

OPEN SESSION: There were no members of public present.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 13th January 2010 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr L C Ford (Town Mayor)
Cllr B H Terry (Deputy Town Mayor)
Cllr N J Chard
Cllr N R G Clarke
Cllr D Cole
Cllr J D Heron
Cllr Mrs G O'Reilly
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine
Cllr M A Steele
Cllr Mrs A Wiseman
Cllr Mrs B Woodifield

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr T Simpson, Town Clerk
Ms C Perrens, Meetings Administrator
District Cllr C Treleaven
Ms M Jenkinson, Student Advisor

C/4984 APOLOGIES

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Chambers, Cllr Mrs Terry and Vicky Leung, Student Advisor.

C/4985 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C/4986 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 25th November 2009, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/4987 RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr B Terry presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd December 2009.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd December 2009 be received.

C/4988 PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Clarke presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th December 2009.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th December 2009 be received.

C/4989
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 16th December 2009.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 16th December 2009, with the exception of F/4508, be received and the recommendation at F/4510 be approved.
- 2) That, with regard to the recommendation at F/4512, Cllr Heron be appointed to join the Ringwood Junior School Equality Working Party.

C/4990
COUNCIL BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2010/11

Members considered the recommendation F/4508 from Policy & Finance Committee, which outlined the Council's budget and precept for 2010/11.

Cllr Heron reported that, in order to keep the budget as low as practicable without affecting the quality of service, Members had agreed to look to undertake essential services and only provide for increases in budgets where these were absolutely essential. This exercise had been carried out and, in broad terms, the recommended budget did not allow for any increase in expenditure except where works were required for health and safety reasons or equipment was worn out. However, the grant budget had been increased from £4,000 to £5,200 in response to the likely need from voluntary and charitable organisations in the coming year.

Since the meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee, he had asked officers to identify ways in which further reductions in expenditure could be achieved. As a result, an early review of Provisions had been carried out and further potential savings had been identified and he therefore recommended the following reductions and amendments:

- 1) The Council had given a commitment to Hampshire Constabulary to provide a grant for Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) for one year, which would expire in July 2010. He proposed therefore that the budget provision be restricted to this period, which would bring about a saving of £5,000. Although he believed that the PCSOs undertook an excellent job, he stated that the primary responsibility for law enforcement lies with Hampshire Constabulary which receives Government grant to meet its expenditure and he believed that the grant provided by the Town Council masked the true cost of policing the town. In addition, the Council also part funds CCTV in the town and, in managing its open spaces, incurs costs to minimise crime and disorder.
- 2) The cost of providing a new footpath at Carvers Recreation Ground had been funded by Cllr Rippon-Swaine's County Councillor's grant. The sum of £2,500 could therefore be transferred from Provisions back to the General Fund.
- 3) There was just over £5,700 in Provisions for additional Christmas lights. However, as efforts for partnership working had not enabled the lights to be extended in the town, it was proposed that £5,000 of this fund be used to reduce the Precept requirement.
- 4) A sum of almost £2,000 had been included in Provisions to lower the wall at Doctor Little Gardens. However, it had been agreed that the Council's groundstaff would now carry out this work and therefore this amount was no longer required.

These savings would enable the net budget to be reduced to £386,260, which represented an increase of only £1.28 per year in the amount payable by a householder in a Band D property and a 1.85% increase over the Council Tax level for 2009/10.

Cllr Heron commended officers' hard work in identifying these savings. Cllr B Terry and Cllr Chard were concerned about the proposal to reduce the sponsorship of the PCSOs. Cllr Heron maintained that it was not the responsibility of a small organization like the Town Council to provide this funding. It provided an

enhanced service in Ringwood, but withdrawal of sponsorship would not lead to the loss of the PCSOs in the area. The Town Clerk made the point that it was unusual for a local council to provide this funding, and that New Milton Town Council, for example, did not subsidise PCSOs.

- 1) That the 2010/11 draft budget for PCSOs be reduced by £5,000.
- 2) That the sum of £2,500 for the new footpath at Carvers Recreation Ground be transferred from Provisions to the General Fund.
- 3) That the sum of £5,000 for Christmas Lights be transferred from Provisions to the General Fund.
- 4) That the sum of £2,000 to lower the wall at Doctor Little Gardens be transferred from Provisions to the General Fund.
- 5) That the recommendations of the Policy & Finance Committee relating to the Council budget, at minute F/4508 of the meeting held on 25th November 2009, with the amendments agreed at 1) to 4) above be approved to provide for a net budget of £386,260; and
- 6) That the Council's precept for 2010/11 be set at £386,260.

C/4991

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported on the following:

1. Due to the postponement of this Council Meeting from 6th to 13th January, she asked Members to consider cancelling the Meeting scheduled for 27th January 2010. There were no recommendations from the Planning, Town & Environment Meeting held on 8th January. It was expected that there would be one recommendation from the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Meeting, regarding proposals to create access from the south of Castleman Trail to the triangle of land owned by the Council and the naming of this piece of land. As this was not a currently approved Council scheme, it was suggested that this recommendation could be made to Policy & Finance Committee on 20th January, in order to allow all Members the opportunity to comment. It was not expected that there would be any recommendations from Policy & Finance Committee. As Members did not object, she cancelled the Meeting scheduled for 27th January 2010.
2. She was pleased to be able to report that it was likely that the Town Clerk would be invited to a meeting by the National Association of Local Councils with one of the Government Ministers responsible for youth to discuss, amongst other things, the Town Council's initiative for the appointment of student advisors. Hopefully, the meeting would take place later in the month and she had asked the Town Clerk to report back to Members after the meeting.
3. She was also pleased to report that the Town Clerk had been appointed as an Officer Advisor to the Larger Local Councils Committee of the National Association of Local Councils. It was hoped that the Town Clerk would be able to express to that Committee the views of local Councils in this area about the roles of Town Council and the development of the sector's services.
4. She drew Members attention to *Clerks & Councils Direct* magazine, which included two news items about the Town Council; one related to the proposed development of Danny Cracknell Pocket Park including improved access to the river, and one about the new hard surface safe access for children and disabled to Carvers Recreation Ground, which was made possible thanks to a county councillor fund grant from Cllr Rippon-Swaine.

C/4992

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Rippon-Swaine presented his written report (*Annex 'A'*).

District Councillor Treleaven presented his written report (*Annex 'B'*). Cllr Treleaven also commented on the efforts made by the District Council to grit access to areas such as schools, NFDC car parks and offices. Individuals have a personal responsibility to take care in icy conditions; care was necessary if a landowner

attempted to address ice problems – it must be done properly or could be counter productive. He also commended the Environmental Services Department for their response at this difficult time. The Town Clerk added that he had now been in contact with the Head of Environmental Services, and all information bulletins were now being circulated to local councils in the district to help disseminate information to local people.

District Councillor Heron congratulated the waste collection team for providing a comparatively efficient service, given the difficult conditions. He reported that the Health and Wellbeing Panel was looking into response times for ambulances, and there was some issue over the methods for reporting response times in towns compared to in rural areas. He would report further at a later date. He was pleased to report that two young people from Ringwood had been invited to speak at the meeting about the benefits of the 8-16 Gym in Ringwood. With regard to the road closure proposals for major repairs to the Ringwood to Salisbury Road, his understanding was that there would now not be total closure, but the works would be operated with traffic light control for the whole scheme.

C/4993

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 20 th January 2010
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 3 rd February 2010
Planning, Town & Environment	2.00pm	Friday 5 th February 2010
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 17 th February 2010
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 24 th February 2010

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 7.50 pm.

RECEIVED AND ADOPTED
24th February 2010

TOWN MAYOR