

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

Held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted

on **Monday 16 January 2017 at 7.30 pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Councillors D Collins (Chair)
 E Collins
 Mrs C Green
 B Newton (Vice Chair)
 G Stevens
 G Yearwood

ALSO PRESENT:

Mrs J Mason – Town Clerk

OPENING MATTERS

FP 01/17 Apologies for absence

These were received from Cllr S Bateman

FP 02/17 Declarations of interest regarding items on the agenda

None

FP 03/17 To approve the **minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 December 2016**

The minutes were approved as a correct record and were duly signed as such by the Chair.

FP 04/17 Chair's Communications

- (i) HAPTC Bulletin December 2016 (circulated to councillors 20 December 2016).

FP 05/17 Suspension of Standing Orders to allow public participation

Not applicable as no members of the public were present.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FP 06 /17 Grant Application – to consider the following:

Grant application made by the Gallery Manager, The Upstairs Gallery, 268, High Street, Berkhamsted. The application is for £800 to cover the cost of an archive book of prints and a catalogue for the exhibition “Our Journey with Graham Greene”.

Cllr D Collins proposed, Cllr G Stevens seconded and it was unanimously **RESOLVED**

that a grant of £300 should be paid to meet the cost of the archive book of prints that will be retained with the exhibition.

FP 07 /17 Income and Expenditure including Receipts and Payments Schedule

- (i) The Income and Expenditure and Variance Analysis at 31 December 2016 was noted and approved.
- (ii) The Receipts and Payments Schedule for the period 1 November 2016 – 31 December 2016 had been sent to Cllrs D Collins and G Stevens for scrutiny. The accuracy of the schedule was approved.

FP 08/17 Budget preparation 2017/18 - Estimates of Income & Expenditure

The draft budget proposals for 2017/18, to be put to Full Council for approval on 23 January 2017, were considered. Cllr D Collins highlighted key points on the expenditure budget which were discussed. In particular, £6,000 had been included to enable the astro-turf area at Lagley Meadow to be made safe and usable; the Festival of Light proposed budget was £17,500 compared to a budget of £9,000 in 2016/17. The additional amount is to cover either the cost of increasing the number of feeder columns in the High Street, enabling the festoon decorations to be used, or, the cost of decorations mounted on lighting columns. A decision would have to be made as to whether column mounted decorations should be hired or purchased. The Legal Fees budget had been set at £3,000 in anticipation of continuing discussions with English Heritage about the transfer of the Castle Site into local management and with DBC about the ownership of the play area adjacent to Dellfield Allotments / Normandy Drive. New play equipment at the latter site might be purchased from Community Infrastructure Levy funds allocated to Berkhamsted Town Council. It was also noted that the Council's IT support contract would be retendered during the year. Turning to income, it was proposed to request a precept of £186,255. Given a tax base of 8,405.60 this would result in a Band D equivalent tax of £22.16 for 2017/18; an increase of 74p on the 2016/17 Band D tax of £21.42.

It was **RESOLVED** that the draft budget proposals for 2017/18, as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting, should be put to the Full Council meeting on 23 January 2017 for approval. The Full Council would be asked to set a precept of £186,255.

FP 09/17 Internal Auditor Interim Report following visit on Monday 5 December 2016

- (i) The report arising from the above visit was **received**;
- (ii) The conclusions contained therein were **noted**, in particular the overall conclusion that the Council has again maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements. At the next visit the Financial Regulations and Risk Assessments would be examined. In the meantime The Town Clerk will investigate the London Allowance issue highlighted by the auditor.

FP 10/17 Hertfordshire Pension Fund Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) 2016 Triennial Valuation Employer Results

- (i) The actuarial report and briefing note attached to an e-mail dated 14 December 2016 from Dominika Tober, Accounting Officer, Hertfordshire County Council (circulated to councillors 6 January 2016) was **received**;
- (ii) It was **noted** that the employer contribution rate payable from 1 April 2017 will be 23.8%;
- (iii) It was **further noted** that the Town Clerk had completed the necessary employer actions set out in the 14 December e-mail.

YOUTH MATTERS

FP 11 /17 Youth Town Council

It was **noted** that a meeting was held on 12 December 2016. The minutes had not yet been received.

FP 12/17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

To **RESOLVE** 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.

Not applicable as there were no members of the public present.

FP 13/17 Land ownership – Land Adjacent to Normandy Drive and Dellfield Allotments

To **note** that in advance of the meeting with DBC representatives (FP102/16 and FC 122/16 refer) the Town Clerk has arranged a meeting with the Town Council's solicitor.

FP 14/17 Purchase of Two Desk Top Computers and Digital Projector

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be authorised to arrange the purchase and installation of two computers to replace her computer and that of the Finance Officer. A digital projector will also be purchased together with computer

peripherals and software as required. The costs will be as set out in the quotations provided by IQuDa. Software needs are still being finalised and the Town Clerk, following a query made by Cllr Stevens, will ask IQuDa about the possibility of buying an annual, multi-machine Microsoft Office licence.

FP 15/17 Allotment R & M Projects 2016/17

It was **RESOLVED** that the Town Clerk be authorised to arrange various works at Sunnyside and Butts Meadow. These are as set out in Frank Cooper and Sons 12 December letter. The cost of the projects to be undertaken in 2016/17 will be £2,020. The remaining work included in the quotation is budgeted for 2017/18.

Signed.....

Date.....