

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

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Held on 18th January 2012 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr J D Heron (Chairman)
Cllr W S Rippon-Swaine (Vice Chairman)
Cllr L C Ford
Cllr R Frampton
Cllr S Stokes
Cllr M A Steele
Cllr B H Terry
Cllr M H Thierry

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Martin Townsend, Finance Manager
Sam Poulter, Student Advisor
Jenny Baldwin, Student Advisor
Cllr A Wiseman

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr B Woodfield, who but for another engagement would have attended to present the report on the Diamond Jubilee celebrations.

F/4790

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Jeremy Heron declared a personal interest in the application for a Grant by the Citizens Advice Bureau, as he is the District Council's representative on the Board of CAB, although he has no voting powers on that organisation – see F/4793.

Cllr Mrs Ford declared a personal interest in the application by the Bickerley Green Nursing and Residential Home – see F/4793.

Cllr Mark Steele declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application by the Bickerley Green Nursing and Residential Home – see F/4793.

F/4791

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2011, having been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Chairman reported that in company with the Town Clerk, he had met with the District Council's Community Grants Advisory Panel on Monday. He was pleased to report that the Panel had decided to recommend to the Portfolio Holder that subject to match funding by the Town Council and other conditions, including the attraction of funds from other sources, and the County Council, the District Council should allocate up to £30,000 towards the scheme for the provision of a new drop-in at Carvers Recreation Ground.

F/4792

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 the Finance Manager's report and Summary Budget Reports be received and noted.
- 6) That it be noted that, in accordance with the Council's Policy on Income Recovery, there were no matters to report in relation to outstanding debtors for the quarter ending 31st December 2011.

ACTION Martin Townsend

F/4793

GRANT AID

Cllr J Heron declared a personal interest in the application by the CAB as a non-voting Member of the Board appointed by the District Council.

Cllr Mrs C Ford declared a personal interest in the application by the Bickerley Green Nursing and Residential Home as she had made use of the facilities in the past.

Cllr M Steele declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the application by the Bickerley Green Nursing and Residential Home as the proprietor of a similar facility elsewhere in the District. He left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or voting on the Application.

Members considered applications for Grant Aid from New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau and Bickerley Green Nursing and Residential Home (*Annex 'B' attached*).

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £500 be awarded to New Forest Citizens Advice Bureau towards running costs;
- 2) That, under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, a grant of £250 be awarded to Bickerley Green Nursing and Residential Home towards the cost of provision of entertainment and activities for residents.

ACTION Alyson Greenfield

F/4794

ARCHIVES

Members considered a report on digital archiving (*Annex 'C' attached*), which related to the need to reduce the number of paper files prior to the Council's move to the Gateway building.

Members noted that the relocation of the Town Council's Offices to the Gateway would place management of the Town Council's IT support with the County Council. The Committee was concerned to ensure that the Town Council's records were treated in an equal manner as the County Council's own records to ensure that data was not lost as a result of any malfunction of the County's equipment. The Town Clerk assured Members that the County Council had automatic backup arrangements in place which should avoid the total loss of the Town Councils data, but nonetheless he would seek a reassurance on this point from County Council Officers.

The Town Clerk also reported that in preparation for the move to the new Gateway, where storage facilities would be limited all old records were being reviewed. This had identified a number which had an historical value and should be transferred to the County Archivist. He sought Members approval to such documents being sent to the County Archivist for storage and public inspection purposes. These would remain in the ownership of the Town Council.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the proposal to digitally archive some of the Council's paper files to reduce the amount of storage space required in the Gateway building and to improve efficiency in the office, be approved.
- 2) That the Town Clerk's verbal report on documentation to be sent to the County Archivist be approved.

ACTION Jo Stannard

F/4795

RINGWOOD FESTIVAL

Members considered the notes of the meeting of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 16th January 2012 (*Annex 'D' attached*).

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the notes of the Ringwood Festival Steering Committee held on 16th January, and the proposals therein, be approved.
- 2) That the time for the concert on Bickerley Green and the sponsorship arrangement be noted.
- 3) That the proposal for allocation of any surpluses from the Pedal Car Grand Prix be approved subject to a proviso that should the Pedal Car Grand Prix fail to go ahead in future years, any balances built up be distributed to charities nominated by the Town Council.

ACTION T Simpson / Mandy Oldfield

F/4796

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

Members considered the Town Clerk's report (*Annex 'E' attached*). Whilst it was suggested that the Town Council should take responsibility for organising a major event, a majority of members believed that the Town Council's role should be to facilitate community activities for this type of celebration. It would not be appropriate to incur expenditure at the level required for a major event organised by the Town Council in the current financial circumstances. In addition, there were already a number of major events taking place in the current year, including not only the Diamond Jubilee, but the Festival and Pedal Car Grand Prix, the Olympics and the Carnival.

The Town Clerk also reported that the Ringwood Scouts had indicated that they were likely to organise a small scale event on the Bickerley and take part in the national lighting of the Beacons as part of the Jubilee celebrations. Members were reminded that there was already a structure for the Beacon in the grounds of the Scout Hut adjoining Danny Cracknell Pocket Park.

Members also noted the opportunity to obtain an Oak tree to plant to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. The proposal was supported for a tree to be planted within the Jubilee Gardens.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That as there is no organisation or individual within the town that can organise a single major event, then consideration of this type of celebration be discontinued;
- 2) That the Town Council now formally supports the wider celebration of the Diamond Jubilee across the whole town through the provision of bunting and flags for street parties in the same manner as provided for the Royal Wedding in 2011;
- 3) That any other celebrations organised by individual organisations be included in any publicity issued by the Town Council to mark the celebrations;
- 4) That £1,500 of the available budget be allocated for the purchase of boxes containing bunting, union flags and other items for street parties and the balance of the budget be retained to enable the Committee to support, if it so wishes, any other celebrations that might be brought to the Council's attention.

ACTION T Simpson

F/4797

GATEWAY PROJECT

The Town Clerk reported on arrangements that would be needed if the Greyfriars Community minibus was to continue to be parked at the rear of the existing Town Council Offices at Greenways, the discussions and proposed designs for the courtyard gate infill panels, the time scales for tenders for external landscaping and lighting and the general progress on the Gateway project.

With regard to the Greyfriars Community minibus, Members noted that there were currently thirteen parking spaces in the car park at the rear of Greenways. Five have been allocated to the tenants of the first floor offices and it was proposed that five should be allocated for the new tenants of the ground floor offices. The Town Council would retain one car parking space for parking of its vehicle and it would therefore be possible to continue with the current arrangement of allowing the Greyfriars Community minibus to be parked overnight in the car park at Greenways.

Members had been circulated with emails showing the design of the courtyard gate infill panels, together with an explanation by the landscape architect of the design features. Large scale plans of the design were displayed at the meeting. Whilst accepting that the design had considerable merit in the right location Members were concerned that the gates would effectively produce a fairly solid barrier between the piazza and the courtyard. In addition the painted mild steel panels would be an attractive target for graffiti. Members believed that great care had been taken to ensure that the Gateway building reflected the style of other buildings in the area and that it would be more appropriate to install gates in the style of wrought iron gates, allowing good visibility into the courtyard at a lower cost than those displayed at the meeting. Such gates could have features and might also include the crests of the three authorities involved in the Gateway project.

It was noted that the District Council had been unable to obtain any external funding for enhanced lighting on the piazza. Members reaffirmed their belief that no additional funding should be available for this part of the scheme and that the original allocation of £200,000 for all works associated with the piazza, including fees, should be maintained and not increased.

The Town Clerk reported that the project was still on target with a completion towards the end of March. A target date for occupation to allow for all fitting out and testing of equipment in the building has been set as Tuesday 8th May. There were still some issues relating to installation of IT and BT lines, but it was anticipated that these would be overcome. Increased costs for the installation of the BT line had meant that some of the contingency fund had to be used, but savings were being achieved elsewhere to keep overall costs within budget. Changes had been made to the location of the drop off point/loading bay to service the building. This would now be close to the main entrance instead of being opposite the toilets. The dropped kerb from the Furlong Centre to the piazza was scheduled to be carried out in the week commencing 23rd January.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) That the Gateway Project Board be advised that the designs for the courtyard gate infill panels are not acceptable to the Town Council as they are not appropriate in this location, and that the Town Council would urgently request the Project Board to approve designs in the style of wrought iron gates with the possibility of crests of the three partner authorities being included within those gates.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That arrangements be made for the Greyfriars Community minibus to continue to be parked on an allocated space in the car park at Greenways, with a second space being reserved for the Town Council's vehicles.
- 2) That it be re-affirmed that the budget provision allocated for the piazza be maintained at a maximum of £200,000.
- 3) That the progress report by the Town Clerk be noted.

ACTION T Simpson

F/4798

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*).

F/4799

GATEWAY PROJECT – FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Members considered a report by the Finance Manager regarding borrowing approval (*Confidential Annex G*), arrangements for letting the ground floor office at Greenways and timescales and arrangements for disposal of the Council's building plot.

The Town Clerk reported on discussions with Carr & Neave with respect of the letting arrangements for the ground floor office at Greenways and sought Members approval to the arrangements for the disposal of the building plot at the rear of Greenways.

RECOMMENDED: That the arrangements for drawing down the loan be made in accordance with the proposals now reported.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the arrangements for letting the ground floor offices and the appointment of Carr & Neave to act on behalf of the Town Council in this matter be approved; and
- 2) That the building plot be offered for sale through the local Estate Agent now identified.

ACTION M Townsend / A Greenfield

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9pm.

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

RECEIVED
25th January 2012

APPROVED
15th February 2012

TOWN MAYOR

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN