Council and considered the timetable of target dates for implementation of recommendations within the report (*Annex 'C'*).

#### **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Draft Internal Audit Report be received.
- 2) That the timetable for implementation of recommendations be approved.

<b>ACTION</b> Martin Townsend / Jo Stannard
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#### **F/4412**

#### **DRAFT FINAL ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RETURN FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2009**

Members considered the Finance Manager's report attached as *Annex 'D'*. The Finance Manager reported on two provisions that were no longer required; £1,000 for dragons teeth at The Bickerley, which had been funded by Hampshire County Council and £8,654 for the production of the Town Plan, which had now been completed. It was suggested that these funds be transferred to a Capital Expenditure Provision to enable the Council to earmark funds for future capital schemes. This had been an aim of the Council for some time but financial circumstances had previously made it difficult to achieve.

It was noted that there had been a substantial increase in the value of total fixed assets. This figure now took account of the value of the Council's landholdings in addition to the insurable assets.

#### **RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) That the actual income and expenditure accounts for 2008/09 and balance sheet as at 31 March 2009 as shown in Appendix 1 be approved;
- 2) That the new in-year transfers to provisions of £16,106 be approved;
- 3) That the balances at 31 March 2009 on the Town Plan provision, £8,654, and The Bickerley provision, £1,000, be transferred to form a Capital Expenditure Provision;
- 4) That the under spent budgets for the cemetery extension road, £32,214, and the new tractor, £17,000, be carried forward to 2009/10;
- 5) That the transfer from the General Reserve of £12,863.98 for 2008/09 be approved;
- 6) That the Annual Return for 2008/09, as shown in Appendix 3, be approved.

<b>ACTION</b> Martin Townsend / Jo Stannard
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**F/4413**

**RENEWAL OF POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICER CONTRACT**

The Council currently has a 2-year contract with Hampshire Police for the provision of two Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the town. Although there had been no correspondence from Hampshire Police, the Town Clerk asked Members for a view on whether the Council should renew the contract from 1<sup>st</sup> August 2009 at a cost of £6,000.

Members believed that the PCSOs had a high visibility in the town, their presence was valued and they were able to respond to specific issues. They also had good relationship with the drop-in centre. However, there was some concern that the PCSOs did not have powers to deal with issues and, in addition, there had been no reports forthcoming from the Police on the effectiveness of their role and no details of what they had actually achieved.

**RESOLVED:** That Hampshire Police be informed that, although the PCSOs presence in the town was valued, the Council was of a mind not to renew the contract, and they be invited to put forward a case for the continuation of the contract.

<b>ACTION</b> Terry Simpson
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**F/4414**

**SECURITY AT THE CEMETERY**

Members considered a recommendation from the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee "That the Policy & Finance Committee be asked to approve a supplementary estimate of £2,000, to be met from reserves, for a secure container and other security measures, to be confirmed, at the Cemetery".

The Town Clerk reported that he had been advised by the District Council Planning Officers that, providing the container is less than 200 cubic metres and less than 8 feet in height, no planning consent is required. A container supplier had confirmed that it would be possible to install a container between the Cemetery wall and the large garage. There would be a need to plant shrubs or to clad the container so it did not appear unsightly. The possibility of inserting a smaller container within the small garage to house the fuel tanks was also being investigated, together with installing steel plates on the inside of the office doors. A further report would be presented to the Recreation Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That a supplementary estimate of £2,000 be allocated from reserves for the provision of a secure container and other security measures at the Cemetery.

<b>ACTION</b> Terry Simpson / Martin Townsend
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**F/4415**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY EXAMINATION**

It was noted that Cllr Clarke had attended the first two days of the Examination regarding housing and affordable housing. He would produce a report on his findings for Members' consideration.

**RESOLVED:** That payment of travel allowances to Cllr Clarke for attendance at the Examination be authorised.

<b>ACTION</b> Jo Stannard
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*As there were no members of the public present and officers from the District Council were present to speak on item 20 – Ringwood Furlong Gateway Project, it was agreed to bring this item forward.*

**F/4416**

**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' attached*).

**F/4417**  
**RINGWOOD FURLONG GATEWAY PROJECT**

Two officers from New Forest District Council updated Members on current plans for the Ringwood Furlong Gateway Project. The project would provide for the replacement of the public toilets and Visitor Information Centre.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the investigations being undertaken by the District Council for the replacement of the public toilets and Visitor Information Centre be noted; and
- 2) That the District Council be requested to review the proposals in a critical manner to ensure that the facilities provided meet the needs of the town and that every effort be made to ensure that the new building is not delayed.

<b>ACTION</b> Terry Simpson
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**F/4418**  
**FURLONG CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

The Town Clerk reported on a meeting with the developer of The Furlong Centre. It was noted that the District Council's adopted strategic plans provided for the redevelopment of this site in order to ensure that the economic viability of the town is maintained.

**RESOLVED:** That the District Council be urged to take all appropriate action available to it in order to facilitate the development of The Furlong area in accordance with its adopted strategic planning policies.

<b>ACTION</b> Terry Simpson
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**F/4419**  
**RE-ADMITTANCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED:** That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

**F/4420**  
**IT INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW**

The Deputy Town Clerk reported that Blue Chip, the Council's new IT contractor, had now completed a comprehensive Infrastructure Review. Following a meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee, they were now in the process of carrying out the recommendations made in that report, which would serve to improve the performance, stability and security of the network.

**RESOLVED:** That the Deputy Town Clerk's update be noted.

<b>ACTION</b> Jo Stannard
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**F/4421**  
**CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL**

Members considered the Department of Transport's consultation document (*Annex 'F'*) proposing the transfer of concessionary travel administration from District to County Council or even regional organisations.

The Town Clerk reported that District Council officers would be recommending that upper tier authorities should be responsible for determining the scheme and negotiating with bus operators as they have the resources to carry out this work, but that the administration of applications is best delegated to shire districts as they are closer to home.

Members were generally happy with the current arrangements for administration of applications, which are serviced by the District Council's office in Ringwood. However, it was noted that not all towns and villages have the advantage of having a local District Council office and, in that event, it would be more convenient if the local town or parish council could deal with applications and issue passes.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council respond to the Department of Transport's consultation stating that the physical distribution of passes should be carried out as local as possible and, if practical, by parish and town councils but that the arrangements for determining the scheme and negotiating with bus operators should be dealt with by upper tier authorities.

**ACTION** Terry Simpson

**F/4422  
FAÇADE OF FORMER CINEMA**

The Town Clerk reported that the owners of the former cinema were looking into the possibility of erecting scaffolding and covering it with material to depict a building in order to improve the appearance of the building prior to redevelopment of the site.

**RESOLVED:** That this information be noted and a further report be submitted to Committee when the developer's detailed proposals are received.

**ACTION** Terry Simpson

**F/4423  
RINGWOOD FESTIVAL**

Members received the minutes of the meeting of Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009 (*Annex 'G'*).

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2009, and the proposals therein, be approved.

**ACTION** Terry Simpson / Sue Godwin

**F/4424  
TOURISM GROUP APPOINTMENT**

Members considered appointing Cllr O'Reilly to a new Tourism Group, which had been formed by a member of the Chamber of Trade. Cllr O'Reilly had attended its first meeting and it was agreed that her report would be circulated to Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That Cllr O'Reilly be appointed to the new Tourism Group.
- 2) That Cllr O'Reilly's report of the first meeting be circulated to all Members.

**ACTION** Cllr O'Reilly / Jo Stannard / Claire Perrens

**F/4425  
MAYORAL BOARD**

The Town Clerk reported that current practice is for the Mayoral Board to be updated every year with the name of the Mayor that year. However, following consultation with the previous and current Town Mayors, it was now proposed to update the Board at the end of each Mayor's term of office.

**RESOLVED:** That, in future, the Mayoral Board be updated at the end of each Mayor's term of office.

**ACTION** Sue Godwin

**F/4426**  
**MAYOR'S CADET**

The Town Mayor reported that it was common practice in other towns for cadets to be assigned to Mayors to help them perform their duties and add dignity to occasions. She said that they required no remuneration, although she would be happy to pay travel costs from the Mayor's Allowance, and only required a small badge for identification purposes.

As she was closely association with the Ringwood & Fordingbridge Air Training Corps, she asked for Members approval to appoint a Mayor's Cadet from this organisation.

She recognised that individual Town Mayors should decide if they wanted one and from which organisation to appoint from.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) That the Town Mayor be authorised to appoint a Mayor's Cadet from a suitable local organisation.
- 2) That, if the appointment is approved, a small badge be purchased to identify the Mayor's Cadet.

<b>ACTION</b> Town Mayor / Sue Godwin
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**F/4427**  
**BICKERLEY VILLAGE GREEN**

The Town Clerk reported that he had been informed that the 6<sup>th</sup> August 2009 would mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the designation of The Bickerley as a Village Green.

It was felt that there was not sufficient time or available funds to organise an event to mark the occasion. However, Members agreed that the anniversary should be publicised.

**RESOLVED:** That the anniversary be publicised through the issuing of a press release and information on the Council's website.

<b>ACTION</b> Terry Simpson
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**F/4428**  
**CHRISTMAS LIGHTS**

Members received the notes of the Christmas Lights Working Party meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2009 (*Annex 'H'*).

It was noted that the Chamber of Trade would endeavour to raise £1,000 towards the cost of new lights, however there was no firm commitment to this.

As the Council was looking to improve the Friday's Cross area by placing artificial trees on shops and premises, most of which were not members of the Chamber of Trade, it was felt that these individuals businesses should be asked to contribute towards the costs.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the Chamber of Trade be requested to give a firm commitment to raising £500 towards the cost of improvements to Christmas Lights in the town.
- 2) That businesses in the Friday's Cross area be requested to contribute a total of £500 towards the cost of providing artificial trees.
- 3) That the Working Party be authorised to approve expenditure within the current year's budget when a detailed scheme has been agreed.

<b>ACTION</b> Terry Simpson
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There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.37pm.

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

RECEIVED & ADOPTED  
24<sup>th</sup> June 2009

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN