

OPEN SESSION: There were two members of the public present.

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

Held on 20<sup>th</sup> May 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, Town Mayor  
Cllr B H Terry, Deputy Town Mayor  
Cllr M J Urwin

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk  
Alyson Greenfield, Finance Officer  
Claire Perrens, Meetings Administrator  
James Fullick, Student Advisor  
Cllr A C Wiseman  
Cllr G J O'Reilly

### **F/4393 APOLOGIES**

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

### **F/4394 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

F/4398 RINGWOOD FESTIVAL *Cllr Ford declared a personal interest in Ringwood Festival as she is connected with charities to benefit from funds raised.*

F/4403 ELLINGHAM & RINGWOOD RUGBY CLUB *The Chairman, Cllr Heron, declared a personal interest in this item, as he is Chairman of the Youth Club Committee.*

*As there was a member of the public present who had been invited to speak regarding Item 6 on the Agenda – Grant Aid, this item was brought forward.*

### **F/4395 GRANT AID**

Roz Bradbury had been invited to attend the meeting to talk about the application made by 'Turn Up for Fun', deferred from the previous meeting and to answer Members' questions. Ms Bradbury outlined the purpose of 'Turn Up for Fun' which she runs for six weeks in the summer holidays at six sites in the Fordingbridge and Ringwood areas. Sites in Ringwood usually include areas of deprivation such as Toad Corner and Southfield Mews. Employing three trained and CRB checked play workers, the project provides free open access play for children, and encourages family involvement. In answer to Members' questions, Ms Bradbury confirmed that accounts are managed by an umbrella group which is a registered charity; last year, this was Forest Bus, this year it is Hampshire Children and Families Forum. The events are promoted with posters and fliers targeted to reach families in areas of deprivation as appropriate. Around 500 people in the Ringwood area would benefit from the project. It was noted that the accounts for the previous year had not been provided, due to being managed by the umbrella charity, but in future years, the Town Clerk emphasised that these must be provided. Due to having recently received a grant of £4,500, Ms Bradbury now amended her grant request to £200 to purchase consumable play materials.

Members also considered a request from Avon Valley Concerts, which received regular support from the Council for classical music concerts in Ringwood. The Finance Officer drew Members' attention to a recent payment made to Mobile Police Van, which left available grant aid funds of £1,753 for 2009/10.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £200 be awarded to Hampshire Children & Families Forum for the 'Turn Up for Fun' project in Ringwood;
- 2) That in line with the Council's policy 'Turn Up for Fun' project be advised that in future years audited accounts in respect of the previous year's activities must be submitted with any application; and
- 3) That, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £200 be awarded to Avon Valley Concerts for classical concerts in Ringwood.

<b>ACTION Alyson Greenfield</b>
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**F/4396**

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meetings held on 15<sup>th</sup> April and 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**F/4397**

**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 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 it be noted the draft final accounts for 2008/09 will be presented to the next meeting of this Committee, and that they will show a variance of £252 only from the probable actual figures that were reported to the 15<sup>th</sup> April meeting; and
- 6) That, following a significant break in at the Cemetery, it be noted estimates will be obtained in order to provide a secure container for equipment and to increase security of existing buildings, for discussion at Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, prior to a recommendation to this Committee.

<b>ACTION 1)-5) Martin Townsend 6) Terry Simpson</b>
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**F/4398**

**RINGWOOD FESTIVAL**

*Cllr Ford declared a personal interest in Ringwood Festival as she is connected with charities to benefit from funds raised.*

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee attached as *Annex 'B'*. The Town Mayor, Cllr Ford, commented that it is urgent that more tickets are sold for the classical concert this year and that the Visitor Information Centre will be one of the venues selling tickets.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2009, and the proposals therein, be approved.

<b>ACTION Sue Godwin</b>
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**F/4399**

**PLEDGED GRANT FOR GREYFRIARS**

**RESOLVED:** That it be noted the grant awarded in 2008 of a second instalment of £3,000 to be paid in 2009/2010 financial year to the Greyfriars Ebenezer Hall Appeal will be presented to a representative of Greyfriars at the Council Meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> May.

<b>ACTION</b> Claire Perrens
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**F/4400**

**RINGWOOD SERVICES**

Members considered issues raised recently about service enhancements within the Town with particular reference to:-

- 1) Visitor Information Centre
- 2) Ringwood Tourism Group and Ringwood as a Tourism hub
- 3) Linkages between Ringwood web sites and New Forest District Council web site
- 4) Joint forum for Forest towns and villages to discuss common issues and in particular to co-ordinate timing of events and festivals to avoid overlap and clashes
- 5) Town Marketing Initiatives
- 6) Redevelopment of former cinema building
- 7) Extension of the Furlong Shopping development through to the Market Place
- 8) Provision of allotments
- 9) Economic stimulus to, and revival of, shopping areas, with particular reference to the older established shopping areas
- 10) Relocation of Town Council offices
- 11) Relocation of District Council offices
- 12) Construction of new town centre toilet facilities
- 13) Redevelopment of Town and District Council office sites for housing purposes.

It was noted that many of the issues were already included in the recently completed Town Plan and were the subject of ongoing discussions within the Town Council and with other authorities. In view of the number of issues the Chairman indicated that he intended to deal with them on the basis of whether the Town Council could influence the issue, whether it wished to, and whether the Council is already taking action. Following a detailed discussion of the items it was:

**RECOMMENDED:**

- 1) That in view of the extremely limited opening times now operating at the Visitor Information Centre, the Town Clerk facilitate a meeting with New Forest District Council and the Chairman and Town Mayor in order to press for new operating initiatives which would provide more extensive opening times;
- 2) That the Town Clerk take action to initiate a public meeting to encourage those involved in tourist-related activities to be more active in promoting the Town;
- 3) That with regard to linkages between Ringwood and District Council web sites, it be noted that links exist and that the Town Council is always prepared to facilitate new links;
- 4) That as the Town Council already works alongside other Forest towns and villages via the New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC), no further action be taken regarding a new joint forum of Forest towns and villages, which is considered unnecessary, but that every effort be made to make NFALC more effective;
- 5) That it be noted with regard to Town Marketing initiatives that it is not the Town Council's role to fund marketing of the Town, nor is this within its budgetary power, but rather the Town Council acts as a facilitator;
- 6) That with regard to the current run down appearance of the former cinema building in the Market Square which is causing complaints, it be noted a meeting was held with the developers, the Chairman, Town Mayor and Town Clerk and that the developers had agreed to investigate the possible installation of gauze panels to conceal the exterior of the building and that the results be reported at a future Meeting;

- 7) That the extension of the Furlong into the Market Place is subject to the further acquisition of linking land but that an impasse exists between the potential vendors and the developers and whilst the Town Council does not have powers to assist with compulsory acquisition orders in this case, the developer had agreed to provide further information to the Town Council so that councillors could investigate ways in which the public authorities could assist with the regeneration of this part of the Town in accordance with existing planning policies;
- 8) That with regard to creating allotments on farm land, it be noted generally preference is for allotments close to Town and that funds are not available for costly Town Centre land for allotments at this difficult financial time;
- 9) That with regard to economic stimulus within the Town, that the Southampton Road Environmental Improvements Steering Group is making progress, but that funds to extend this scheme to Friday's Cross are not currently available and that effort be made for future work in this area; and
- 10) That it be noted with regard to relocation of Town Council offices, relocation of District Council offices, construction of new town centre toilet facilities, and redevelopment of Town and District Council office sites for housing purposes, that the Town Council has made huge efforts to address these issues without success as it had not been possible to agree outcomes with New Forest District Council, but that it be noted that the Town Mayor and Chairman would continue to press tirelessly for improvement to the toilet facilities.

**ACTION** 1) 2) 6) Terry Simpson 9) Jo Stannard 10) Cllr Ford / Cllr Heron

**F/4401  
A338**

Members considered an invitation from Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council to appoint two members to attend meetings to discuss fatalities on the A338.

**RESOLVED:** That Cllr Heron, Cllr Ford, Cllr Clarke and Cllr Chard be appointed to attend future meetings if available.

**ACTION** Terry Simpson

**F/4402  
SPONSORSHIP OF ACHIEVEMENT AWARD 2009**

Members considered renewal of the Council's sponsorship for these awards at Ringwood School.

**RESOLVED:** That sponsorship of awards at Ringwood School be renewed and that in future the costs be included in the Budget.

**ACTION** Martin Townsend

**F/4403  
ELLINGHAM & RINGWOOD RUGBY CLUB**

*The Chairman, Cllr Heron, declared a personal interest in this item, as he is Chairman of the Youth Club Committee.*

Members considered consultation from the District Council about the allocation of a grant of £30,000 from its Youth Project Fund to support the appointment of a Youth Outreach Officer by the Rugby Club for a period of three years (detailed papers previously circulated). Cllr Chard noted that this proposal would be limited to rugby, instead of all sports and such major funding should benefit more people.

Members of the Committee were concerned about statements made about liability of VAT and also that despite the Town Council working in partnership with the Rugby Club on this scheme, this appointment had

never been mentioned and had not been included in the Business Plan. The Committee recalled that existing youth organisations in the Town were underfunded. This had led to the Town Council providing funding for the Youth Club and the Drop In Centre. Members were aware of the need for this type of post which was the subject of a funding bid during preparation of the Committee's own budget last year. However, the proposal had to be deferred for financial reasons. Members indicated that whilst supporting the appointment of a Youth Outreach Officer for the Town, it could not support the present proposal by the Rugby Club since it would continue the existing unco-ordinated approach to youth provision and support. There was a clear need for a co-ordinated approach to be taken to provide the best benefit for all youth organisations and young people in the Town.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1) That the District Council be advised that in principle the Town Council supports the appointment of a Youth Outreach Officer for the Town, but cannot support the proposal in its present form; and
- 2) That the District Council be requested to initiate discussions with the Town Council and other interested organisations with a view to a co-ordinated approach being adopted that will lead to resources being made available for the appointment of an officer to support all youth activities in the Town.

<b>ACTION Terry Simpson</b>
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**F/4404**

**EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

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 'C' attached*).

**F/4405**

**FIRST FLOOR OFFICE ACCOMMODATION**

Members considered two quotations for the re-letting of the first floor offices at the end of September.

**RESOLVED:** That an agent be appointed to act as single agent for letting the Town Council's first floor office accommodation.

<b>ACTION Terry Simpson</b>
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There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.40pm.

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

RECEIVED & ADOPTED

27<sup>th</sup> May 2009

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN