

BERKHAMSTED TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the

FINANCE & POLICY COMMITTEE

held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Berkhamsted

on Monday 16 March 2015 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors D Collins Chair
Mrs C Green Vice-Chair
S Bateman
I Reay
G Stevens

OFFICER: Gary Cox Town Clerk

1 member of the public.

OPENING MATTERS

FP 1/15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Laws.

FP 2/15 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

FP 3/15 Minutes of the last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting held on 22 December 2014 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

FP 4/15 Chair's Communications

The Committee noted letters of thanks from:

- the Happy Wanderers Club for a grant award towards the hire of a wheelchair accessible coach for an outing.
- Berkhamsted Cricket Club for the grant award of £1,000 towards a new tractor.
- the Upstairs Gallery for the grant award of £500 towards the 'Big Draw' art competition.

The Committee also noted that the Dacorum Health and Wellbeing Partnership has funding available for non-profit making organisations that promote physical activity and healthy weight and improving mental health and emotional wellbeing.

FP 5/15 Public Participation

There was no public participation.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

FP 6/15 The Committee noted that for the financial year up to 1 March, grant awards of £4,338.30 had been made from the budget of £10,000.

FP 7/15 Grant Applications

- i The Committee considered an application from Northchurch United Charities for £450 towards funds for distribution to the elderly, residents of very limited means and local clubs.

Following discussion, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £350 to Northchurch United Charities. **Action: Town Clerk**

- ii The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £633 to Age UK Dacorum for towards opening a Sunday afternoon Tea Club in Berkhamsted for older people and their carers. **Action: Town Clerk**

- iii The Committee considered an application from Berkofest for a grant of £1,000 towards a website to market and provide information about the Festival.

Following discussion, it was unanimously **RESOLVED** to make a grant of £500 to Berkofest.

The Committee suggested that Berkofest also be advised to contact the Borough Council's Tourism Officer for further support on promoting the event. **Action: Town Clerk**

- iv The Committee **RESOLVED** to make a grant to Berkhamsted Litter Pickers for a grant of £360 for equipment for new volunteers. **Action: Town Clerk**

FP 8/15 Request for Support for Magpas

Following discussion, the Committee **RESOLVED** not to make a financial contribution to Magpas, a charity providing air ambulance support in the East of England.

FP 9/15 HAPTC and NALC subscriptions

It was noted that the Town Council subscriptions to HAPTC and NALC for 2015/16 have been calculated correctly at £1,894.33.

FP 10/15 Statement of Internal Control

The Committee reviewed the draft Statement of Internal Control for 2014/15 and, subject to one change, agreed the draft should go to Full Council for approval.

FP 11/15 Income and Expenditure

The Committee noted that Councillors D Collins and Stevens had reviewed the detailed income and expenditure records for the period 1 December 2014 to 28 February 2015 and were satisfied that the Income and Expenditure Report was correct.

The Committee noted the Income and Expenditure report and that the anticipated deficit at year end was £43,645; and that this higher than budgeted deficit was the result of additional approved expenditure towards the repair of Church Lane Cobbles, the repairs and widening of the canal towpath and the costs of the West Ward by-election.

FP 12/15 Investments

- i The Committee endorsed the decision to re-invest the maturing £80,000 bond with Saffron Building Society into a further one-year tracker bond with that Society.
- ii The Committee noted the Town Council's cash, forecast cashflow and investment position at 9 March 2015; and unanimously **RESOLVED** to transfer the Nat West Business Reserve Account of £54,897 into a cash account for the short-term, to secure 2015-16 cashflow, pending receipt of the 2015/16 precept payment from DBC. **Action: Town Clerk**

POLICY MATTERS

FP 13/15 New Local Council Award Scheme

The Committee noted that NALC has replaced the Quality Council scheme with a new Local Council Award Scheme.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the Town Council would not register for the Award Scheme at this time; and would review whether to register as more information and any benefits of the Scheme became clearer.

FP 14/15 Loyalty Cards

The Committee considered a proposal from a resident to introduce a local loyalty card for Berkhamsted and agreed the proposal should be forwarded to the Chamber of Commerce to consider. **Action: Town Clerk**

WORKING PARTY REPORTS

FP 15/15 Festival of Light

- i The Committee noted the minutes of the Festival of Light Committee meeting held on 10 February 2015.
- ii In discussion, the Committee agreed that The Lions Club should not be charged for half of the Town Council's rental cost for the hire of the Civic Centre for the Festival of Light; and unanimously **RESOLVED** that the £127 share of rental for the 2104/15 event should be refunded to the Lions Club.

YOUTH MATTERS

FP 16/15 Youth Town Council

The Committee noted the minutes of the Youth Town Council meetings held on 21 January 2015 and 25 February 2015.

The Town Council thanked the members of the Youth Town Council for providing its report at the recent Annual Town Meeting.

Part 2 Closed Session – Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was **RESOLVED**

That under Section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded during the items in Part II of the agenda for this 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 17/15 Support Services Group

The Committee received and adopted the minutes of the Support Services Group meeting held on 13 January 2015.

FP 18/15

Recruitment of Town Clerk

The Committee received an update on the recruitment of a new Town Clerk/ Responsible Financial Officer.

The Committee noted that an appointment had not been made from the initial exercise and agreed that the Support Group be asked to undertake a second recruitment exercise.

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should pay for the vacancy to be advertised through the local Gazette on-line recruitment service. **Action:Town Clerk**

The Committee agreed that the vacancy should also be more widely advertised, including on a neighbouring County Association website. **Action:Town Clerk**

The Committee also asked that the Support Group put in place contingency arrangements for the period between the existing Clerk leaving and a new Clerk taking up post. **Action: Support Group**

FP 19/15

Close of Meeting

The meeting closed at 8.30pm