

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted

on **Monday 5 December 2016 at 7.30 pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors D Collins (Chair)
 E Collins
 G Corry (Substitute)
 Mrs C Green
 B Newton
 G Stevens

Ex officio: Cllr T Ritchie

ALSO PRESENT:

Mrs J Mason – Town Clerk

2 members of the public

OPENING MATTERS

FP 85/16 Apologies for absence

These were received from Cllr S Bateman and Cllr G Yearwood.

FP 86/16 Declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda

None.

FP 87/16 Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2016

These were approved as a correct record and were duly signed as such by the Chairman.

FP 88/16 Chair's Communications

- (i) 24 October 2016 and 8 November e-mails from Mrs R North, Secretary to the Trustees of Northchurch United Charities thanking the Town Council for the grant donation of £450 and enclosing the charity's accounts for 2015/16;
- (ii) Invitation to Community Action Dacorum AGM on 1 December 2016 (to councillors 22 November 2016);

- (iii) NALC National Bulletin 28 October 2016 (to councillors 22 November 2016);

FP 89/16 Suspension of Standing Orders to allow public participation

The Chairman suspended standing orders to enable members of the public to speak.

Fiona Richardson, the Manager of Happy Days pre-school which is based at the Lagley Meadow Youth Centre, spoke in support of the reinstatement of the astro-turf area that is located adjacent to the Youth Centre. The pitch and surrounds are currently fenced off because vandalism has rendered them unsafe for use. She and her colleague Gemma Beechey hoped that funding would be found for the necessary repairs. The area is a valuable outdoor space which is used on a daily basis by the pre-school children. One option suggested was that it be incorporated into the curtilage of the Youth Centre.

Thanking members of the public for their contribution, the Chairman reinstated standing orders. The members of the public left the meeting at this stage.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FP 90 /16 Grant Applications

No grant applications have been received.

FP 91 /16 Income and Expenditure including Receipts and Payments Schedule

- (i) The Income and Expenditure and Variance Analysis at 31 October 2016 were **noted and approved**;
- (ii) The Receipts and Payments Schedule for the period 1 August 2016 – 31 October 2016 has been sent to Cllrs D Collins and G Stevens for scrutiny. The accuracy of the schedule was approved.
- (iii) The schedule of payments over £500 for the period 1 July 2016 – 30 September 2016, prepared in accordance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, was noted and approved.

FP 92/16 Procurement of digital projector for use in Council Chamber

It was note that this item has been deferred pending the outcome of discussions with Dacorum Borough Council regarding the introduction of paperless planning. It was **agreed** that this item should be referred to the next meeting of the Committee (16 January 2017).

FP 93/16 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Funds

Possible projects that might be funded via CIL payments made to the Town Council were considered. Such projects might then be included for consideration in the next and future years' budgets bearing in mind the need to spend such funds within five years of receipt on infrastructure projects or projects that support the demands placed on the area by development.

Three projects had been put forward following the T & E Committee meeting held on 14 November 2016. First, new play equipment for the site adjacent to Dellfield allotments. Secondly, repairs to the astro turf mini pitch, goal ends and fencing at Lagley Meadow and finally the purchase of equipment to monitor traffic speeds and movement. Items suggested were a Moveable Vehicle Activated Sign (MVAS) and a radar traffic counter/analyser. The Town Clerk outlined costings associated with each project.

It was **RESOLVED** that

- i. The list should be reviewed and updated on a six monthly basis in the light of CIL receipts, actual and projected;
- ii. The Town Council, via the Town Clerk, will keep Robert Freeman, Infrastructure Officer, Strategic Planning and Regeneration Department at DBC informed.

FP 94/16 Budget preparation 2017/18 update and timetable

The Town Clerk had met recently with both Cllr Collins and Cllr Stevens to discuss the predicted outturn for the 2016/17 budget together with proposals for the 2017/18 budget. Further discussions were planned. She reported that DBC would be setting the tax base on 12 December and on 16 December formal requests for precept would be sent to Towns and Parishes. Precept returns would be requested for mid-January. The Town Council would agree its budget recommendations at the 16 January 2017 F & P meeting with formal approval and setting of the precept taking place at the Full Council meeting on 23 January 2017.

FP 95/16 Internal Auditor Interim Visit Monday 5 December 2016

It was **noted** that the Internal Auditor had made his interim visit and inspection that day. His report would be received shortly.

POLICY MATTERS

FP 96/16 Pensions Regulator automatic enrolment duties

Receipt of the Pensions Regulator's 28 October 2016 letter confirming that Berkhamsted Town Council has completed a declaration of compliance under the Pensions Act 2008 was **noted**.

WORKING PARTY/GROUP REPORTS

FP 97 /16 To receive any reports from other Working Parties and Groups since the meeting of the F & P Committee held on 12 September 2016:

- (i) Communications Working Group: The group has been unable to meet.
- (ii) Festival of Light Working Party: This year's event had been held on Sunday 27 November 2016. Generally, feedback from members of the public had been favourable. There were a number of issues to be brought forward to the "wash up" meeting scheduled for 14 February 2017

including timings, communication, lack of councillor volunteers, parked vehicles and security. The Town Clerk will include a provision for the installation of feeder columns into the budget proposals for 2017/18. This will enable the festoon lights to be reinstated.

An incident involving one of the working party had, however, cast a shadow over the event.

YOUTH MATTERS

FP 98 /16 Youth Town Council

It was **noted** that meetings were held on 5 October 2016 and 9 November 2016.

REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

FP 99/16 Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust

It was **noted** that at the Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust on 24 October 2016, Mr M Hillier was confirmed as the Town Council appointed representative.

FP 100/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

It was **RESOLVED** that under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded for the remainder of the meeting, because it is likely that publicity would prejudice the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business or for other special reasons stated in the resolution, arising from the nature of the business or proceedings.

FP 101/16 Staffing Matters

- i. It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should move from salary point 40 to salary point 41 with effect from 1 November 2016. This follows successful completion of CiLCA. Cllr Ritchie will write to the Town Clerk confirming the increase.
- ii. It was **RESOLVED** that the Finance Officer should move from salary point 30 to point 31 with effect from 1 November 2016 which is the anniversary of her appointment to the LC2 Substantive Benchmark range. The Town Clerk will write to the Finance Officer confirming the increase.

FP 102/16 Land ownership

- (i) An update on discussions with DBC regarding the ownership of the land adjacent to Normandy Drive and Dellfield allotments was received. DBC representatives had been given access to the findings of the Town Council's solicitor but beyond that substantive progress had not been made;
- (ii) In view of the above it was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk should convene a meeting between appropriate Town Council and DBC representatives.

FP 103/16 Appointment of accountant to help with Year End, Annual Return and VAT Partial Exemption Calculation

It was **RESOLVED** to appoint Accounting Solutions from DCK Beavers Ltd to undertake this work with effect from the year end 2017. The Town Clerk will advise staff at DCK Beavers so that the Town Council can be included in their year end timetable. The combined net cost of preparing the year end financial reports (which will include the figures for the Annual Return) and site software closedown will be £915.50. Additionally, the firm will carry out VAT Partial Exemption calculations for 2014/15 and 2015/16 and this will cost £195 (net) per year. This calculation will be requested each year and should enable the Town Council to reclaim the majority, if not all, of VAT incurred through Youth Centre expenditure.

FP 104/16 The meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....